

Bede's Temple: An Image and its Interpretation

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Short Abstract

This thesis studies, for the first time, Bede's use of the image of the Jewish temple across all his writings. Not only analysing how Bede developed earlier Christian interpretations of the temple, it also uses the temple-image to shine light on under-explored aspects of his theological thought. Throughout, I argue that the communal understanding of the temple-image in Bede's monastery helped shape his exegesis; we should think of Bede, not as an individual scholar, but as a monk engaged in an active discourse concerning the Bible.

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, providing the historiographical and historical context. Bede's exegesis existed within a long tradition of Christian interpretation of the temple, as **Chapter 2** shows; one image could be interpreted in diverse ways by Bede and therefore this thesis follows a thematic approach. **Chapter 3** studies Bede's engagement with the cosmic interpretation of the temple, in particular his use of the image to emphasise the Anglo-Saxons' participation in the universal Church. Analysing Bede's interpretation of the Jewish priesthood, **Chapter 4** argues that he championed an élite of ordained clerics in the role of reforming the temple-Church. This Church clashed with the Body of Satan, symbolised by the Tower of Babel, concerning which the contemporary Northumbrian situation shaped Bede's understanding. For Bede, the temple-image stressed Christ's humanity and his sacrificial priesthood, as **Chapter 5** shows. Bede urged the faithful to shape themselves as pure temples in imitation of Christ, directing them towards union with God. A diachronic overview of Bede's writings on the temple in **Chapter 6** highlights the importance of the years immediately prior to 716, the period in which the Codex Amiatinus was created at his monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow, in the development of Bede's interpretation of the temple. We should consider the possibility that Bede's temple-commentaries drew upon interpretations formed in this communal, monastic, context.

Long Abstract

This thesis contributes to the scholarly understanding of the most important early-medieval English Latin author, and indeed one of the most significant thinkers of the early Middle Ages in general: Bede (c.672-735). Bede's interpretation of the Jewish temple matters not only because it was a dominant, and frequently original, part of his exegetical work, but also because it was to prove one of his most influential contributions to exegesis into the twelfth century and beyond. Previous scholarship has recognised the major role the temple-image plays in Bedan exegesis, but mine is the first study to provide a full synthesis of Bede's use of it throughout his corpus. This broader scope enables us not only to see how Bede added to earlier Christian interpretations of the temple, but also to use the temple-image to shine light on many under-explored aspects of his theological thought (such as his Christology). The thesis examines the variety of possible meanings Bede ascribed to the temple-image, bringing out connections between, without forcing any unitary explanation upon, them. I argue throughout the thesis that the communal understanding of the temple-image in Bede's monastery helped shape his own exegesis; it may be productive to think of Bede, not as an individual scholar, but as a monk engaged in an active discourse concerning the Bible.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The image of the Jewish temple dominates a trilogy of Bede's late commentaries (*On the Tabernacle*, *On the Temple* and *On Ezra and Nehemiah*) but it appears in many works throughout the different genres on which he worked during his life. The wide diffusion of the temple-image in Bede's corpus establishes its importance for understanding him as an author, and means that the study of a single work, as has previously been the most common approach to Bede's exegesis, is insufficient. This thesis, therefore, provides a holistic analysis, drawing on all of Bede's discussions concerning the temple. Considering the diversity of possible interpretations which he could apply to the image, I have chosen to follow a thematic approach. I examine Bede's interpretation of the temple according to different possible levels of meaning, moving from macrocosm to microcosm.

Historiographical Overview

The study of Bede's writings has often been seen as a window on the personality of Bede the man himself. This thesis seeks to avoid such a focus on the individual genius. While traditionally little scholarship addressed the religious dimensions of Bede's work, recent work devoted to studying, editing and translating his exegesis has done much to redress this failing. Those studies provide the material for re-evaluating our understanding of Bede, but synthetic and thematic analysis such as this thesis provides is necessary to make that re-evaluation. Scholars are now interested in seeing the connections between Bede's works and exploring the ways in which he followed a single programme throughout his exegesis, history and other writings. This thesis develops that current approach.

Bede's World

Bede's writings were products of the 'Northumbrian Renaissance' where a fertile mixture of cultures nourished a burgeoning monasticism. Early Anglo-Saxon monastic communities were usually aristocratic institutions, closely linked with social élites and not closed off from the world by Benedictine contemplation. Bede's wealthy community at Wearmouth-Jarrow was not as separate from the Northumbrian mainstream as it has sometimes been painted, but it did remain a distinctively cosmopolitan centre, possessing a clear ideology of integrating Northumbria into the Roman Church. Through his monastery's wide interests Bede would have been engaged with society, but his intellectual and spiritual context as a member of Wearmouth-Jarrow remain as important for understanding his exegesis as the political and social context do.

Chapter 2: Bede's Temple in its Intellectual Context

The Intellectual Context at Wearmouth-Jarrow

Wearmouth-Jarrow's founders gathered a rich library of Christian writings, centred upon the great Latin Fathers; the educational and intellectual life of the community was focused upon the Bible (a complete edition of the Vulgate being an important project there during Ceolfrith's abbacy) and this context clearly influenced Bede. Scripture undoubtedly recounted historical truth for Bede, and presented textual and linguistic

problems not without interest, but the spiritual interpretation of the Bible attracted most of his attention. This was superabundant with meaning – it is only by looking at repeated interpretations that one can see what mattered most to Bede. While he approached the Bible from within the monastic confines of Wearmouth-Jarrow, Bede spoke also to a clerical audience with a clear pastoral slant in his exegesis.

The Temple in the Christian Tradition before Bede

Bede declared that he studied the Bible ‘in the footsteps of the Fathers’. Once seen as a declaration that in his commentaries he did little more than compile, recent scholars have nuanced our understanding of this modesty topos, seeing Bede as making claims to be on a par with the patristic past. Nonetheless, patristic exegesis did greatly influence Bede’s themes, ideas and even language on occasion. While the basis of his understanding of the temple-image derived from uses of that image within the New Testament itself, the Fathers had added to and developed all these uses. Bede’s commentaries cannot be understood except when seen in continuity with the patristic past, but his skilful manipulation of sources reveals thoughtfulness and originality.

Chapter 3: Bede’s Temple as Cosmos

Bede’s Use of the Cosmic Interpretation

Interpreting the temple-image as a mirror of creation had a long pedigree, dating back to Jewish exegesis. In the Christian tradition it is most associated with the eccentric Cosmas Indicopleustes, whose work was known in Anglo-Saxon England. While Bede used some cosmological ideas when interpreting the temple, I show that he clearly did not believe that it represented a physical model of either the universe or of heaven. Rather the temple-image provided a way of thinking about the relationship between heaven and earth. Bede emphasised the gap between the earthly life (symbolised by the tabernacle) and the heavenly one (symbolised by the temple), but he also used the temple-image to explore how these had been brought closer together through Christ’s incarnation.

The Anglo-Saxons' Place in the World

The unity of Jews and gentiles in the Church which spread to all corners of the fourfold world represents a constant theme in Bede's commentaries on the temple. Concern about the election of the Anglo-Saxons lies in the background here. Classical geographical knowledge emphasised the distance of the British Isles from the civilised centre of the world; language of peripherality was an important part of the rhetoric surrounding the Easter Controversy in the Insular world. Bede used his exegesis of the temple-image to emphasise the unity of all peoples in the universal Church, reading his nation's salvation into Old Testament accounts of a distinctively Jewish holy-place. While on occasion basing this on a rejection of narrow Jewish localism, in the main he preferred the idea of Jews and gentiles as linked by the temple-Church.

The Codex Amiatinus

In 716 the Wearmouth-Jarrow community offered a magnificent display-Bible, made at the monastery, to the pope: the Codex Amiatinus. The codex was intended to assert the unity of the Northumbrian periphery with the Roman centre and the Anglo-Saxons' membership of the universal Church. The diagram of the tabernacle in the codex reveals many points of similarity between Bede's understanding of the temple-image and that of the community in which he lived. While evidence exists for linking Bede's work with the manuscript at some level, it cannot be claimed that he single-handedly produced its entire intellectual programme. The possibility that his exegesis of the temple, with its focus on universality and the election of the gentiles, derives from a communal understanding at Wearmouth-Jarrow is a strong one.

Chapter 4: Bede's Temple as Church

The Temple and Reform

Recent scholarship has drawn attention to Bede's 'reform agenda'. Scott DeGregorio, in particular, has directed attention to the temple-commentaries as an important source for ideas about reform. It has been accepted that the role of teachers and preachers was central to Bede's ideas about reform, but there has been disagreement about who exactly Bede thought should perform this duty. I examine how Bede used the ancient Jewish

priesthood to understand the duties of the ideal preacher. I conclude that, while Bede was not always consistent, the overall weight of his work tends towards celebrating the role of ordained clergy working within a monastic context in a hierarchically structured Church. Here again Bede probably reflected ideas common at Wearmouth-Jarrow, as evidenced by the image of Ezra, dressed in the robes of the Jewish high priest, in the Codex Amiatinus.

The Temple versus the Tower

Bede's *On Genesis* includes an excursus on the tower of Babel which contrasts it to the temple of Jerusalem. The passage shows how Bede understood the temple-Church as opposed by rival 'pseudo-churches' (consisting of Jews, pagans, heretics and false Catholics), which were superficially similar but fatally flawed. A dualistic vision of the unified Church of the elect locked in conflict with the forces of pride and division symbolised by Babel appears frequently in Bede's writings. This outlook mirrors Bede's division of the contemporary Northumbrian Church into true and false monasteries in his 734 letter to Bishop Ecgberht of York – his contrast between the tower and the temple was probably shaped by the context in which he lived.

The Temple as which Church?

Investigating whether Bede used the temple to symbolise the cosmic Church of the elect or the institutional Church in which both elect and reprobate were mixed, I find that his preference was overwhelmingly for the community of the elect. But the temple-image still connects with the institutional Church as Bede used it to present a vision where the heavenly body of the saved and the sacramental Church of this world are one and the same. Bede's apparent desire for a pure institutional Church finds many analogues in contemporary Insular ecclesiastical writings.

Chapter 5: Bede's Temple as Individual

The Temple as Christ

Bede adopted a number of different interpretations of the temple-image as signifying Christ's humanity and incarnation. This emphasis probably derived from the desire at Wearmouth-Jarrow to emphasise Roman orthodoxy as opposed to Monothelete heresy.

The struggle against Monotheletism had a formative influence on the Anglo-Saxon Church in the late seventh-century. Bede's work often presented Christ as priest and sacrifice, both in regard to his humanity – probably drawing upon Augustine especially. The importance of this sacrificial humanity of Christ for Bede is worth underlining as traditional overviews of early medieval theology present 'Germanic' Christology as stressing the divine and regal aspects of Christ.

The Temple as Christian

Morality

While Paul in the New Testament had proposed that the body of the Christian was the temple of God, subsequent patristic writings redirected the emphasis towards the faithful soul. Bede inherited both attitudes and carefully balanced the importance of the heart and body, both being the seat of God in the Christian. The use of the temple-image for moral exhortation is particularly noticeable in Bede's homiletic writings, but appears throughout his corpus. Moral uses of the image consistently stress the mixture of the internal and external, the bodily and the spiritual, both of which are necessary for salvation. Indeed the body plays an important role in Bede's morality – physical asceticism is a significant, and hitherto under-appreciated, part of his moral vision which probably derives from the importance of physical sacrifice in Bede's conception of Christ. This sacrifice was to be imitated by all Christians.

Imitation

Imitation was a key means by which Christians formed themselves into temples of the Lord. Christ is not the only exemplary model: imitation of (and by) teachers formed an important part of the reform discourse which underlies the temple-commentaries; Bede highlighted imitation of the angels as fellow members of the cosmic Church in *On the Tabernacle* and *On the Temple*. But all imitation for Bede seems to have derived its importance from the imitation of God. The image of the temple was aimed at drawing humanity closer to God on the model of the incarnation, the union of man and God within Christ which the temple symbolised.

Chapter 6: Building Bede's Temple

Diachronic Overview

I have chosen to structure the thesis thematically, rather than diachronically, because of the difficulties in establishing the chronology of Bede's writings with total certainty. However, the danger of such an approach is that it may seem to impose a false unity upon his ideas, ignoring the possibility of development. I, therefore, provide a partial diachronic overview focusing on how Bede's approach to the temple may have changed over time. The chronological evidence suggests that Bede was comparatively uninterested in the temple-image until the years immediately preceding 716, when he developed his approach to the temple at about the same time that the Codex Amiatinus was probably being completed. I suggest that the creation of the codex stimulated Bede to focus upon the temple-image in detail, and that much of the content of his interpretation derived from the discussions centred on the manuscript prior to 716.

A Monk and his Monastery

While there were other religious communities in the Insular world which could have had some influence on Bede (such as Hexham or Canterbury), none of them seems as likely a source for his thought on the temple-image as his own monastery. Bede's writings suggest that he identified closely with Wearmouth-Jarrow (where he lived from the age of seven) and its official ideology. This ideology emphasised unity, universality and a commitment to orthodoxy as defined by Rome – all themes which we have seen appear in Bede's use of the temple-image. The experience of living at Wearmouth-Jarrow probably explains the community's interest in the temple as seen in Bede's homilies; the grand stone buildings there may have called to mind the temple in the Anglo-Saxon world of wood. Bede's writings probably preserve many ideas which derive not from his singular genius, but from a discourse shared with his brother monks.

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I studied at Cork alongside Kirsty March and her questions, comments and (occasional) criticisms have done much to stimulate my thought on Bede; I must thank her for many years of enjoyable conversation on matters Anglo-Saxon. Zoë Sternberg has done her best to assist me with approaching her two great birth-rights: the German language and the Northumbrian countryside. My limited knowledge of both cannot be laid at her door. Above all, she has done more than anyone to keep me sane over the past three years. Zoë, my father and Kieran Murphy gave generously of their free time to proof-read parts of this thesis.

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Abbreviations

- Act.* Bede, *Expositio Actuum Apostolorum*, ed. M.L.W. Laistner, CCSL 121, pp. 3-99.
- Apoc.* Bede, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Roger Gryson, CCSL 121A.
- ASE* *Anglo-Saxon England*.
- Cant.* Bede, *In Cantica Canticorum*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119B, pp. 167-375.
- CCSL Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout).
- CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna).
- DST* Bede, *De Schematibus et Tropis*, ed. Calvin B. Kendall, CCSL 123A, pp. 142-71; trans. Tannenhaus = Gussie Hecht Tannenhaus (trans.), 'Bede's *De Schematibus et Tropis* a translation', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 48 (1962), pp. 237-53.
- DTR* Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, ed. Charles W. Jones, CCSL 123B; trans. Wallis = Faith Wallis (trans.), *Bede: On the Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).
- EME* *Early Medieval Europe*.
- EpCath.* Bede, *In Epistulas Septem Catholicas*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 121, pp. 181-342.
- EpEcg.* Bede, *Epistula ad Ecgbertum Episcopum*, ed. Charles Plummer in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 405-23; trans. Whitelock = Dorothy Whitelock (trans.) in *English Historical Documents: Volume 1 c.500-1042*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1979), pp. 799-811.
- Ezra.* Bede, *In Ezram et Neemiam*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A, pp. 235-392; trans. DeGregorio = Scott DeGregorio (trans.), *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006).

- Gen.* Bede, *In Principium Genesis*, ed. Charles W. Jones, CCSL 118A; trans. Kendall = Calvin B. Kendall (trans.), *Bede: On Genesis* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).
- HA* Bede, *Historia Abbatum auctore Baeda*, ed. Charles Plummer in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 364-87; trans. Farmer = D.H. Farmer (trans.), *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, in *The Age of Bede*, ed. D.H. Farmer (London: Penguin, 1983), pp. 185-210.
- HE* Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).
- Hom.* Bede, *Homiliarum Euangelii*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 122, pp. 1-403; trans. Martin & Hurst = Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst (trans.), *Bede: Homilies on the Gospels*, 2 vols (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991).
- JEH* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*.
- JTS* *Journal of Theological Studies*.
- Luc.* Bede, *In Lucae Euangelium Expositio*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 120, pp. 5-425.
- Marc.* Bede, *In Marci Euangelium Expositio*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 120, pp. 431-648.
- MGH* Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Berlin & Munich).
- PL* *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris).
- RB* *Revue Bénédictine*.
- Reg.* Bede, *In Regum Librum XXX Quaestiones*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119, pp. 289-322; trans. Foley = W. Trent Foley (trans.), *Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings*, in *Bede: A Biblical Miscellany*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), pp. 81-143.

- Ret.* Bede, *Retractatio in Actus Apostolorum*, ed. M.L.W. Laistner, CCSL 121, pp. 103-63.
- Sam.* Bede, *In Primam Partem Samuhelis*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119, pp. 5-287.
- Tab.* Bede, *De Tabernaculo et Vasis eius ac Vestibus Sacerdotum*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A, pp. 1-139; trans. Holder = Arthur G. Holder (trans.), *Bede: On the Tabernacle* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994).
- Temp.* Bede, *De Templo*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A, pp. 141-234; trans. Connolly = Seán Connolly (trans.), *Bede: On the Temple* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995).
- VCeol.* *Vita Ceolfridi (Historia Abbatum auctore Anonymo)*, ed. Charles Plummer in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 388-404; trans. Farmer = D.H. Farmer (trans.), *The Anonymous History of Abbot Ceolfrith*, in *The Age of Bede*, ed. D.H. Farmer (London: Penguin, 1983), pp. 211-29.
- VCP* Bede, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), pp. 142-306.
- VW* Stephen, *Vita Wilfridi*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927).

Unless otherwise indicated, when citing the Bible I use the Vulgate for the Latin (*Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. R. Weber et al., 2 vols (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969)) and the Douay-Rheims version for the English (*The Holy Bible: Douay Version* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1956)).

Possible Chronology of the Works of Bede

The most recent attempts to date Bede's corpus are: George Hardin Brown, *A Companion to Bede* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), pp. 13-5; and Michael Lapidge, 'Introduzione', in *Beda: Storia degli Inglesi*, ed. Michael Lapidge & trans. Paolo Chiesa, vol. 1 (Rome: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 2008), pp. xlvi-lix. Neither is perfect, however. Poor editing vitiates the usefulness of Brown's summary, which contradicts his comments elsewhere in the same volume. Lapidge's study does not engage with some recent attempts to date certain works, resulting in some very conservative conclusions. The dating suggestions in M.L.W. Laistner & H.H. King, *A Hand-List of Bede Manuscripts* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1943) have in many cases now been superseded by the editions and translations of individual works, to which the reader should turn in the first instance for much of what follows.¹ I have cited secondary literature where relevant in the text of the thesis.

pre-703?	<i>On the Holy Places</i>
703	<i>On the Nature of Things</i> and <i>On Time</i>
c.703	<i>On the Apocalypse</i>
c.705	<i>Verse Life of Cuthbert</i> (first recension)
708	<i>Letter to Plegwine</i>
c.709/10	<i>On Acts</i>
c.709/10	<i>Commentary on I John</i> (part of <i>On the Seven Catholic Epistles</i>)
post-709?	<i>On the Art of Metre</i> and <i>On Schemes and Tropes</i>
710-715	<i>On Luke</i>
c.715	<i>Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings</i>
715-717	<i>On I Samuel</i>
c.716	Letters to Acca: <i>On the Resting-Places</i> and <i>On What Isaiah Said</i>

¹ For a study of the manuscript transmission of Bede's works Laistner & King are wholly superseded by Michael Lapidge, 'Beda Venerabilis', in *La Trasmissione dei Testi Latini del Medioevo/Medieval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, ed. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi, vol. 3 (Florence: SISMEL, 2008), pp. 44-137 – but only for those works studied therein, which include, alas, none of Bede's exegesis.

pre -716?	<i>On the Song of Songs</i>
pre-716?	<i>On Proverbs</i>
716-717?	<i>History of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow</i>
709-720	Book One of <i>On Genesis</i>
c.720	Book Two of <i>On Genesis</i>
c.720	<i>Prose Life of Cuthbert and Verse Life of Cuthbert</i> (second recension)
721-725?	<i>On the Tabernacle</i>
722-725?	Books Three and Four of <i>On Genesis</i>
pre-725	<i>Letter to Helmwald</i>
725	<i>On the Reckoning of Time</i>
post-725	<i>Letter to Wicthed</i>
c.725-731?	<i>On Mark</i>
725-731	<i>Retraction on Acts</i>
725-731	<i>Martyrology</i>
729-731	<i>On the Temple</i>
725-731?	<i>On Ezra and Nehemiah</i>
731 (with probable additions later)	<i>The Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i>
734	<i>Letter to Ecgberht</i>

The following works pre-date the *Ecclesiastical History* but have not been specifically dated:

The Gospel Homilies

On the Canticle of Habakkuk

On Tobit

Hymns and Epigrams

The Passion of St Anastasius

The Life of St Felix

Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine on the Letters of the Blessed Apostle Paul

On Orthography [in the past believed to be a very early work – but such assumptions are no longer secure]

Undated, but possibly post-731: *Eight Questions*

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the summer of A.D. 70, after years of Jewish insurrection, a Roman army under Titus entered Jerusalem. A hard-fought, slow advance through the city reached its climax on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av (the anniversary of the destruction of Solomon's temple by the Babylonians), when the torching of the temple gates combined with the scorching summer heat to destroy the entire temple complex. The destruction of the Jewish holy site may have been accidental, but its effects proved dramatically permanent.¹ The place of God's dwelling amongst his chosen people would never be rebuilt, despite the hopes and dreams of many. But its power was not destroyed: the next two millennia saw the image of the Jewish temple exert an influence over many minds, Christian as well as Jewish.² Thus, when, at the beginning of the eighth century, a Christian monk at the opposite end of the former Roman Empire from Jerusalem first sat down to write about the Bible, the image of the temple, despite the building's destruction, continued to inspire him.

The Venerable Bede (c.672-735) declared that the earthly temple had been replaced by the Church, the 'temple of the living God', whose 'way of life is in heaven'; while the former had hidden the Ark of the Covenant behind a veil, the latter revealed the incarnation to the whole world.³ Bede began his exegetical career as he was to continue it

¹ Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilisations* (London: Penguin, 2008), pp. 23-9, 440-4; but also James Rives, 'Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple', in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, ed. Jonathan Edmondson et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 145-66.

² E.g. William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely, *Solomon's Temple: Myth and History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007).

³ *Apoc.*, p. 385 'Templum domini quondam in terra positum arcam testamenti sub uelamine mystico clausam tegebat. Nunc autem in ecclesia, quae est templum dei uiui, cuius conuersatio in caelis est, uelo templi ueteris et medio pariete macheriae domini sanguine descisso, arca incarnationis eius toto iam panditur orbi'; 2 Corinthians 6.16, Philippians 3.20 (my translation), Ephesians 2.14.

– convinced of the temple-image’s relevance even in a time and place far distant from the site of ancient Jewish worship. Bede would become one of the most significant intellectual figures in the Latin West of his day; his achievement substantially rests upon the biblical commentaries which he wrote over thirty years, starting with his *Explanation of the Apocalypse*. The temple-image’s place in that extraordinary output grew from occasional references to become the focus of self-consciously ‘novel’ works on Moses’ tabernacle and the temple in Jerusalem.⁴ Bede believed that God had allowed him ‘not only to grasp the ancient offerings...but also to discover new ones beneath the veil’, that is, to build from the patristic tradition an original, and uniquely detailed, Christian exegesis of the temple.⁵

This thesis studies that exegesis in its entirety for the first time. It does so from the conviction that understanding Bede’s use of the temple sheds significant light on the worldview of this most important of early-medieval English authors.⁶ Bede’s significance needs no defence: his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is a major work, the pre-eminent source about early Anglo-Saxon England, earning him acclaim as the Father of English History. But his scriptural commentary reveals much more concerning the contours of Bede’s mind and significance for his own time than does the *Ecclesiastical History* seen in isolation. Exegesis provided the major form of intellectual discourse in the early Middle Ages. Intellectuals rarely wrote free-standing theological or academic treatises in this period because exegesis was an encyclopaedic endeavour, drawing upon

⁴ *Temp.*, p. 144 ‘Verum quia noua quaeque non numquam amplius delectant uisum est mihi opusculum quod de factura templi Dei...condideram tuae sanctitati percurrendum mittere’; trans. Connolly, p. 3.

⁵ *Ezra.*, p. 392 ‘amorem dedisti et auxilium...in thesauro prophetici uoluminis non solum uetera amplectendi uerum et noua sub uelamine ueterum donaria inueniendi’; trans. DeGregorio, p. 226. Matthew 13.52.

⁶ The best basic introduction to Bede and his work is now Scott DeGregorio (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Bede* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). See also George Hardin Brown, *A Companion to Bede* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009) and Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, 2nd edn (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1998).

all spheres of knowledge. Scholars now recognise that ‘exegesis and biblical commentary were often the field [*sic*] where political, philosophical and theological matters were discussed.’⁷ Bede wrote about the temple-image not from antiquarian interest, but convinced of its continuing relevance; as a consequence his use of the image opens a window on what mattered to him about the nature of the world, the Church as an institution and the individual’s relationship with God.

A trilogy of major commentaries on the temple-image dominates Bede’s mature output: *On the Tabernacle*, *On the Temple* and *On Ezra and Nehemiah*. As works of the latter half of Bede’s career these provide an insight into his developed thought and reveal an experienced author experimenting with exegetical tradition. *On the Tabernacle* and *On the Temple* are both formally unusual – thematically organised exegetical treatises, focusing narrowly on the details of the construction of the desert tabernacle and Solomon’s temple.⁸ While *On Ezra and Nehemiah* provides a more traditional line-by-line commentary of an entire book of the Bible, it too broke new ground by dealing with the, previously unexamined, book of Ezra.⁹ A propensity to understand architectural details and descriptions of construction-work as symbolic of the Church unites the trilogy; beginning from the assumption that the temple-image represented the entire

⁷ Ineke van ‘t Spijker, ‘Introduction’, in *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture: the Role of Exegesis in early Christian and Medieval Culture*, ed. Ineke van ‘t Spijker (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 1-12, at 1. Also Thomas O’Loughlin (ed.), *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999); Celia Chazelle and Burton Van Name Edwards (eds), *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003). For the growth in scholarship on early medieval exegesis, compare Jean Leclercq, ‘From Gregory the Great to St Bernard’, in *The Cambridge History of the Bible. Volume 2: The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, ed. G.H.W. Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 183-97, with John J. Contreni, ‘The Patristic Legacy to c.1000’, in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible. Volume 2: From 600-1450*, ed. Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 505-35.

⁸ *On the Tabernacle* deals with the relevant texts from Exodus 24.12-30.21; *On the Temple* draws upon 3 Kings 5-7 (Bede skipped over descriptions of Solomon’s palace as irrelevant to his purposes), with additional material from 2 Paralipomenon 2-4.

⁹ Modern Bibles tend to treat Ezra and Nehemiah as two books, but in the Vulgate they form a single book.

reality of the Church, Bede explored the institutional, personal, historical and spiritual ramifications of the image throughout these commentaries.

While this trilogy alone would justify scholarly interest, it does not exhaust Bede's use of the temple. He dealt with it across different genres – as well as his commentaries, three of Bede's homilies concentrate on the temple: *Homily* II.1 (on John 2.12-22), II.24 (John 10.22-30) and II.25 (Luke 6.43-8); a fourth, *Homily* II.19 (on Luke 1.5-17), also dedicates much space to the image. If Bede's temple-commentaries asserted the relevance of the image to all aspects of the life of the Church, in the homilies Bede spoke directly to his contemporaries of that relevance: 'we ourselves, who come together in the Lord's name, are...his temple'.¹⁰ The homilies may date, along with the temple-trilogy, from Bede's maturity but, as we have seen, Bede's exegesis featured the temple-image from the very beginning. Regardless of subject, his interest in it kept breaking through. Bede noted that Luke's gospel both begins and ends in the temple-precincts – *On Luke* thus returns to the temple-image repeatedly.¹¹ His exegesis of the tower of Babel contains a comparison with the temple of Jerusalem using much of the architectural approach familiar from the temple-commentaries.¹²

No previous Christian author devoted the same degree of sustained focus to the image as Bede did; unsurprisingly, his works on the topic were to consequently prove influential in England and throughout Europe.¹³ His *On the Tabernacle* and *On the Temple* inaugurated

¹⁰ *Hom.*, II.24 p. 359 'ipsi qui in nomine domini conuenimus...templum eius et appellemur et simus'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 242.

¹¹ *Luc.*, pp. 424-5; *Apoc.*, p. 283; see pp. 199-200 below.

¹² *Gen.*, pp. 157-62.

¹³ Iain M. Douglas, 'Bede's *De Templo* and the Commentary on Samuel and Kings by Claudius of Turin', in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Gerald Bonner (London: SPCK, 1976), pp. 325-33; Giuliana Italiani, 'Il "De templo Salomonis" di Beda e il commento ai re di Claudio di Torino', in *Immagini del Medioevo: saggi di cultura mediolatina* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1994), pp. 179-190; Valery V. Petroff, 'The *De Templo* of Bede as the Source of an Ideal Temple Description in Eriugena's *Aulae Siderae*', *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales*, 65 (1998), pp. 97-106; Joanna Kramer, "'Du eart se weallstan":

a new genre of themed exegetical treatises, focusing on biblical structures, which reached its apogee in the twelfth century.¹⁴ The *Glossa Ordinaria* – the great collated biblical commentary of the high Middle Ages – reveals the influence of Bede’s writings on medieval views of the temple. They provided most of the Gloss’s material for the building of the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple and all of the material for Ezra and Nehemiah and the account of the rebuilding of the temple.¹⁵

The importance of Bede’s work on the temple-image in particular mirrored the influence of his exegesis in general.¹⁶ Shortly after his death his monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow already had to respond to a significant demand for Bede’s writings, coming especially from the Anglo-Saxon missionaries at work in continental Europe.¹⁷ The activity of these figures, and that of his fellow-Northumbrian Alcuin, rapidly made Bede a major intellectual influence on the Carolingian renaissance, which in turn fuelled his importance in later Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁸ Bede’s exegesis remained popular up until

Architectural Metaphor and Christological Imagery in the Old English *Christ I* and the Book of Kells’, in *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill*, ed. Charles D. Wright et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 90-112. For the influence of *On the Tabernacle* and *On the Temple*: Arthur G. Holder, ‘Bede’s Commentaries on the Tabernacle and the Temple’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 1987), pp. 141-8.

¹⁴ Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l’Écriture*, 2 parts in 4 vols (Paris: Aubier, 1959-1964), II.1, 406.

¹⁵ Lesley Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 45, 47, 55, 80-1. Modern scholars broadly agree with the compilers of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on the question of Bede’s dominance of the surviving commentary on these biblical verses. See the relevant volumes of the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), pp. 121-36; *1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, ed. Marco Conti (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), pp. 24-56, 303-73.

¹⁶ Dorothy Whitelock, *After Bede*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul’s Church, 1960); J.E. Cross, ‘Bede’s Influence at Home and Abroad: An Introduction’, in *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk & Northumbrian*, ed. L.A.J.R. Houwen and A.A. MacDonald (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1996), pp. 17-29; Brown, *Companion*, pp. 117-34. M.L.W. Laistner and H.H. King, *A Hand List of Bede Manuscripts* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1943) is outdated but still helpful in giving a rough guide to the later distribution of Bede’s works.

¹⁷ M. Tangl (ed.), *Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, MGH Epistolae Selectae 1, 75-6 pp. 156-9, 91 pp. 206-8, 116 pp. 250-2, 125-7 pp. 262-5. Malcolm Parkes, *The Scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul’s Church, 1982), pp. 12-6.

¹⁸ Joyce Hill, *Bede and the Benedictine Reform*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul’s Church, 1998); David Rollason, *Bede and Germany*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul’s Church, 2001); Joshua A. Westgard, ‘Bede and the Continent in the Carolingian Age and beyond’, and Sharon M. Rowley, ‘Bede in later

the birth of Scholasticism and beyond, into the early modern period – unsurprisingly given that he was accorded patristic status.¹⁹ Not only did Bede himself feel connected with the Church Fathers, but Carolingian councils cited him as the *doctor* of modern times.²⁰ When Charlemagne ordered Paul the Deacon to compile a homiliary from the words of the Catholic Fathers, he derived almost a quarter of his material from Bede's writings – more than from any other source.²¹ The Middle Ages paid its supreme complement to Bede: dozens of works which he never actually wrote circulated under his name. Scientific works proved especially prone to gain authority from ascription to him, but the fact that penitentials and large quantities of exegesis shared the same fate indicates Bede's status as a major authority.²²

No one idea or image can encapsulate everything worth understanding about a writer of such stature. But the broad, and substantially original, coverage of the temple-image in Bede's corpus makes it perhaps the best entrance into his worldview. Bede saw the wandering tabernacle and the various permutations of the temple in Jerusalem as closely related, all essentially the same house of God. These Jewish holy sites also contained elaborately-described altars and decorations, and priests dressed in distinctive vestments

Anglo-Saxon England', both in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 201-15 and 216-28, respectively.

¹⁹ Joyce Hill, 'Carolingian Perspectives on the Authority of Bede', in *Innovation and Tradition in the writings of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2006), pp. 227-49; Richard W. Pfaff, 'Bede Among the Fathers? The Evidence from Liturgical Commemoration', *Studia Patristica*, 28 (1993), pp. 225-9.

²⁰ The Council of Aachen in 836 supported its statement that Solomon's temple was a figure of the Church by appealing to the 'eximiorum patrum expositione' – naming in particular 'venerabilis et modernis temporibus doctor admirabilis Beda presbiter': *Concilia Aevi Karolini I*, ed. A. Werminghoff, MGH Legum Sectio 3 Concilia 2, p. 759. For Bede's perspective: Jan Davidse, 'The Sense of History in the Works of the Venerable Bede', *Studi Medievali*, 23 (1982), pp. 647-95, at 654-6; Roger Ray, 'Who Did Bede Think He Was?', in *Innovation and Tradition*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 11-35.

²¹ Cyril Smetana, 'Paul the Deacon's Patristic Anthology', in *The Old English Homily & its Backgrounds*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach and Bernard F. Huppé (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1978), pp. 75-97, at 79-80.

²² Michael Gorman, 'The Canon of Bede's Works and the World of Ps. Bede', *RB*, 111 (2001), pp. 399-445; Charles W. Jones, *Bedae Pseudepigrapha: Scientific Writings Falsely Attributed to Bede* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1939); Allen J. Frantzen, 'The Penitentials Attributed to Bede', *Speculum*, 58 (1983), pp. 573-97. PL 90-5 contains much spurious exegetical material, including commentaries on the Pentateuch and the gospels of Matthew and John.

performing cult acts for the worship of God. This matrix of interlinking images cannot be separated from the idea of the temple complex; thus I use the phrase ‘temple-image’ in this, broader, sense, rather than simply referring to the stones and mortar of a single building. This image combined the static architecture of the temple with the dynamic ritual of its priests, thus allowing Bede to speak about both the eternal reality of the Church and the lived experience of its members through a single, divinely-sanctioned, image.

Addressing such a wide subject in a large body of literature, this thesis, while not claiming to be exhaustive, provides an extensive tour of Bede’s thinking on the temple. I have chosen a thematic structure (focusing on possible interpretations of the temple-image) which moves from the macrocosm of the temple as cosmos, through the temple as Church, to the microcosm of the temple as individual. The impossibility of providing a convincing chronology for the whole corpus of Bede’s works has led me to eschew a chronological approach in the main – though a short diachronic overview of Bede’s use of the temple-image does appear in the final chapter. That overview provides important clues as to the reasons for Bede’s interest in the temple-image, but chronology can retrospectively impose too neat a teleology on a subject. I follow the example of other recent synthetic studies of Bede’s writings, then, in pursuing a thematic approach, while remaining sensitive to issues of chronology²³ – an approach made necessary by the free and open-ended nature of Bede’s exegesis.²⁴

Bede’s methodology opened up, rather than limited, possible meanings. Since this study explores the use to which Bede put the image of the temple, one must start by

²³ Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of Time* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Giovanni Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei Fedeli secondo San Beda: un itinerario di maturità cristiana* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002) initially provides a chronological study of a few of Bede’s works, but the majority of the work follows a synthetic and thematic approach.

²⁴ See pp. 37-39 below.

acknowledging that he did not interpret that image in any one single way. Depending on the circumstances it could mean any of a host of different things. A thematic approach, therefore, succeeds in giving a sense of the multiplicity of meanings and ideas Bede explored through the temple. I have chosen the sequence employed (moving from macrocosm to microcosm) more for its own inner logic than to imply any hierarchy of meaning in Bede's mind. Although I will draw out common threads which link different interpretations of the temple, seeking to sketch out the worldview which underpins Bede's work, to start from the assumption that one single interpretation explains all of his approaches to the temple-image would simply mislead the reader.

Chasing one of Bede's favourite images through its plurality of interpretations means that we can gain important insights into numerous aspects of his thought: from his, comparatively well-studied, ecclesiology to his, almost completely neglected, Christology.²⁵ Scholars have recognised the wide significance of the temple throughout Bede's corpus and my work depends to a great extent upon that completed previously by scholars such as Arthur Holder, Jennifer O'Reilly and Scott DeGregorio.²⁶ But as the first

²⁵ Surveys of Bede's ecclesiology: Johannes Beumer, 'Das Kirchenbild in den Schriftkommentaren Bedas des Ehrwürdigen', *Scholastik*, 28 (1958), pp. 40-56; Edward P. Echlin, 'Bede and the Church', *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 40 (1973), pp. 351-63; Sarah Foot, *Bede's Church*, Jarrow Lecture 2012 (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 2013). I know of no overview of Bede's ideas on Christ, but recent work has made some contributions: Arthur G. Holder, 'The Feminine Christ in Bede's Biblical Commentaries', in *Bède le Vénérable entre tradition et postérité/The Venerable Bede. Tradition and Posterity*, ed. Stephane Lebecq et al. (Lille: Université Charles-de-Gaulle, 2005), pp. 109-18; *idem*, 'Christ as Incarnate Wisdom in Bede's Commentary on the Song of Songs', in *Innovation and Tradition*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 169-88.

²⁶ E.g. Arthur G. Holder, 'New Treasures and Old in Bede's "De Tabernaculo" and "De Templo"', *RB*, 99 (1989) pp. 237-49; *idem*, 'Allegory and History in Bede's Interpretation of Sacred Architecture', *American Benedictine Review*, 40 (1989), pp. 115-31; *idem*, 'The Venerable Bede on the Mysteries of Our Salvation', *American Benedictine Review*, 42 (1991), pp. 140-62; *idem*, 'The Mosaic Tabernacle in Early Christian Exegesis', *Studia Patristica*, 25 (1993), pp. 101-6. All the above are based on Holder's doctorate. Jennifer O'Reilly, 'Introduction', in *Bede: On the Temple*, trans. Seán Connolly (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), pp. xxvii-lv; *eadem*, 'The Library of Scripture: Views from Vivarium and Wearmouth-Jarrow', in *New Offerings, Ancient Treasures: Studies in Medieval Art for George Henderson*, ed. Paul Binski and William Noel (Stroud: Sutton, 2001), pp. 3-39; *eadem*, 'The Multitude of Isles and the Cornerstone: Topography, Exegesis, and the Identity of the Angli in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*', in *Anglo-Saxon Traces*, ed. Jane Roberts and Leslie Webster (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011), pp. 201-27. Scott DeGregorio, "'Nostrorum socordiam temporum': the Reforming Impulse of Bede's Later Exegesis", *EME*, 11 (2002), pp. 107-22; *idem*, 'Bede's *In Ezram et*

thematic synthesis of Bede's use of the temple-image my thesis makes an important new contribution. Across many scriptural commentaries Bede would often repeat or contradict himself; only the holistic approach adopted in this thesis allows us to see which of the writer's statements were exceptional and which part of Bede's long-term worldview. We might understand Bede's condemnation of constructing rich churches differently, for example, when aware that he also interpreted the temple as symbolising the church-building.²⁷

This thesis argues, therefore, that Bede's temple is a multi-faceted image which, nonetheless, teaches us much about the structure of Bede's thought. Across different texts the temple-image reveals the consistent importance of unity to Bede's worldview and the theological importance of Christ as the guarantor and enabler of that unity.

Bede's use of the temple does not provide access to the purely personal thinking of one mind, however exceptional. It arose from a long-standing Christian tradition and, I argue, an immediate environment of monastic discourse and exegetical discussion. In other words, context matters. This thesis consistently aims to set Bede's statements in their context, especially, though not exclusively, that at Wearmouth-Jarrow.

Luckily we possess a contemporary representation of the temple-image which we can compare with Bede's interpretation. The Bible created at Wearmouth-Jarrow during Bede's own lifetime, known as the Codex Amiatinus, contains a magnificent image of the tabernacle in the desert on one bifolium.²⁸ This provides important evidence for interest in and engagement with the temple-image in the religious community to which Bede belonged. Reading Bede's work in relationship with the codex helps us to

Neemiam and the Reform of the Northumbrian Church', *Speculum*, 79 (2004), pp. 1-25. For more on DeGregorio's work: Chapter 4 below.

²⁷ See pp. 207-8, 214-20 below.

²⁸ Florence, Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Amiatino 1, fols 6v-7r/IIv-IIIr. For a full discussion of the codex with bibliography: pp. 88-97 below.

understand something of the factors forming Bede's thought on the temple. By offering a rare insight into the thought-world of Wearmouth-Jarrow which does not come from the pen of the monastery's most famous member, the codex allows us to catch glimpses of the ways in which communal interpretation and ideology may have influenced Bede – thus potentially affecting our understanding of Bede as an author and an individual.

The importance of contextualising Bede's writings with reference to the books and artefacts he knew, the events and institutions which shaped him, arises from the fact that, in truth, we know very little about Bede the man.²⁹ Central to our knowledge is that he entered Wearmouth-Jarrow at the age of seven and spent the rest of his life (about fifty-five years) there. If we hope to understand Bede as a thinker we can never afford to forget the institutional environment in which he lived. The importance of seeing Bede in a communal context arises from the fact that the literature concerning him has often been shaped by the ideal of the heroic individual, the genius, the 'great man'. Research on Bede presents something of a paradox – although the subject of a long and distinguished tradition of English-language scholarship, Bede has very rarely been studied as a religious thinker until quite recently.³⁰ The scholar who writes about Bede as an exegete then both inherits a large body of literature and simultaneously works in a relatively recent area of research.

Historiographical Overview

Within the limits of this introduction a full analysis of the long tradition of writing about Bede cannot be undertaken. I have, consequently, chosen to focus on two particular themes in the modern historiography of Bede and to trace their development over the past

²⁹ N.J. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in context* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 6-20.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-40; Allen J. Frantzen, 'The Englishness of Bede, from then to now', in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 229-42.

century or so. These are: the image of Bede the man; and the scholarly engagement with the religious aspects of Bede's writings, that is, with Bede as a theologian and exegete. Both provide particularly important and relevant backgrounds to this thesis.

The link between the study of Bede's work and the celebration of a certain image of Bede the man has long existed, and its longevity reveals the power of many ideas concerning Bede's personality. The influence of Charles Plummer, Bede's first great modern editor and commentator, remains particularly important for framing, at the dawn of the twentieth century, how the monk came to be interpreted. A wide and sensitive reader of Bede's corpus, Plummer's reading convinced him that he had gained an insight into the author's nature.³¹ He derived a clear picture of a humble, pious, hard-working, sensible, doggedly English figure: 'the very model of the saintly scholar-priest; a type in which the English Church has never, thank God, been deficient'.³² In part Plummer may have had grounds for seeing Bede's writings as a window on the author's personality; but those writings also reflected an awful lot of Plummer and his contemporary interests back at him. His keenness, as chaplain of an Oxford college, for the virtue of intellectual humility seems to explain his conviction that it was central to Bede's nature.³³

This image of Bede, however, and the related certainty that the modern scholar could know Bede as a man, did not belong to Charles Plummer alone. It dominated scholarship on Bede in the early twentieth century and has had a long influence up until very recently. This image of the individual towered over his works, even though it looks, retrospectively, like nothing more than the personification of the virtues (and sometimes

³¹ Charles Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), I, p. iii.

³² *Ibid.*, I, pp. lxxviii-lxxix.

³³ *Ibid.*, I, p. lxvi; Charles Plummer, *Intellectual Humility: A Sermon preached before the University of Oxford on Quinquagesima Sunday February 25, 1900* (Oxford: Horace Hart, 1900), esp. pp. 11-3. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Bede and Plummer', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. Bonner, pp. 366-85.

vices) associated with the devout Christian, the scholar and the Englishman.³⁴ Bede was brilliant, but unoriginal, deeply religious, but with the historian's commitment to truth. This image, that of a man who embodied timeless qualities, meant that historians frequently presented Bede as at one remove from his own barbarous age. The great power of this vision can be seen from the fact that historians, including those not themselves Bede experts, could speak of him with absolute certainty of knowing him as a man.³⁵

The dominant role of the study of Bede's historical writings in the earlier twentieth century substantially explains this focus upon his exceptionalism and timelessness. Increased interest in, and access to, his more clearly religious writings (especially with the publication of new critical editions from the 1950s onwards) had an effect on this.³⁶ The institution of the Jarrow Lecture in 1958, held annually on the Friday closest to the Feast of St Bede, indicates the great respect for Bede the saintly scholar. But the lecture series helped to keep interest in Bede fresh and opened up the study of new areas in Bedan studies, with Gerald Bonner giving the first lecture on Bede's exegesis in 1966.³⁷ This fitted into a process of putting Bede in increasingly wider contexts (not just the histories, but the exegesis, not just England, but all of Europe), noticeable also in the volume produced to commemorate the thirteen-hundredth anniversary of his birth.³⁸

³⁴ E.g. Herbert Hensley Henson, 'Introduction', in *Bede: His Life, Times, and Writings*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), pp. xiii-xvi, at xiv.

³⁵ David Knowles, *Saints and Scholars: Twenty-five Medieval Portraits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 12-8; R. W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), pp. 1-8. See Ward, *Venerable Bede*, p. 2: 'it is possible to know Bede more intimately than any other man of his time.'

³⁶ Plummer, unusually, had read all of Bede's works and stressed the importance of the theology in understanding the history: *Opera Historica*, I, p. ii.

³⁷ The Jarrow Lectures for 1958-1993 are brought together in Michael Lapidge (ed.), *Bede and His World*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), but in this thesis I shall cite all lectures individually.

³⁸ Gerald Bonner, 'Introduction', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. Bonner, pp. 1-4. See Peter Brown, 'What's in a name?', <<http://www.ox.ac.uk/pdf/brown_what_in_name.pdf>> (accessed 10/04/2013), pp. 10-1.

Increased contextualisation meant that the *Ecclesiastical History*'s failure always to reflect accurately reality became increasingly evident, along with the mismatch between much in Bede's thought and the rest of Anglo-Saxon culture. As a result even when a highly sympathetic reader of Bede came to write a major study of Christianity in early Anglo-Saxon England in the 1970s, he saw the monk as primarily a religious writer, aiming to build up the Church, rather than straightforwardly to record truth.³⁹ A new image of Bede the man was forged, that of him as an idealist – an interpretation perhaps associated with Patrick Wormald above all.⁴⁰ This perspective saw Bede as an individual opposed to the general culture of his own day; driven by a devotion to Christianity, the monk had striven to change a materialist society according to a higher set of values. No longer a simple truth-teller, rather than describing reality, Bede had sought to reshape it. Alan Thacker built on this tradition in revealing the reformist impulses behind much of Bede's work.⁴¹

This increased sensitivity to the degree to which Bede differed from modern historians combined with general changes in scholarly taste to emphasise the importance of Bede as a creative author. The linguistic turn and postmodern mood of the 1980s informed Walter Goffart's controversial *The Narrators of Barbarian History*.⁴² Goffart placed Bede's historical literature within the context of other contemporary Northumbrian writings and saw these works as part of a textual battle in a wider war involving the Church politics of

³⁹ Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (London: Batsford, 1991; 1st edn: 1972). The work of James Campbell was also important in exploring the purposes and flaws of the *HE*: James Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London: Hambledon Press, 1986), pp. 1-84.

⁴⁰ The most important expression of Wormald's interpretation is probably his 1978 'Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', repr. in *The Times of Bede*, ed. Stephen Baxter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 30-105. Sarah Foot, 'Patrick Wormald as Historian', in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, ed. Stephen Baxter et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 11-27.

⁴¹ Alan Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal of Reform' in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. Patrick Wormald et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 130-53.

⁴² Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon*, 2nd edn (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), with comments on the first edition's (1988) reception at pp. xxvii-xxviii.

the time. Few genuinely contested the conclusion that Bede as an historian had sometimes misled; but Goffart's image of the man proved divisive – in this case the image of a self-consciously political and partisan historian. Many of the subsequent debates over Goffart's thesis orbited around the question of whether Bede was worldly or idealistic. Both sides actually agreed (much more than they seem to have realised) on the essential point that Bede could not always be trusted – the question remained whether politics or religion dominated his outlook.⁴³

Goffart based his approach entirely on reading Bede's historical works – the refusal to set them in the context of the larger, especially exegetical, corpus now appears rather old-fashioned. At the same time, the image of Bede as idealist tended to over-emphasise his distance from contemporary society. The recent flourishing of scholarship on Bede has tended towards integrating both approaches: portraying Bede as a devout Christian who cared about the realities of contemporary affairs, and all of whose work (exegesis and history) shared a common aim of promoting ecclesiastical reform.⁴⁴ The other main thrust of contemporary Bedan studies emphasises the originality of his work. Close study of the scriptural commentaries since the 1980s has allowed the old belief in Bede's lack of originality to be cast aside and given new life to the even older respect for Bede as an exceptional writer. The new Bede is more original and more socially-engaged than the old, but he remains a genius.⁴⁵

⁴³ Henry Mayr-Harting, 'Bede's Patristic Thinking as an Historian', in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1994), pp. 367-74. Goffart has written a number of responses to criticisms: e.g. 'Bede's History in a Harsher Climate', in *Innovation and Tradition*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 203-26. Notice how the debate gravitates towards the implications for Bede's morality: Mayr-Harting protested that Bede was not 'Machiavellian' (p. 373); Goffart felt criticised for not portraying Bede as 'innocent' (p. 207).

⁴⁴ This viewpoint is not simply a post-Goffart synthesis, however, as its origins lie in Thacker, 'Ideal of Reform'.

⁴⁵ Scott DeGregorio, 'Introduction: The New Bede', in *Innovation and Tradition*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 1-10.

Much, therefore, has changed in the representation of Bede since the days of Charles Plummer; but a common thread running throughout the period has assigned great importance to Bede as an individual. Of course, one can argue that recent studies do a much better job of locating Bede in his wider world than those of the past. However, the increased focus on Bede as an innovator has also fed the traditional bias towards thinking of him as exceptional. The general belief that his works give access to Bede himself, his insights and ideas, has in fact grown with the recent emphasis on originality. Previous work has investigated the possibility that the *Ecclesiastical History* represents something other than Bede's unalloyed personal opinion, but little comparable analysis of the exegesis exists.⁴⁶ The question of whether the uses of the temple-image which we find in his writings should be entirely ascribed to Bede alone is one to which this thesis returns on a number of occasions.

From the Reformation onwards the most striking use of Bede as a religious writer has been to promote the claims of one or other Christian confession.⁴⁷ Even into the twentieth century Bede was used to establish the inherently Roman Catholic or Anglican nature of early English Christianity.⁴⁸ Of course, the grounds for contemporary confessional debates tended to dominate such uses of his writings, sometimes obscuring his own theological interests. Bedan studies have always attracted a large number of scholars in religious communities or holy orders – and it would be exceptionally foolish to deny the value of many of these scholars' contributions. However, even as late as the 1940s and the publication of the first major study of his religious thought, a present-centred

⁴⁶ Higham, *(Re-)reading Bede*, pp. 194-7; D.P. Kirby, 'King Ceolwulf of Northumbria and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *Studia Celtica*, 14-15 (1979-1980), pp. 168-73. But see *idem*, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum: Its Contemporary Setting*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 1992), which concludes (p. 15) that the *HE* is Bede's personal, 'idiosyncratic', take on Anglo-Saxon history.

⁴⁷ John William Houghton, 'St. Bede among the Controversialists: A Survey', *American Benedictine Review*, 50 (1999), pp. 397-422.

⁴⁸ E.g. G.F. Browne, *The Venerable Bede* (London: SPCK, 1879), esp. pp. 132-8; Bernard Capelle, 'Le rôle théologique de Bède le Vénéral', *Studia Anselmiana*, 6 (1936), pp. 1-40.

confessional viewpoint still framed the approach to Bede's theological writings.⁴⁹ Indeed for many scholars contemporary judgements led them to ignore the most explicitly religious writings in the Bedan corpus.

The allegorical method of exegesis fell out of fashion in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scriptural commentary; scholars often dismissed Bede's commentaries as dull, silly even, and not worthy of serious study. They sought to avoid wasting time on works for which they had so little sympathy.⁵⁰ Even the classic English-language monograph on medieval biblical studies skipped over the early Middle Ages as quickly as possible; Beryl Smalley preferred to focus on the origins of the modern, text-critical study of the Bible from the twelfth century onwards.⁵¹ The overwhelming interest in Bede's historical writings exacerbated this bias against the study of his exegesis. If Bede as a theologian had nothing to contribute to the present day, as an historian scholars deemed him to be proto-modern. Such a narrow focus meant that Bede's use of miracles stories disturbingly contradicted historians' image of him as an historical rather than religious thinker.⁵²

Protestant attitudes to scriptural study may have partially inspired the antipathy to allegorical exegesis amongst Anglophone scholars. Certainly the study of Bede as a theologian benefited from the increased interest in patristic and early medieval theology

⁴⁹ Mary Thomas Aquinas Carroll, *The Venerable Bede: His Spiritual Teachings* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1946), studied the entirety of Bede's theological corpus but framed the results in terms of the scholastic tradition of systematic theology; see pp. 107-31 for her contribution to the long-running confessional debate over whether Bede believed in transubstantiation.

⁵⁰ Claude Jenkins, 'Bede as Exegete and Theologian', in *Life, Times and Writings*, ed. Thompson, pp. 152-200.

⁵¹ Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 1-36 – in this edition Smalley acknowledged the limitations of her original (1940) approach: p. viii. Glenn W. Olsen, 'From Bede to the Anglo-Saxon Presence in the Carolingian Empire', *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 32 (1984), pp. 305-82, at 330-4, contrasts Smalley critically with Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*.

⁵² Hence the large bibliography on Bede and the miraculous: Bertram Colgrave, 'Bede's Miracle Stories', in *Life, Times and Writings*, ed. Thompson, pp. 201-29; Benedicta Ward, 'Miracles and History: A Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories used by Bede', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. Bonner, pp. 70-6; William D. McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1994). For the problems with applying a positivist view of history to Bede's work: Jan Davidse, 'On Bede as Christian Historian', in *Beda Venerabilis*, ed. Houwen and MacDonald, pp. 1-15.

driven initially by continental Roman Catholic writers, such as Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou and Jean Leclercq.⁵³ The latter's work especially generated much scholarly interest in a specifically monastic spirituality, centred on the liturgy of the Holy Office and *lectio divina*.⁵⁴ Such developments throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century combined with the growth of the image of Bede as an idealist, outlined above, to create a new interest in Bede's exegetical and religious writings. We should note, however, that frequently non-British scholars showed the greatest tendency to study Bede for his theology; British academics remained likely to use the exegesis as a way of helping them understand Bede as an historian.⁵⁵

Not that such an approach should be denigrated. Scholars like Henry Mayr-Harting and Roger Ray, by asserting the links between the *Ecclesiastical History* and Bede's commentaries, laid the groundwork for a really serious study of Bede's work as an integrated whole.⁵⁶ By the 1980s usable critical editions of the majority of Bede's exegesis became available for, effectively, the first time, which resulted in a flourishing in the study of these texts. The first major studies of Bede's use of the temple-image appeared in this context. Arthur Holder shone light on the sources and themes of *On the*

⁵³ E.g. Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*; Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, trans. Wulstan Hibberd (London: Burns & Oates, 1960).

⁵⁴ Esp. Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catherine Misrahi, 3rd edn (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982). Also Benedicta Ward, 'The Spirituality of St Cuthbert', in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community until AD1200*, ed. Gerald Bonner et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), pp. 65-76.

⁵⁵ Compare, for example, Claudio Leonardi, 'Il Venerabile Beda e la Cultura del Secolo VIII', *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 20 (1973), pp. 603-58, with Judith McClure, 'Bede's Old Testament Kings', in *Ideal and Reality*, ed. Wormald et al., pp. 76-98. See Scott DeGregorio, 'Explorations of Spirituality in the Writings of the Venerable Bede, King Alfred, and Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, 1999), pp. 37-9, on the paucity of literature on Bede as a spiritual writer.

⁵⁶ Mayr-Harting, 'Patristic Thinking'; *idem*, *The Venerable Bede, The Rule of St. Benedict, and Social Class*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 1976); Roger D. Ray, 'Bede, the Exegete, as Historian', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. Bonner, pp. 125-40; *idem*, 'What do we know about Bede's Commentaries?', *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 49 (1982), pp. 5-20

Tabernacle and *On the Temple*, exploring Bede's pastoral theology in particular.⁵⁷

Jennifer O'Reilly built upon Mayr-Harting's initial contribution by exploring the rich patristic underpinning of Bede's historical work, revealing how the themes of the *Ecclesiastical History* and *On the Temple* overlap.⁵⁸ Both these contributions informed Scott DeGregorio's study of *On Ezra and Nehemiah* as a commentary reflective of the pastoral and reforming issues significant in Bede's later works.⁵⁹ The attempt to understand the monk's different writings as an integrated whole clearly has provided an important context for all this work on his exegesis.

This thesis, with its aim of undertaking a synthetic study of a particular scriptural image across Bede's work, clearly fits into this current trend in the historiography. Much of the work of the past two decades has been devoted to elucidating individual commentaries – necessary work considering the substantial neglect of Bede's religious works up until quite recently. But that does mean that scholars have undertaken few large-scale studies of any single idea in Bede's corpus. This thesis attempts to put the theory of the integrity of that corpus into practice. We must also acknowledge that much work still remains to be done on many aspects of Bede's theology. The increased interest in religion, arising from the influence of anthropology and cultural history, which has marked Late Antique studies, amongst many other historical fields, has influenced early medievalists.⁶⁰ But while Late Antiquity possesses a rich literature on patristic theology, early medieval religion still requires much attention. In examining Christology and ecclesiology as part

⁵⁷ Holder, 'Commentaries on the Tabernacle and the Temple'.

⁵⁸ O'Reilly, 'Introduction', esp. pp. xxxiv-xxxix.

⁵⁹ DeGregorio, 'Reforming Impulse', pp. 113-21; *idem*, 'Reform of the Northumbrian Church'.

⁶⁰ Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) – an overview of the transition between antiquity and the Middle Ages by the doyen of Late Antique scholars, with a typical interest in intellectual and religious factors. Note that Brown's early work influenced Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*'.

of this thesis, I focus on theological issues which mattered just as much to Bede as they did to Augustine.

Bede's World

Of course, Bede lived in a world very different from that of Augustine. With an unbroken line of Christian kings only beginning in 634 at the accession of Oswald, Northumbria had been converted comparatively recently and the process probably continued for some time still.⁶¹ Some scholars have traditionally looked for signs of pagan survivals into the eighth century and have portrayed the process of Christianisation as shallow and ineffective in changing the lives of the masses.⁶² But we should not see everything pre-Christian as necessarily anti-Christian; Christianity adapted in the face of new cultures just as much as it forced cultures to adapt to it, but adaptation does not equate to dilution.⁶³ Certainly some of the clergy, Bede among them, were not slow to condemn practices which fell outside their vision of correct Christianity. But no real evidence exists to suggest that the people who participated in such practices considered themselves anything other than Christian.⁶⁴

While organised polytheism probably presented no living threat to the Church during the lifetime of Bede, the level of catechetical instruction no doubt varied widely throughout the Northumbrian countryside and then, as now, the Church would have contained a wide

⁶¹ Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, remains perhaps the most readable account of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. For more recent interpretations, from different view-points: N. J. Higham, *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Marilyn Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons c.597-c.700: Discourses of Life, Death and Afterlife* (London: Continuum, 2009).

⁶² E.g. Rosalind Hill, 'Bede and the Boors', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. Bonner, pp. 93-105.

⁶³ I am greatly influenced by R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1-17. Also James C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). The Roman missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons seem to have followed a particularly non-confrontational and syncretic strategy: R.A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. G.J. Cuming (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 29-38.

⁶⁴ John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 166-81.

diversity of attitudes to both belief and practice. People probably accessed the reality of Christianity in a diversity of ways, mirrored in the varying interpretations of modern historians. For some, standing crosses might have represented displays of patristic learning, for others signs of wealth and power and for yet others they could have had supernatural powers.⁶⁵ In this way, serving a diversity of needs and interests, Christianity came to be rooted in Northumbrian society. The evidence indeed suggests that the Anglo-Saxon élites keenly embraced the exotic new religion which had come to them from the wider world, and made it work for them within their own context.⁶⁶

The major growth of monasticism which marked Bede's own lifetime provides one measure of the zeal with which the aristocratic rulers of Northumbria, like many of the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, took to Christianity. The world of religious communities which Bede and his contemporaries inhabited was financed by noble and royal wealth. Investing substantially in such communities had many advantages for the aristocracy. Monasteries combined devotional and commemorative functions with an innovative legal status, whereby landed resources could be retained for eternity – at least in theory.⁶⁷ As in Frankia and Ireland, monasticism in late seventh-century Anglo-Saxon England came

⁶⁵ The diversity of approaches to standing crosses is emblematic of the diversity of interpretations of medieval religion. Paul Meyvaert, 'A New Perspective on the Ruthwell Cross: *Ecclesia and Vita Monastica*', in *The Ruthwell Cross: Papers from the Colloquium sponsored by the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, 8 December 1989*, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 95-166; Fred Orton and Ian Wood with Clare A. Lees, *Fragments of History: Rethinking the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Monuments* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), esp. p. 202; Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 'Converting the Anglo-Saxon Landscape: Crosses and their Audiences' in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Eamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 407-29.

⁶⁶ Brown, *Western Christendom*, pp. 340-4. Christianity influenced Anglo-Saxon cultural and religious practices even before conversion: Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 51-7.

⁶⁷ For the variety of reasons for founding a religious house: Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c.600-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 77-87. Much work has been done on the élite engagement with Northumbrian monasticism, especially in relation to land-tenure: e.g. Patrick Wormald, 'Bede and the Conversion of England: The Charter Evidence', repr. in *Times of Bede*, ed. Baxter, pp. 135-66; Ian Wood, 'Monasteries and the Geography of Power in the Age of Bede', *Northern History*, 45 (2008), pp. 11-25. Monastic communities often proved less than eternal: *VCP*, VIII pp. 180-1.

to further the prestige and spiritual and material wealth of noble families.⁶⁸ Ruling dynasties, never sure of their worldly permanence, tried to gain some part of the sacred and the eternal through houses designed for burial and memorial purposes. We see this most clearly perhaps in those establishments, containing both male and female religious, ruled over by princess-abbesses.⁶⁹

As a consequence of this material dependence upon the aristocracy, Northumbrian religious communities seem to have been primarily aristocratic in terms of personnel and culture. Élite pastimes, including the pleasures of the table and the hunt, proved popular in these societies.⁷⁰ Monastic egalitarianism had to deal with patrician pride;⁷¹ in fact there is no recorded senior Northumbrian cleric or religious for whom peasant birth can be proved.⁷² The difficulty of differentiating religious and secular households of the time from the archaeological evidence alone proves the similarities between them.⁷³ One reason why monasticism proved so amenable to Anglo-Saxon culture may well have been the similarities between it and the close-knit, single-sex communities in which the native warrior élite spent their youth.⁷⁴ However, we should not assume that secular and religious households differed not at all; even the inhabitants of the worldliest

⁶⁸ Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 84-91; Brown, *Western Christendom*, pp. 252-5; Richard Sharpe, 'Some Problems concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), pp. 230-70, esp. 258-9, 263-5.

⁶⁹ Barbara Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London: Continuum, 2003). For a discussion of female monasticism at this time more generally: Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women. Volume I: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 35-60.

⁷⁰ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 236-46; James Campbell, 'Elements in the Background to the Life of St Cuthbert and his Early Cult', in *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner et al., pp. 3-19; Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*', pp. 50-8.

⁷¹ Mayr-Harting, *Rule of St Benedict, and Social Class*. Religious communities probably often included servants and slaves: Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 179-83.

⁷² Caedmon was probably the sole peasant named by Bede, only becoming a monk thanks to miraculous powers of song: *HE*, IV.24 pp. 414-21.

⁷³ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 96, 247-8; Christopher Loveluck, 'Caedmon's World: Secular and Monastic Lifestyles and Estate Organization in Northern England, A.D. 650-900', in *Caedmon's Hymn and Material Culture in the World of Bede*, ed. Allen J. Frantzen and John Hines (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2007), pp. 150-90.

⁷⁴ Cf. Brown, *Western Christendom*, p. 348.

establishments seem to have recognised the existence of a distinctive monastic way-of-life.⁷⁵

Historians have often distinguished Bede's Wearmouth-Jarrow from the mass of such aristocratic establishments. Certainly the evidence suggests that it came much closer to an ideal of Benedictine piety than most Northumbrian houses.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, we should consider whether, at the time, distinguishing Wearmouth-Jarrow materially from a family-based religious community may have proved difficult.⁷⁷ Its founder Benedict Biscop was noble-born and many of his assistants and successors seem to have come from amongst his kin; there is even a possibility that Bede himself was a relative.⁷⁸ Both establishments had been founded with royal support and Jarrow seems to have belonged to a network of high-status sites near the mouth of the Tyne. The monastery probably overlooked a busy harbour in which it may have had an economic stake, and certainly controlled extensive land-holdings.⁷⁹ Bede and his abbots communicated with generations of Northumbrian kings, regularly engaging in forms of gift-exchange indicative of élite relationships.⁸⁰ The one thing which set Wearmouth-Jarrow apart from other houses was probably its wealth and size.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 105-7.

⁷⁶ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 22, 55; Patrick Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', repr. in *Times of Bede*, ed. Baxter, pp. 3-29.

⁷⁷ Ian Wood, 'The Gifts of Wearmouth and Jarrow', in *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 89-115, at 95-6.

⁷⁸ Ian Wood, 'The Foundation of Bede's Wearmouth-Jarrow', in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 84-96, at 88; Alan Thacker, 'Bede and the Ordering of Understanding', in *Innovation and Tradition*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 37-63, at 39-40. The evidence is contested: Brown, *Companion*, p. 9. Bede certainly was born on land which later became part of the monastery: *HE*, V.24 pp. 566-7.

⁷⁹ For the location of Jarrow: Ian Wood, 'Bede's Jarrow', in *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes*, ed. Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp. 67-84; *idem*, *The origins of Jarrow: the monastery, the slake and Ecgfrith's minster* (Jarrow: Bede's World, 2008), pp. 18-28. Royal support and endowment: *HA*, 4 pp. 367-8, 7 p. 370; *VCeol.*, 7 p. 390, 11 p. 391; *Hom.*, I.13 p. 91.

⁸⁰ *HA*, 9 p. 373, 15 p. 380; *VCeol.*, 12 p. 392; *HE*, praef. pp. 2-3.

⁸¹ Foot, *Monastic Life*, p. 174, estimates that most religious communities numbered between five and twenty members at this time. For doubts as to the claim that Wearmouth-Jarrow had six hundred monks in 716 (*HA*, 17 p. 382; *VCeol.*, 33 p. 400): Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 172-3.

Bede's own community thus lay in the mainstream of Northumbrian monasticism; however, diversity, not uniformity, defined that mainstream.⁸² The imposition of Benedictine seclusion as the one correct form of monasticism had to await the tenth-century reform movement in England.⁸³ Abbots chose the rules for their communities and the word *monasterium* seems to have referred to a whole variety of institutions whose inhabitants differed in gender, clerical status and lifestyle.⁸⁴ While Bede did not believe that all such communities deserved the name, the modern scholar should be cautious of differentiating 'real' from 'false' monasteries.⁸⁵ Perhaps because of their very adaptability and diversity, these establishments could meet many societal functions: the high-status functions outlined above were important, but religious houses also existed as central places in the landscape, with economic, pastoral and charitable roles.⁸⁶

This variety in the forms which religious life took in Bede's Northumbria mirrors, and is in part explained by, a wider diversity in the culture of that time and place. The late seventh and early eighth centuries saw a cultural efflorescence in Northumbria, marked by an artistic style combining Anglo-Saxon, Irish, Roman, Frankish and more exotic features.⁸⁷ The art-historical term for this cosmopolitan style, Insular, has come to

⁸² Ibid., pp. 10, 48-60.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 12-20.

⁸⁴ For this reason some scholars prefer to call early Anglo-Saxon religious houses *minsters* rather than monasteries: Foot, *Monastic Life*, p. 6; Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, p. 3. For a defence of the term *monastery*: Wood, 'Geography of Power', p. 13 n. 20. For contemporary terminology: Sarah Foot, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: a Review of Terminology', in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), pp. 212-25.

⁸⁵ *EpEcg.*, 10 pp. 413-4 'sunt loca innumera, ut nouimus omnes, stilo stultissimo in monasteriorum ascripta uocabulum, sed nichil prorsus monasticae conuersationis habentia'.

⁸⁶ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 283-336; Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 141-65, 251-61. The 1990s saw a major debate over the role of monastic communities in pastoral care in this period, but their general importance to society is now widely recognized: see e.g. Sarah Foot, 'The Role of the Minster in Earlier Anglo-Saxon Society', and David Rollason, 'Monasteries and Society in Early Medieval Northumbria', both in *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain: Proceedings of the 1994 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Benjamin Thompson (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1999), pp. 35-58 and 59-74 respectively. Also p. 108 below.

⁸⁷ Carol Neuman de Vegvar, *The Northumbrian Renaissance: A Study in the Transmission of Style* (London: Associated University Presses, 1987); Michelle P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society,*

indicate the shared culture of the British Isles during this period – a culture which we cannot neatly subdivide on straightforwardly ethnic or national lines.⁸⁸ Northumbria especially was open to a number of influences. For roughly thirty years, until the Synod of Whitby in 664, the Northumbrian Church belonged to the Columban network controlled from Iona.⁸⁹ A number of key aristocratic figures, including Bishop Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop, imported ‘Roman’ ecclesiastical concepts and promoted an ideology of unity with the wider Catholic Church.⁹⁰ Northumbria lay at the edge of Europe, but trade and economic exchange linked it to continental routes which carried wealth, art and ideas over long distances.⁹¹

While older studies presented this mixture of cultures primarily in terms of a conflict between ‘Celtic’ and ‘Roman’ churches, recent scholarship emphasises synthesis – a ‘middle party’ seems to have occupied the Northumbrian mainstream.⁹² The religious communities mentioned by Bede seem to have been largely connected by networks of personnel and ideas.⁹³ Bede is often seen as viewing Wilfrid with distaste but Ceolfrith (abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow for much of Bede’s life) had belonged to Wilfrid’s monastic *familia* and the bishop himself clearly visited the monastery as a friend on

Spirituality & the Scribe, (London: British Library, 2003); David Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100: Creation and Destruction of a Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 122-57.

⁸⁸ For the unity (and diversity) of the British Isles: Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘Conclusion’, in *After Rome*, ed. Thomas Charles-Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 259-70, at 266-70.

⁸⁹ Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 41-60; Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 308-43.

⁹⁰ While support for Rome is sometimes represented as a local drive to replace foreign ecclesiasts with natives, it also included Irish *Romani* (such as Rónán: *HE*, III.25 pp. 294-7) – much of the Church in Ireland outside the Ionan network already having accepted the Roman Easter.

⁹¹ Richard Morris, *Journeys from Jarrow*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul’s Church, 2004). For Northumbria’s trade links with the continent: J.R. Maddicott, ‘Two Frontier States: Northumbria and Wessex, c. 650-750’, in *The Medieval State: Essays Presented to James Campbell*, ed. J.R. Maddicott and D.M. Palliser (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), pp. 25-45, at 38-40.

⁹² Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 336-43.

⁹³ Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, pp. 164-7.

occasion.⁹⁴ While Lindisfarne's connections to Iona might seem to have set it against the ultra-Roman Wearmouth-Jarrow, in fact the evidence points to close co-operation between the two monasteries in the early eighth century.⁹⁵ Even Iona's great abbot Adomnán visited the community in Bede's own lifetime and was remembered with warmth by both Bede and Ceolfrith.⁹⁶ When Northumbria gained its ecclesiastical independence from Iona at Whitby in 664 interest in the island monastery did not end; Anglo-Saxons continued to seek the conversion of the Columbans to Roman ways through domination or persuasion.⁹⁷

We should not impose an image of irenic Christian charity upon the real divisions in the Northumbrian Church, however. The wealth and aristocratic links of most monasteries would have naturally drawn them into the world of politics. The arguments between Ionan and Roman-leaning clergy left genuine wounds and these were exacerbated by the upheaval of Wilfrid's career: twice expelled from his episcopal office, he met attempts by kings to wrest some of the vast wealth of his monastic network from him with successful appeals to papal judgement, which the Anglo-Saxon hierarchy, in turn, mostly ignored.⁹⁸ These factors seem all to have led to a real sense of insecurity and, therefore, to competition between the major Northumbrian religious communities during Bede's lifetime. The attempts to form cults around major figures like Cuthbert and Wilfrid, and

⁹⁴ *VCeol.*, 3 p. 389; *HE*, IV.19 pp. 390-3. Ian Wood, *The Most Holy Abbot Ceolfrid*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 1995), pp. 6-7.

⁹⁵ Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 53-66, 407-8; *VCP*, prol. pp. 142-7.

⁹⁶ *HE*, V.21 pp. 550-1. See Barbara Yorke, 'Adomnán at the court of King Aldfrith', and Clare Stancliffe, "'Charity with Peace": Adomnán and the Easter Question', both in *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, Lawmaker, Peacemaker*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding et al. (Dublin: Four Courts, 2010), pp. 36-50 and 51-69, respectively.

⁹⁷ See Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 432-5.

⁹⁸ See D.P. Kirby (ed.), *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham* (Newcastle: Oriel Press, 1974); Eric John, 'The Social and Political Problems of the Early English Church', *Agricultural History Review*, 18 Supplement (1970), pp. 39-63.

especially the hagiographies associated with such cults, form the best evidence of such competition.⁹⁹

We can see this interplay of unity and division played out in Bede's own monastery at Wearmouth-Jarrow also – a monastery actually consisting of two monasteries. Biscop founded the establishment at Wearmouth in 674; seven years later King Ecgrith founded (apparently without the practical involvement of Biscop) that at Jarrow with Ceolfrith as abbot. The death of Ecgrith in battle within a month of the dedication of St Paul's at Jarrow probably left the monastery directionless and forced it to seek closer relations with Wearmouth. Hence, Bede and the author of the *Life of Ceolfrith* may have insisted that Wearmouth and Jarrow had always been a single unit, inseparable as head and body, so fiercely because the issue was open to question.¹⁰⁰ The continuous need to emphasise the unity of Wearmouth-Jarrow seems defensive, and we know that Biscop's brother certainly tried to inherit Wearmouth against the founder's wishes.¹⁰¹

Despite this, Wearmouth-Jarrow did present a clear and distinctive culture to the outside world, a culture reified in the material of the buildings themselves.¹⁰² The grand stone churches of St Peter and St Paul were partially a typical Anglo-Saxon use of monumentalism to display wealth and prestige, but they also followed distinctively foreign and Late Antique models – a symbolic declaration of union with the Church of

⁹⁹ Alan Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', in *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner et al., pp. 103-22; D. P. Kirby, 'The Genesis of a Cult: Cuthbert of Farne and Ecclesiastical Politics in Northumbria in the Late Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries', *JEH*, 46 (1995), pp. 383-97; David Rollason, 'Hagiography and Politics in Early Northumbria', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. P.E. Szarmach (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 95-114; Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 9-10, 64-6; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 259-95.

¹⁰⁰ Head and body: *HA*, 7 p. 370.

¹⁰¹ Wood, 'Foundation'; *idem*, *Origins of Jarrow*, pp. 3-18. Biscop's brother: *HA*, 11 pp. 375-6.

¹⁰² Rosemary Cramp et al., *Wearmouth and Jarrow Monastic Sites*, 2 vols (Swindon: English Heritage, 2005-2006) provides a complete summary of the archaeological and material evidence for Wearmouth-Jarrow.

Rome.¹⁰³ Benedict Biscop, like Wilfrid, chose to construct his churches in the ‘Roman style’;¹⁰⁴ this required skilled workers in stone and stained-glass to be imported, for use of these materials was unknown in native Anglo-Saxon construction.¹⁰⁵ The churches at both Wearmouth and Jarrow contained religious images and holy relics carried from Rome.¹⁰⁶

Wearmouth-Jarrow thus contained a self-consciously cosmopolitan community, living in buildings constructed with foreign expertise, filled with foreign objects and protected by papal privileges.¹⁰⁷ But it also participated in Northumbrian society: female bodies in the cemetery and phraseology in Bede’s homilies which may imply the presence of the unbaptised in church suggest that the monastery did not hold itself aloof from the lay communities surrounding it.¹⁰⁸ It may indeed have performed a pastoral role, at least toward the individuals who must have lived on the lands owned by the house.¹⁰⁹ These factors should be taken into account when considering whether Bede was a figure isolated from society. His immersion in the communal life of Wearmouth-Jarrow would have necessitated an awareness of the Northumbrian world insofar as it made an impact upon the monastery.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, scholars have noted Bede’s Northumbrian bias or patriotism.¹¹⁰ For all of Bede’s lifetime Northumbria remained a major player in British

¹⁰³ Alecia Arceo, ‘Rethinking the Synod of Whitby and Northumbrian Monastic Sites’, *Haskins Society Journal*, 20 (2008), pp. 19-30; Cramp, *Wearmouth and Jarrow*, I, 358-9.

¹⁰⁴ *HA*, 5 p. 368 ‘iuxta Romanorum...morem’; trans. Farmer, p. 191; *VW*, XVII pp. 34-7, XXII pp. 44-7.

¹⁰⁵ *HA*, 5 p. 368; *VCeol.*, 7 p. 390.

¹⁰⁶ *HA*, 6 pp. 369-70, 9 p. 373; *VCeol.*, 9 p. 391.

¹⁰⁷ *Hom.*, I.13 p. 93.

¹⁰⁸ Cramp, *Wearmouth and Jarrow*, I, 84; *Hom.*, II.6 p. 222; A.G.P. van der Walt, ‘The Homiliary of the Venerable Bede and Early Medieval Preaching’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1980), pp. 56-8. Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, p. 157: ‘...for all their Mediterranean culture Wearmouth and Jarrow were thoroughly Northumbrian monasteries, perfectly integrated into Northumbrian society.’

¹⁰⁹ Alan Thacker, ‘Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care in early Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Pastoral Care*, ed. Blair and Sharpe, pp. 137-70, at 140-2.

¹¹⁰ Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 240, 252-3; Higham, *(Re-)reading Bede*, pp. 145-6.

power politics, although no longer enjoying the hegemony which the kingdom had commanded around the middle of the seventh century. The monk thus genuinely cared about the power and security of the kingdom and will no doubt have been aware of, and possibly disturbed by, the signs of increased political upheaval in the early eighth century.¹¹¹ Crises associated with the royal succession seem to have taken place in 705, 716 and 729-31.¹¹² Ceolfrith, who resigned the abbacy of Wearmouth-Jarrow in 716 (the same year that King Osred was killed), may have played an important role in Northumbrian diplomacy – just as Biscop had regularly attended King Ecgrith's councils.¹¹³ The political unrest of this period may possibly have some connection to the dramatic changes which the establishment of the Northumbrian Church, and in particular the significant endowment of religious communities, brought about in aristocratic society.¹¹⁴

Power and politics only formed part of Bede's world, however, and fail, by themselves, to explain his exegetical writings. While they should constantly be kept in mind when reading the analysis of Bede's use of the temple-image which follows, we require additional context before undertaking that analysis. Life in most Northumbrian monastic houses would not have matched that in secular households exactly. Communal prayer structured both day and night; some form of work was expected of all individuals, usually manual labour but those with more specialised skills may have been allowed to

¹¹¹ Bede's comments on Ecgrith's loss to the Picts (*HE*, IV.26 pp. 428-9), the state of Britain in 731 (*HE*, V.23 pp. 560-1) and the possibility of 'barbarian' invasion (*EpEcg.*, 11 p. 415) all imply concern for Northumbria's military fortunes.

¹¹² Maddicott, 'Frontier States', warns against assuming that instability at the level of the monarch undermined Northumbria's continued wealth and power throughout the early eighth century.

¹¹³ Ceolfrith's communication with the Pictish King Nechtan and Adomnán (*HE*, V.21 pp. 532-53) suggests links with the royal court: Higham, (*Re-reading Bede*, pp. 129, 190. Biscop at royal councils: *VCeol.*, 12 p. 392.

¹¹⁴ Orton & Wood, *Fragments of History*, pp. 199-201; N.J. Higham, *The Kingdom of Northumbria: AD 350-1100* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1993), pp. 132-9, 147, argues that the endowment of monasteries caused Northumbria's political decline.

concentrate on their strengths.¹¹⁵ Roman-leaning monasteries, including Wearmouth-Jarrow, appear to have been particularly keen on perfecting liturgical song and ritual.¹¹⁶ Bede situated his scholarship within this environment of monastic routine and communal worship: ‘amid the observance of the discipline of the Rule and the daily task of singing in the church, it has always been my delight to learn or to teach or to write.’¹¹⁷ Bede may have had an educational role at Wearmouth-Jarrow, and the nature of the personal possessions which he gave away on his death-bed suggest that he frequently performed his priestly function of celebrating the mass.¹¹⁸

In other words, the spiritual, sacramental and communal were all realities which impinged upon Bede daily. Locating him politically or socially involves imaginatively reconstructing Bede’s participation in certain groupings of kin, class and ethnicity. But the monastic liturgy and the performance of the mass located Bede spiritually, whether in the brotherhood of religious at Wearmouth-Jarrow or in the cosmic body of Christ. We must seek to reconstruct his participation in these communities also. The dominant ideology of Wearmouth-Jarrow may not quite deserve the definition ‘counter-cultural’ which some have given it – but living there Bede did participate in realities separate, and sometimes opposed, to the realities of Northumbria’s secular aristocracy.¹¹⁹ Studying Bede’s use of the temple-image we can see just how much membership of the body of

¹¹⁵ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 186-226.

¹¹⁶ *HA*, 6 p. 369; *VCeol.*, 9 p. 391, 14 p. 393; *Hom.*, I.13 p. 92; *VW*, XLVII pp. 98-9. Wood, *Ceolfrid*, pp. 16-8.

¹¹⁷ *HE*, V.24 pp. 566-7 ‘inter obseruantiam disciplinae regularis, et cotidianam cantandi in ecclesia curam, semper aut discere aut docere aut scribere dulce habui.’

¹¹⁸ Faith Wallis, *Bede: On the Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), pp. xxx-xxxiv. At his death Bede possessed pepper, incense and *oraria*, all of which probably had a liturgical function: Daniel J. Heisey, ‘Bede’s Pepper, Napkins, and Incense’, *Downside Review*, 129 (2011), pp. 16-30. For a contrasting interpretation of these gifts: Isabel Moreira, *Heaven’s Purge: Purgatory in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 169-71.

¹¹⁹ Olsen, ‘From Bede’, p. 317; Olsen agrees with Leonardi, ‘Il Venerabile Beda’, p. 617, that Bede’s outlook was ‘mystic-monastic’. For the ideology of Wearmouth-Jarrow as classless: Mayr-Harting, *Rule of Benedict and Social Class*. For the possibility that while Bede himself was critical of aristocratic culture, other Wearmouth-Jarrow monks were more positive: Wood, ‘Gifts of Wearmouth and Jarrow’, p. 114.

Christ mattered to him, and, I argue, we can discern how the communal spirituality of Wearmouth-Jarrow may have shaped his ideas.

One activity in which Bede engaged would certainly have set him apart from most of the secular élite: the extensive reading and detailed note-taking which must lie behind his exegesis.¹²⁰ The post-Goffart emphasis on Bede as socially engaged has often defined itself in opposition to the idea, enunciated by Wormald and Mayr-Harting, that Bede's world was a 'world of books'.¹²¹ Obviously such a phrase is potentially reductive (one should consider, say, how Bede's world of books was financed and sustained), but it should be nuanced, not rejected. As Alan Thacker's work has subtly shown, we can understand Bede as an idealist informed by a worldview significantly derived from books and as an individual aware of and reacting to his wider society.¹²² If Bede built his temple in eighth-century Northumbria, its foundations were laid in the books he read, and it is to this intellectual context which I now turn.

¹²⁰ Rosalind Love, 'The library of the Venerable Bede', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Volume 1: c.400-1100*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 606-32, at 630. King Aldfrith's learning proves that members of secular society could be highly literate also, but he in fact had probably received a clerical education: Barbara Yorke, *Rex Doctissimus: Bede and King Aldfrith of Northumbria*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 2009).

¹²¹ Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*', p. 63; Mayr-Harting, 'Patristic Thinking', p. 373.

¹²² Thacker, 'Ideal of Reform', p. 130; *idem*, 'Monks', p. 169.

Chapter 2

Bede's Temple in its Intellectual Context

To understand Bede, as any author, we need to locate him as a writer and to put his work into its wider context. Bede's own autobiographical comments in the *Ecclesiastical History* bring two important contexts to our attention.¹ Firstly, Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrith educated Bede at Wearmouth-Jarrow, where he read and wrote all his life and for whose members he produced his exegesis. The 'works of the venerable Fathers on the holy Scriptures' provide another key context for Bede's commentaries.² Recent scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that Bede did more than merely copy what he found in the patristic tradition – but his claim to 'follow in the footsteps of the Fathers' is not just a modesty topos.³ Rather, it reminds us of the important links which Bede himself saw between the Fathers and his own work. This chapter, then, examines these two contexts, focusing primarily on Bede's reading as the necessary starting-point for understanding Bede's writing. Firstly, I examine the intellectual resources available at Wearmouth-Jarrow and how they would have conditioned Bede's exegetical methodology; I then provide an overview of the Christian interpretations of the temple-image which Bede inherited.

¹ *HE*, V.24 pp. 566-7.

² *Ibid.*, 'haec in Scipturam sanctam meae meorumque necessitati ex opusculis uenerabilium patrum breviter adnotare, siue etiam ad formam sensus et interpretationis eorum superadicere curauit.'

³ See the papers by Ray, Thacker and DeGregorio in *Innovation and Tradition*, ed. DeGregorio. Also pp. 59-61, 176-7 below.

The Intellectual Context at Wearmouth-Jarrow

Before he founded a monastery at Wearmouth, Benedict Biscop had gathered a large number of books on his fourth visit to Rome (c.671) and indeed it was partially these books which inspired King Ecgrith to donate land to him.⁴ After the monastery had been built, he returned to Rome (this time accompanied by Ceolfrith – 679-680) and obtained for it ‘a great mass of books’.⁵ Sometime after Jarrow had been established Biscop visited Rome for a sixth time and once again brought back many volumes.⁶ In a society still in the comparatively early stages of literacy this importation of books is striking; Biscop’s pride in the library he had built up made him fearful of its division after his death, as other aristocrats might worry about the dismemberment of the land they had accumulated.⁷ Instead, according to Bede, the library doubled in size under Ceolfrith’s abbacy.⁸ The founders of Wearmouth and Jarrow were stereotypical Anglo-Saxon aristocrats in their commitment to gathering treasure, though it consisted of parchment rather than gold. Like gold, manuscripts had an economic value and Ceolfrith could exchange a volume from his library for land.⁹

Fortunately for Bede, therefore, he had access to possibly the largest library ever collected in Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁰ The founders’ hoard of books having long vanished, we can only reconstruct this library from the evidence of Bede’s own writings, which reveal an extraordinary amount of reading. The four Fathers of the Latin Church appear

⁴ *HA*, 4 p. 367.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6 p. 369 ‘innumerabilem librorum omnis generis copiam adportauit’; trans. Farmer, p. 192; *VCeol.*, 9 p. 391.

⁶ *HA*, 9 p. 373.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 11 p. 375.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15 p. 379; *VCeol.*, 20 p. 395.

⁹ *HA*, 15 p. 380.

¹⁰ M.L.W. Laistner, ‘The Library of the Venerable Bede’, in *Life, Times, and Writings*, ed. Thompson, pp. 237-66, and *idem*, ‘Bede as a Classical and a Patristic Scholar’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series 16 (1933), pp. 69-94, remain the essential starting point. Also Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 34-7, 191-228; Love, ‘Library’.

to have dominated: Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory the Great.¹¹ Bede did not have equal access to all their works – he may have only read a small amount of Ambrose’s corpus, for example.¹² He had, however, read quite substantial quantities of Jerome and Augustine’s colossal output. The evidence for his knowledge of Augustine may be skewed by the fact that Bede used Eugippius’ *Excerpta* of quotations from the Augustinian corpus. Nonetheless, he clearly had read many of Augustine’s writings in their entirety, including some of the largest works.¹³ Bede certainly had all of Gregory’s major works available to him and indeed the writings of the pope left a definite impression on him, playing a central role in shaping his mind-set.¹⁴

Along with this key patristic core, Biscop and Ceolfrith had imported many of the classics of Christian Latin culture. Bede’s reading included poetry (e.g. Sedulius and Arator), hagiography (e.g. the *vitae* of Martin and Antony) and monastic texts (e.g. Cassian’s *Conferences* and the Benedictine Rule), as well as major biblical commentaries.¹⁵ In comparison to this wealth of Latin texts, Bede did not have access to a large quantity of Greek patristic thought. Nonetheless, he did have Latin translations of

¹¹ Bede helped to popularise these four as the great Fathers of the West: Bernice M. Kaczynski, ‘Bede’s Commentaries on Luke and Mark and the Formation of a Patristic Canon’, in *Anglo-Latin and its Heritage: Essays in Honour of A.G. Rigg on his 64th Birthday*, ed. Siân Echard and Gernot R. Wieland (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), pp. 17-26.

¹² Dabney Anderson Bankert et al., *Ambrose in Anglo-Saxon England with Pseudo-Ambrose and Ambrosiaster*, Old English Newsletter Subsidia 25 (Kalamazoo, MI: Modern Language Association of America, 1997). Bede certainly knew Ambrose’s commentary on Luke, *De Fide*, *De Spiritu Sancto* and possibly the *Exameron*.

¹³ Love, ‘Library’, pp. 624-5; Alan Thacker, *Bede and Augustine of Hippo: History and Figure in Sacred Text*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul’s Church, 2005), p. 5; François Dolbeau, ‘Bède, lecteur des Sermons d’Augustin’, *Filologia Mediolatina*, 3 (1996), pp. 105-33, at 106-8. Works of Augustine known to Bede include: *De Civitate Dei*, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, *De Trinitate*, the commentaries on John’s gospel and on the Psalms, and at least the first three books (and probably all) of *De Doctrina Christiana*.

¹⁴ Paul Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory the Great*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul’s Church, 1964); Scott DeGregorio, ‘The Venerable Bede and Gregory the Great: Exegetical Connections, Spiritual Departures’, *EME*, 18 (2010), pp. 43-60. Bede knew Gregory’s *Regula Pastoralis*, *Moralia in Iob* and the homilies on the gospels and Ezekiel.

¹⁵ While Wearmouth-Jarrow did not follow the Benedictine Rule exclusively, Bede knew it very well: A.D.P. van der Walt, ‘Reflections of the Benedictine Rule in Bede’s Homiliary’, *JEH*, 37 (1986), pp. 367-76; Scott DeGregorio, ‘Bede and Benedict of Nursia’, in *Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Baxter et al., pp. 151-63.

a few works – especially, Rufinus’ version of Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*.¹⁶ Bede’s reading was not limited to Christian sources either; his writings show a deep familiarity with the works of Vergil, despite the common Christian claims to reject classical literature and secular rhetoric.¹⁷ And his scientific writings prove that Bede had access to material coming from Ireland – indeed while rejecting the ‘Celtic’ Easter, Bede probably relied heavily on a dossier of computistical materials first collected in Ireland.¹⁸

The availability of so many texts notwithstanding, Bede’s life and Wearmouth-Jarrow’s culture were dominated by a single book: the Bible. Ceolfrith expanded his library not simply by collecting, but also by creating new books – especially copies of a Bible-text newly edited at Wearmouth-Jarrow from a variety of exemplars.¹⁹ Because of this project Bede had access to numerous biblical texts, including at least some of the New Testament in Greek. It appears that he even taught himself enough Greek to be able to engage intelligently with this version towards the end of his life.²⁰ Bede certainly worked with a variety of scriptural manuscripts, often displaying an interest in comparing different translations and versions of the text.²¹ But the ideology of Wearmouth-Jarrow promoted respect for Jerome’s Vulgate above all, for Ceolfrith’s Bible-text consisted of a complete edition of that work. Hence, despite his penchant for textual criticism, Bede

¹⁶ For Rufinus’ influence on Bede: Danuta Shanzer, ‘Bede’s Style: A Neglected Historiographical Model for the Style of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*’, in *Source of Wisdom*, ed. Wright et al., pp. 329-52.

¹⁷ Neil Wright, ‘Bede and Vergil’, *Romanobarbarica*, 6 (1982), pp. 361-79. On monastic use of the classics: Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, esp. pp. 112-25. For the Christian tradition condemning the secular classics and Wearmouth-Jarrow’s relationship to it: George Hardin Brown, ‘Ciceronianism in Bede and Alcuin’, in *Intertexts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Paul E. Szarmach*, ed. Virginia Blanton and Helene Scheck (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), pp. 319-29, at 319-23.

¹⁸ Jean-Michel Picard, ‘Bède et ses sources irlandaises’, in *Bède le Vénérable*, ed. Lebecq et al., pp. 43-61; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, ‘The Irish Provenance of Bede’s *Computus*’, *Peritia*, 2 (1983), pp. 238-42.

¹⁹ Richard Marsden, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 140-201.

²⁰ Kevin M. Lynch, ‘The Venerable Bede’s Knowledge of Greek’, *Traditio*, 39 (1983), pp. 432-39; Anna Carlotta Dionisotti, ‘On Bede, Grammars, and Greek’, *RB*, 92 (1982), pp. 111-41.

²¹ Paul Meyvaert, ‘Bede the Scholar’, in *Famulus Christi*, ed. Bonner, pp. 40-69, at 47-51; Marsden, *Text of the Old Testament*, pp. 202-19; Scott DeGregorio, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), pp. xvii-xxi; Calvin B. Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), p. 56.

accorded the Vulgate a special status. It was the *hebraica veritas* – the Hebrew truth. As Bede himself did not independently know any Hebrew, Jerome’s *Hebrew Names* and the Latin translation of Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* were vital for his understanding of the Old Testament.²² Indeed, Bede probably cited *Hebrew Names* more than any other patristic work²³ – proof that the need to understand the Bible dominated his reading above all.

All of Bede’s intellectual endeavours orbited, at greater or lesser distances, the Bible – unsurprisingly when we consider the type of education he would have received at Wearmouth-Jarrow. The cultural efflorescence in late seventh- and early eighth-century Anglo-Saxon England depended upon a Christian, and almost wholly monastic, education system.²⁴ Children educated in monasteries, like Bede, would have initially learnt Latin through the liturgy; the Psalter would be memorised and internalised through the performance of the monastic Office.²⁵ Religious schools carried on the traditions of Late Antique grammatical education in the ways students were subsequently trained in reading and understanding Latin texts.²⁶ Traditionally grammar had been taught through the use of the secular classics as examples of perfect Latin style. This certainly did

²² E.F. Sutcliffe, ‘The Venerable Bede’s Knowledge of Hebrew’, *Biblica*, 16 (1935), pp. 300-6; Damian Fleming, ‘“The Most Exalted Language”: Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of Hebrew’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, 2006), pp. 53-79.

²³ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 217.

²⁴ Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: from the Sixth through Eighth Century*, trans. John J. Contreni (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 369-99 – the classic overview, which probably overstates the absolute rejection of secular literature by Christian thinkers. For early Anglo-Saxon education and learning: Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), chs 7-11; Michael Lapidge, ‘Anglo-Latin Literature’, in *Anglo-Latin Literature 600-899* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), pp. 1-36, at 1-5; Rosalind Love, ‘The World of Latin Learning’, in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 40-53.

²⁵ Lapidge, ‘Anglo-Latin’, pp. 1-2; Benedicta Ward, *Bede and the Psalter*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul’s Church, 1991).

²⁶ Martin Irvine, ‘Bede the Grammarian and the Scope of Grammatical Studies in eighth-century Northumbria’, *ASE*, 15 (1986), pp. 15-44; *idem*, *The Making of Textual Culture: ‘Grammatica’ and Literary Theory, 350-1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Some (especially Roger Ray, e.g. ‘Bede and Cicero’, *ASE*, 16 (1987), pp. 1-15) have argued for the centrality of rhetoric, rather than grammar, to Bede’s writings, but this suggestion has not gained support: Gabriele Knappe, ‘Classical Rhetoric in Anglo-Saxon England’, *ASE*, 27 (1998), pp. 5-29.

continue in the Christian context: Bede's own verse *Life of Cuthbert* shows his familiarity with Vergil, Lucan and Claudian.²⁷ However, his grammatical and educational works show the reorientation of Late Antique grammar toward the study of the Bible. Scripture had become the new 'classic' to be read and comprehended in the classroom.²⁸

The attitudes long held by grammarians toward secular literature provide the context for Bede's Christian approach to the Bible: texts demanded interpretation, and were approached from the reader's, rather than the author's, point of view.²⁹ The Anglo-Saxons' predilection for riddles reveals a delight in the double-meanings of words; this native tradition possibly played a part in life at Wearmouth-Jarrow, if the riddles of Eusebius are indeed the work of Bede's contemporary Hwaetberht.³⁰ Bede's grammatical writings show his awareness of the twists and turns of scriptural language, the ways in which words can mean something other than what they say.³¹ This interpretative approach to the text is commonly associated with the four senses of scripture: the historical, allegorical (here narrowly defined as referring to Christ and the Church), tropological (moral) and anagogical (heavenly or eschatological) senses.³² In *On Schemes*

²⁷ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, pp. 107-15.

²⁸ Margot H. King, 'Grammatica Mystica: A Study of Bede's Grammatical Curriculum', in *Saints, Scholars, and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones*, ed. Margot H. King and Wesley Stevens, 2 vols (Collegeville, MN: Saint John's Abbey and University, 1979), I, 145-59; Carmela Viricillo Franklin, 'Grammar and Exegesis: Bede's *Liber de schematibus et tropis*', in *Latin Grammar and Rhetoric: From Classical Theory to Medieval Practice*, ed. Carol Dana Lanham (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 63-91; Seppo Heikkinen, *The Christianisation of Latin Metre: A Study of Bede's De Arte Metrica* (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2012), esp. pp. 9-16.

²⁹ Irvine, 'Bede the Grammarian', pp. 27, 41. Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), throughout argues that patristic authors used the methodology of secular exegesis.

³⁰ *Aenigmata Eusebii*, ed. F. Glorie, CCSL 133, pp. 209-71; Andy Orchard, 'Enigma Variations: The Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Tradition', in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andy Orchard, vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 284-304.

³¹ *DST*, II.12 p. 161 'Allegoria est tropus quo aliud significatur quam dicitur...'

³² For the claim that Bede 'coined the definitive formula for the fourfold sense': Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Mark Sebanc & E.M. Macierowski, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998-2000), II, 213. Lubac's study (only partially translated into English: see Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, for the complete work) is an exhaustive examination of the topic.

and Tropes Bede outlined all four, illustrating them using the image of the temple of Jerusalem:

According to the historical fact the temple of the Lord is the house which Solomon built; allegorically, it is the body of the Lord, about which He said: *Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up.* Or it is his Church, which was addressed as follows: *For the temple of God is holy, which you are.* Through the tropological interpretation it signifies some one of the faithful, who are addressed as follow: *Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* Through the anagogical interpretation it signifies the joys of the heavenly dwelling for which that man longed who said: *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord...*³³

As scholars have long recognised, like his predecessors, Bede did not apply the senses in such a systematic way to every verse he commented upon.³⁴ The senses rather pointed towards the diversity of possible meanings which a text could contain; they existed to open up, and not to limit, the interpretation of the Bible.³⁵ In practice then we will look in vain for hard and fast ‘rules’ of interpretation in Bede’s exegesis – neither the senses, nor Tyconius’ seven rules supply such a need.³⁶ Bede learnt the art of interpretation from reading the Latin Fathers and from them, especially from Gregory, he would have learnt about the infinity of scripture. The Bible shaped itself according to the reader, expanding and contracting with the needs of one’s mind. There was nobody so simple that they

³³ *DST*, II.12 pp. 168-9 ‘templum Domini iuxta historiam domus quam fecit Salomon; iuxta allegoriam corpus Dominicum de quo ait: “Soluite templum hoc, et in tribus diebus excitabo illud,” siue ecclesia eius, cui dicitur: “templum enim Dei sanctum est, quod estis uos”; per tropologiam quisque fidelium, quibus dicitur: “An nescitis quia corpora uestra templum est Spiritus sancti qui in uobis est”; per anagogen supernae gaudia mansionis, cui suspirabat qui ait: “Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine...”’; adapted from trans. Tannenhaus, p. 252. Bede’s application of the four senses to the temple clearly adapts the earlier application to Jerusalem (e.g. John Cassian, *Collationes*, ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 13, XIV.VIII.4 p. 405), which he used at *Cant.*, p. 260.

³⁴ Gregory began his *Moralia* with a clear tripartite interpretative structure for each verse commented upon, but soon abandoned it: Judith McClure, ‘Gregory the Great: Exegesis and Audience’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1978), pp. 20-1. Discussing the four senses at *Tab.*, p. 25, Bede explained each with a different verse.

³⁵ Charles W. Jones, ‘Some Introductory Remarks on Bede’s Commentary on Genesis’, *Sacris Erudiri*, 19 (1969-70), pp. 115-98, at 135-40.

³⁶ Tyconius’ rules mainly concern determining the referent of a given verse, i.e. Christ or his Church, the sinners or righteous within the Church, etc.: *Apoc.*, pp. 223-31; Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. and trans. R.P.H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), III.92-133 pp. 172-95. Cf. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, p. 205, on Tyconius’ rules as ‘a systematisation of an essentially arbitrary process’.

could learn nothing from it, nobody so wise that they could ever exhaust its meanings.³⁷

The four senses, and other such schemes, simply alerted the exegete to the possible ways one could read scripture, revealing that one should penetrate beyond the surface of the letter and into the inner spiritual meaning.³⁸

Therefore, speaking of Bede's use of allegory does not imply any codified system of one-to-one meanings which unlocked the real significance of a biblical text. An image can change meaning a number of times throughout the course of a commentary, or can have multiple possible meanings simultaneously.³⁹ Bede could produce diverse interpretations for a single verse: the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate symbolise faith in the Trinity being preached in the four parts of the world, that a teacher ought to combine that faith with the four virtues and, Bede declared a little later, the zodiac because the 'Sun of righteousness is going to fill all our times and all regions of our world with his light, after the pattern of the mundane sun.'⁴⁰ Artistry clearly played a role in all this; exegetical exuberance could provide pleasure: 'if it pleases you to hear something new...'⁴¹

Nor did Bede restrict any meaning to a single word or image. While the portico of the temple signified the faithful before the incarnation, the sanctuary those after the incarnation and the holy of holies the heavenly reward shared by both, Bede saw no problem with also, apparently inconsistently, applying the same interpretations to the

³⁷ Gregory, *Homiliae in Hiezechihelam Prophetam*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 142, I.VII.8 p. 87 'quia diuina eloquia cum legente crescunt, nam tanto illa quisque altius intellegit, quanto in eis altius intendit'; *idem*, *Moralia in Iob*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 143+A+B, Epistola ad Leandrum IV p. 6 'Quasi quidam quippe est fluuius, ut ita dixerim, planus et altus, in quo et agnus ambulet et elephas natet.' Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, I, 75-82, II, 204-7.

³⁸ The importance of the spiritual core: *Ezra.*, p. 237; *Marc.*, p. 524; *Ret.*, p. 163; *Hom.*, II.2 p. 196.

³⁹ Augustine, *Doctrina*, III.84 p. 168 'Quando autem ex eisdem scripturae verbis non unum aliquid sed duo vel plura sentiuntur...'; Jennifer O'Reilly, 'Exegesis and the Book of Kells: The Lucan Genealogy', in *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992*, ed. Felicity O'Mahony (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), pp. 344-97, at 377.

⁴⁰ *Tab.*, p. 112 'sol iustitiae cuncta nostra tempora cunctas orbis nostri plagas sua esset luce repleturus in exemplum solis mundani'; trans. Holder, p. 129.

⁴¹ *Tab.*, p. 54 'Aut si noui aliquid audire delectat...'; trans. Holder, p. 59.

materials (stone, wood and gold) from which all three locations were built: ‘For in the different materials there is a manifold repetition of the same figures.’⁴² Thus Bede’s commentaries tend to be highly repetitious: in different contexts the same basic interpretations come up repeatedly. In such repetition, rather than in striking once-off statements, we can see Bede’s major interests coming to the surface.⁴³ The content of the biblical text can seem secondary to the exegete’s own ideas in these cases.⁴⁴ Bede in this respect again followed the example of Gregory whose ‘free-wheeling’ exegesis tended to produce religious treatises, rather than textual commentaries.⁴⁵ While extensive Gregorian tangents appear comparatively rarely in Bede’s work, his exegesis shines as much, if not more, light on his own worldview, as it does on the Bible.

Of course, Bede did not conceive of all readings of scripture as equally justified. While Kendall’s argument that Bede differentiated between signs consecrated by God and symbols devised by human intelligence does not convince, I do agree with him that Bede saw Augustine’s law of charity as the determinant of true exegesis.⁴⁶ Bede and Augustine both stood in the mainstream of Christian interpretation – correct exegesis had to take place within the Church and was circumscribed by the limits of orthodox faith as handed down (which Augustine summarised as love of God and neighbour).⁴⁷ Thus Bede would have approached the Bible from the conviction that he already knew what it meant – the purpose of exegesis was simply to show how every scriptural text upheld orthodox

⁴² *Temp.*, p. 175 ‘Multiplex namque est in diuersis rebus earundem repetitio figurarum’; trans. Connolly, p. 42.

⁴³ Meyvaert, ‘Bede the Scholar’, p. 46.

⁴⁴ However, Bede could be sensitive and drawn to the ‘plot’ of a book of the Bible: DeGregorio, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, pp. xxx-xxxii.

⁴⁵ R.A. Markus, *Signs and Meanings: World and Text in Ancient Christianity* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), pp. 48-70 (quotation at p. 50); McClure, ‘Exegesis’, p. 258, disagrees with such a reading of Gregory. For just how free Bede’s methodology could be: Jones, ‘Introductory Remarks’, pp. 151-60.

⁴⁶ Calvin B. Kendall, ‘The Responsibility of *Auctoritas*: Method and Meaning in Bede’s Commentary on Genesis’, in *Innovation and Tradition*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 101-19; Augustine, *Doctrina*, I.86-88 pp. 48-51.

⁴⁷ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 17-21; Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, I, 25-7.

Christianity. Hence, for Bede, Jews could never really understand the Bible which had meaning solely in Christ.⁴⁸ Scripture spoke only of the correct Christian faith and those who rejected this closed off the possibility of an accurate, spiritual, exegesis; the unfaithful (whether Jews or heretics) as a consequence gained nothing from their reading of scripture.⁴⁹

Bede's conviction that the Bible should be read spiritually need not suggest that he held the literal or historical aspects of the text in contempt. Some scholars have made an especial effort to highlight Bede's interest in the historical and textual questions which arise in exegesis.⁵⁰ Sometimes this has led to misleading attempts to portray Bede as an historical exegete opposed to allegorical tendencies, as Lapidge for example has argued: 'By nature Bede favours philological and historical exposition and avoids the wilder excesses of allegorical interpretation.'⁵¹ Traditionally historians of Christian exegesis have distinguished 'Alexandrian' (allegorical/spiritual in nature, deriving from Origen and dominant in the West) from 'Antiochene' exegesis (opposed to Origen, focused on literal, historically-contextualised interpretation).⁵² Bischoff influentially suggested that 'Antiochene' interpretation dominated in the Canterbury school of Theodore of Tarsus;

⁴⁸ See R.A. Markus, 'The Jew as a Hermeneutic Device: The Inner Life of a Gregorian Topos', in *Gregory the Great: A Symposium*, ed. John C. Cavadini (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), pp. 1-15, at 1-4; John William Houghton, 'Bede's Exegetical Theology: Ideas of the Church in the Acts Commentaries of St. Bede the Venerable' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 70-2. Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, I, 225-41.

⁴⁹ *Apoc.*, p. 267; Bede, *In Proverbia Salomonis*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119B, pp. 95-6; *idem*, *Expositio in Canticum Abacuc Prophetarum*, ed. J.E. Hudson, CCSL 119B, p. 406. Sharon M. Rowley, 'Reassessing Exegetical Interpretations of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*', *Literature and Theology*, 17 (2003), pp. 227-43, at 233: 'The ability to interpret and understand obscure passages of Scripture...reflects not only extensive knowledge, but also faith and the promise of salvation.'

⁵⁰ E.g. Meyvaert, 'Bede the Scholar'.

⁵¹ Lapidge, 'Anglo-Latin', p. 16.

⁵² Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, pp. 1-36; Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, trans. John A. Hughes, ed. Anders Bergquist and Marcus Bockmuehl (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994).

the recent explosion of work on Theodore and Canterbury has strengthened this impression that an ‘Antiochene’, literal approach to the Bible characterised that school.⁵³

This has naturally led to questions of to what extent Canterbury’s literalism influenced Bede – Benedict Biscop after all had close connections with Theodore and Canterbury.⁵⁴

I would be cautious about over-stating the importance of the Canterbury school for a number of reasons. Firstly, patristic scholars increasingly question the binary opposition of ‘Alexandrian’ and ‘Antiochene’ exegesis upon which so much has been based, becoming more wary of its utility as a frame of reference.⁵⁵ Secondly, no exegetical work analogous to that of Bede survives from Canterbury: the majority of the evidence derives from surviving biblical glosses.⁵⁶ The gloss is a distinct genre, separate from the commentary and always more likely to focus on the literal meaning of the text – it does not necessarily imply rejection of other, spiritual, readings.⁵⁷ Thirdly, although Bede did once cite Theodore, it was only to dismiss the archbishop’s interpretation of the verse in question.⁵⁸ Finally, while Bede obviously valued understanding the historical dimensions

⁵³ Bernhard Bischoff, ‘Turning-Points in the History of Latin Exegesis in the Early Middle Ages’, trans. Colm O’Grady in *Biblical Studies: The Medieval Irish Contribution*, ed. Martin McNamara, Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association 1 (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1976), pp. 74-160; Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 243-9; Jane Stevenson, *The ‘Laterculus Malalianus’ and the School of Archbishop Theodore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 43-7.

⁵⁴ Bischoff, ‘Turning-Points’, pp. 74-7; James Siemens, *The Christology of Theodore of Tarsus: The Laterculus Malalianus and the Person and Work of Christ* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), p. 180; Paul Hilliard, ‘The Venerable Bede as Scholar, Gentile and Preacher’, in *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Corradini et al. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), pp. 101-9, at 105-6.

⁵⁵ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 120-2, 161-85; Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 70-8.

⁵⁶ Michael Gorman, ‘Theodore of Canterbury, Hadrian of Nisida and Michael Lapidge’, *Scriptorium*, 50 (1996), pp. 184-92, at 189; Bernice M. Kaczynski, ‘The Seventh-Century School of Canterbury: England and the Continent in Perspective’, *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 8 (1998), pp. 206-15, at 211.

⁵⁷ Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, II, 214-6.

⁵⁸ Bede, *VIII Quaestiones*, ed. Michael Gorman, ‘Bede’s *VIII Quaestiones* and Carolingian Biblical Scholarship’, *RB*, 109 (1999), pp. 32-74, III p. 65. Also Helen Conrad-O’Brian, ‘The Harrowing of Hell in the Canterbury Glosses and its Context in Augustinian and Insular Exegesis’, in *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Learning and Literature Presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer*, ed. Helen Conrad-O’Brian et al. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp. 73-88, at 87-8.

of scripture, there is nothing surprising about this; his reading of Augustine and Jerome, as well as Gregory, alone suffices to explain his interpretive approach.

The distinctively Christian hermeneutic approached the Bible as speaking of real historical events which themselves had spiritual meaning, prefiguring other real historical events. The inspired authors had recorded the history of Israel which God himself had authored to refer to Christ's saving work.⁵⁹ Any human text could contain 'allegory in words'; the Bible also contained 'allegory in deeds'.⁶⁰ This approach was rendered authoritative for the Latin West by Augustine and Jerome, whose work came increasingly to stress the historical reality of the Old Testament.⁶¹ At prayer in Jarrow church Bede found himself surrounded by this approach to scripture, reified in the pictures which paired events from the Old and New Testaments.⁶² Therefore, Bede knew that the history of the Old Testament was both true and spiritually significant. He could take details unrecorded in the Bible from Josephus, because he was interpreting not just the scriptural account of the temple, but also the physical temple itself.⁶³

Bede believed that any use of allegory that denied the reality of Old Testament history, which recounted God's work in this world, could damage faith: 'But it must be carefully observed, as each one devotes his attention to the allegorical senses, how far he may have forsaken the manifest truth of history by allegorical interpretation.'⁶⁴ His concern was not that allegory itself was wrong, but that Christian allegory should never undermine the

⁵⁹ Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, II, 41-98; Erich Auerbach, "'Figura'", trans. Ralph Manheim in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 11-76.

⁶⁰ *DST*, II.12 p. 164 'Notandum sane quod allegoria aliquando factis, aliquando uerbis tantummodo fit'; *Tab.*, p. 25.

⁶¹ Markus, *Signs and Meanings*, pp. 5-11; Simonetti, *Patristic Exegesis*, pp. 99-108. For the link between Augustine's methodology and Bede's attitude to the temple: Thacker, *Bede and Augustine*, pp. 17-25, 31-3.

⁶² *HA*, 9 p. 373. For exegesis in a liturgical context: Ward, *Venerable Bede*, pp. 44-6.

⁶³ Paul Hilliard, 'Bede and Josephus', paper given at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, 12/05/2012; Samuel W. Collins, *The Carolingian Debate over Sacred Space* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 18-21. Cf. Holder, 'Allegory and History', pp. 127-31.

⁶⁴ *Gen.*, p. 3 'Sed diligenter intuendum ut ita quisque sensibus allegoricis studium impendat, quatenus apertam historiae fidem allegorizando derelinquat'; trans. Kendall, p. 69.

believer's faith in sacred history.⁶⁵ Bede would never use allegory, or indeed history, to explain away a scriptural miracle;⁶⁶ but he would use allegory to make historical facts spiritually useful to contemporary readers.⁶⁷ The exegete could only fruitfully interpret the tabernacle once he had its physical dimensions clear.⁶⁸ It was (usually⁶⁹) impossible to have a spiritual interpretation without the foundation of the historical one; but equally philological or historical analysis of the Bible alone was fruitless. Hence, Bede habitually referred to the meaning of Hebrew words or alternative versions of a text simply to make a spiritual point.⁷⁰

Discussion of different methodologies can disguise the fact that Bede would simply have viewed his exegesis as biblical and derived from the principles asserted by Paul. It was Paul whom Bede quoted to explain why everything in the Old Testament had a meaning relevant to contemporary Christians: 'all these things happened to them in figure; and they are written for our correction'.⁷¹ Similarly, Bede frequently would use scripture to explain scripture. Scholars see this as a particularly monastic type of exegesis where the individual drew upon their extensive memory of the biblical text, connecting similar words or phrases.⁷² Bede's second homily on the dedication of a church, where he

⁶⁵ Christian exegetes used 'allegory' to refer both to their own spiritual exegesis and to a 'pagan' interpretation which denied the historical reality of the events described: Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, II.2, 125-37.

⁶⁶ Indeed he disagreed with Theodore (p. 41 above) when the latter attempted to use 'historical' knowledge to explain what seemed to be a miracle on the literal level: McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede*, pp. 62-4.

⁶⁷ E.g. *Sam.*, p. 9.

⁶⁸ *Tab.*, pp. 43-4. Bede's literal exegesis of the tabernacle is much briefer than that of Augustine: *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*, ed. J. Fraipont, CCSL 33, II.177 pp. 152-74.

⁶⁹ Traditionally Christian exegetes decreed the Song of Songs to have no literal meaning: *Cant.*, p. 337.

⁷⁰ Hebrew etymology: *Temp.*, pp. 152, 155; *Ezra.*, p. 353; *Tab.*, pp. 18-9. Textual comparison: *Ret.*, p. 138; *Apoc.*, p. 285. See Tristan Major, 'Words, Wit, and Wordplay in the Latin Works of the Venerable Bede', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 22 (2012), pp. 185-219, at 210-8.

⁷¹ 1 Corinthians 10.11: *Temp.*, p. 148; *Gen.*, p. 188; *Reg.*, XVI p. 310; *Tab.*, p. 5. I am unconvinced that the latter example displays Bede's use of classical rhetoric's *circumstantiae* (Ray, 'Bede's Commentaries?', pp. 16-8), rather than simply the traditional understanding of this verse: Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, II.2, 62-4. Bede used Romans 15.4 to make a similar point: *Temp.*, p. 143; *Sam.*, p. 9 (quotes both verses).

⁷² Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, pp. 73-7; Scott DeGregorio, 'Bede, the Monk, as Exegete: Evidence from the Commentary on Ezra-Nehemiah', *RB*, 115 (2005), pp. 343-69, at 367-8.

commented upon the parable of the man who built his house upon a rock, provides a good example of the kind of exegesis to which such an approach led. Bede interpreted the man building a house as Christ in his guise as Mediator – using, it seems, the word ‘man’ (*homo*) which is common to Luke 6.48 and 1 Timothy 2.5. He went on to link the discussion of building upon a rock in Luke’s gospel with a discussion of building upon a rock in Matthew’s gospel and thus interpreted the house as the Church, following the words: ‘thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church’.⁷³ Once again a single word (*petra*) connected the two separate parts of the Bible and thereby allowed Bede to interpret the verse before him. Having established the fact that Luke and Matthew spoke of the same thing, Bede connected the flood which the house built upon rock resists with the gates of hell which cannot prevail against the Church. In the midst of all this, ‘and the rock was Christ’ (1 Corinthians 10.4) clearly influenced Bede, though he never explicitly quoted it.⁷⁴

If we call Bede a ‘monastic exegete’ based on this methodology and intellectual background, does that mean Bede was a monk writing for brother-monks? Bede wrote exegesis for members of the Wearmouth-Jarrow community, but many of his commentaries were requested by his diocesan bishop, Acca of Hexham.⁷⁵ Recent work has highlighted the probable importance of a clerical audience with pastoral duties to whom Bede provided necessary materials; hence the moral emphasis of Bede’s exegesis:

⁷³ Matthew 16.18.

⁷⁴ *Hom.*, II.25 pp. 372-3. Surprisingly the homily’s editor and translators have not drawn attention to 1 Corinthians 10.4 as a source here.

⁷⁵ Bede declared that he wrote his commentaries ‘meae meorumque necessitati’ (*HE*, V.24 p. 566); Acca requested *On Luke* and Book I of *On Genesis*, for example, and urged Bede toward exegesis in general, resulting in the monk sending him many other commentaries also: *Act.*, p. 3 ‘me commonere dignatus es ne mentis acumen inerti otio torpere et obdormire permittam, sed meditandis scrutandisque cotidie scripturis uigil atque indefessus insistam’.

the focus on spiritual meanings which require realisation in action.⁷⁶ A clerical audience, however, does not rule out a monastic one. While the community at Hexham had a bishop and that at Wearmouth-Jarrow did not, they probably overlapped in many other features.⁷⁷ In the context of an Anglo-Saxon monasticism not yet characterised exclusively by cloistered contemplation, this ‘pastoral’ element in Bede’s thought does not contradict a monastic concentration on the Bible.⁷⁸

The Bible thus lay at the heart of Bede’s education and intellectual endeavours. As we will shortly see, Bede’s interpretations of the temple-image derive from the use of that image within scripture itself. But often such interpretations were also patristic commonplaces. Centuries of Christian scholarship had been devoted to the Bible before Bede. A monk’s exegesis depended almost as much on his memory of the writings of the Fathers as on that of the sacred text.⁷⁹ We cannot discuss Bede’s ‘methodology’ without acknowledging the importance of his patristic reading, for, as already seen, he often simply had learnt that methodology from the Fathers. Thus, before embarking on a detailed study of Bede’s use of the temple-image, we must look at how it was used in the Christian tradition before him.

The Temple in the Christian Tradition before Bede

In this section, I locate Bede within the extensive tradition of Christian interpretation of the temple-image. The sheer bulk of Christian material before Bede which makes

⁷⁶ Judith McClure, ‘Bede’s *Notes on Genesis* and the Training of the Anglo-Saxon Clergy’, in *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 17-30; DeGregorio, ‘Exegetical Connections’, pp. 55-60; Arthur G. Holder, ‘Bede and the Tradition of Patristic Exegesis’, *Anglican Theological Review*, 72 (1990), pp. 399-411.

⁷⁷ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 61-9.

⁷⁸ DeGregorio, ‘Bede, the Monk’, p. 362.

⁷⁹ Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, p. 89.

reference to the temple-image mocks any attempt at synthesis or summary.⁸⁰ I confine myself, therefore, to emphasising writers and themes which may have influenced Bede; but neither here nor in the thesis as a whole has my aim been to conduct a detailed source-analysis of Bede's use of the temple-image.⁸¹ On occasion I identify particular influences or sources, including some not previously recognised. I make no claims to be exhaustive in doing so – having merely sought to remind the reader that Bede did not create his writings *ex nihilo*.

Christianity initially arose in the shadow of the temple at Jerusalem and both Jesus and his early followers continued to worship there. In such circumstances, the image of the temple features quite commonly in the New Testament – though some of its uses may not refer exclusively to the Jewish temple: gentile Christians were also familiar with pagan temples.⁸² Perhaps most obviously, the temple-image appears as a description of the Christian community, a *topos* possibly derived from similar language in other first-century Jewish groupings.⁸³ Architectural language appears time and again in the New Testament to describe the Church. As well as the general description of Christians as a temple or building, numerous architectural details feature: Christian leaders are pillars;

⁸⁰ Other overviews of this topic: Holder, 'Commentaries on the Tabernacle and the Temple', pp. 151-79; O'Reilly, 'Introduction', pp. xxiii-xxviii; Christiana Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 10-8.

⁸¹ The CCSL critical editions provide a starting point for investigation of Bede's sources, but those edited by David Hurst (including Bede's temple-commentaries) require substantial revision. Holder, 'New Treasures and Old', investigates the sources for *On the Temple* and *On the Tabernacle*. Many of the recent English translations include critical apparatuses which do much to improve on Hurst's source identification, in particular those by Holder and DeGregorio of *On the Tabernacle* and *On Ezra and Nehemiah* respectively. The translations of *On the Temple* and *Homilies on the Gospels* mainly simply repeat Hurst.

⁸² E.P. Sanders, 'Jerusalem and its Temple in Early Christian Thought and Practice', in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Lee I. Levine (New York: Continuum, 1999), pp. 90-103; Christopher Rowland, 'The Temple in the New Testament', in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day (London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 469-83. For the significance of the temple in the pagan world: Gregory Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 37-114.

⁸³ R.J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 38 (1976), pp. 159-77, mainly focuses on what sets the New Testament apart.

the cornerstone symbolises Christ; the apostles and prophets form the foundation (although elsewhere Christ is the foundation) and individual Christians become ‘living stones’.⁸⁴ The work of Christ tears down the ‘middle wall of partition’ which separated Jews and gentiles – a possible reference to the barrier separating the court of the gentiles from the rest of the temple-complex.⁸⁵ While Paul’s letters argued for the interpretation of the community as the temple, Paul further suggested that the body of the individual Christian formed a temple.⁸⁶ Through Christ all individual Christians had become priests and sacrifices.⁸⁷

While some Christian texts sought to commandeer the image of the temple for the new Church, others sought to denigrate it by emphasising how Christ had superseded the old Jewish cult and holy place. The Gospel of John identified Jesus’ body with the temple, and seems indeed to have presented the incarnate Word as replacing the temple as the means of God’s communication with his people.⁸⁸ Related ideas appear in the other gospels where the destruction of the temple veil marks Christ’s death; in Matthew’s gospel Christ declares himself to be greater than the temple.⁸⁹ Christians interpreted Jesus’ death on the cross as an act of sacrifice on the model of Jewish cult.⁹⁰ The most detailed use of such an idea is in the Letter to the Hebrews which presents Christ’s death not simply as superior to the Jewish sacrifices of the Old Testament but in fact as their

⁸⁴ 1 Corinthians 3.16-17; 2 Corinthians 6.16; Ephesians 2.21; Galatians 2.9; Apocalypse 3.12; Ephesians 2.20; 1 Corinthians 3.11; 1 Peter 2.5.

⁸⁵ Ephesians 2.14.

⁸⁶ 1 Corinthians 6.19. While Jewish writers had thought of the soul or mind as a temple of God, the identification with the body was original: Schüssler Fiorenza, ‘Cultic Language’, p. 172.

⁸⁷ 1 Peter 2.5, 2.9; Apocalypse 1.6; Romans 12.1. Schüssler Fiorenza, ‘Cultic Language’, pp. 174-5.

⁸⁸ John 2.19-21 (cf. Matthew 26.61, 27.40; Mark 14.58, 15.29). See Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), pp. 10-8.

⁸⁹ Matthew 27.51; Luke 23.45; Mark 15.38; Matthew 12.6.

⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians 5.7; Ephesians 5.2.

completion and perfection with Christ as the true high priest.⁹¹ The work of Christ had rendered the old mediation of the temple priesthood unnecessary. Hence, in the New Jerusalem there will be no temple because the Lord God ‘is the temple’.⁹² Stephen’s diatribe in Acts indicates that some Christians condemned the temple as something always nigh-idolatrous in its attempt to localise and limit the transcendent God.⁹³

The Letter to the Hebrews may also display a cosmological reading of the tabernacle similar to that presented by first-century Jewish authors like Philo and Josephus – the holy of holies represents heaven which Christ has entered by his sacrifice.⁹⁴ John’s Apocalypse similarly depicts heaven as a temple where God sits enthroned, worshipped by priestly angels.⁹⁵ Christian longing for the New Jerusalem, which was not of this world, replaced the old Jewish longing for Zion. In this great variety of New Testament sources lies the origin of Bede’s ‘rather exceptionally architectural approach to Revelation’.⁹⁶

Broadly speaking, Bede put the temple-image to those uses established by the New Testament. Indeed, when outlining the multiplicity of ways one could understand the temple, he would recite those interpretations which appear in the Bible: the temple as Church, as Christ’s body, as the individual believer, as heaven.⁹⁷ And Bede would cite the appropriate New Testament texts to back up these interpretations – the uses from

⁹¹ Hebrews 7-10; Marie E. Isaacs, *Sacred Space: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); Kenneth L. Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews: The Settings of the Sacrifice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁹² Apocalypse 21.22.

⁹³ Acts 7.47-50. Rowland, ‘Temple in the New Testament’, pp. 473-4; Wardle, *Jerusalem Temple*, pp. 197-202.

⁹⁴ Hebrews 9.24; George W. Macrae, ‘Heavenly Temple and Eschatology in the Letter to the Hebrews’, *Semeia*, 12 (1978), pp. 179-99, at 182-8; Jean Daniélou, ‘La Symbolique du Temple de Jerusalem chez Philon et Josephé’, in *Le Symbolisme Cosmique des Monuments Religieux*, ed. Giuseppe Tucci (Rome: Is.M.E.O., 1957), pp. 83-90. Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology*, pp. 180-1, argues that this language should be seen as metaphorical rather than genuinely cosmological.

⁹⁵ Apocalypse 4-5, 11.19, 15.5-8. Cf. 2 Corinthians 5.1.

⁹⁶ Jones, ‘Introductory Remarks’, p. 169.

⁹⁷ *DST*, II.12 pp. 168-9; *Temp.*, p. 147; *Ezra.*, p. 300; *Hom.*, II.1 pp. 189-90; *Gen.*, p. 213.

John's gospel and 1 Corinthians of course, but also 1 Peter (on 'living stones') and Ephesians (Christ as cornerstone).⁹⁸ While he also made use of the Letter to the Hebrews and the related ideas of Christ's superiority to the temple-cult, Bede seems to have rarely used Stephen's condemnation of the temple 'made by hands'.⁹⁹ The virulent polemic which the image of the temple incited in early Christian writers, who had attacked the material temple as having never been part of God's plan, never reached him.¹⁰⁰ The New Testament provided a variety of interpretations of the temple-image, and Bede clearly preferred some to others.

Centuries of patristic thought had mediated and refined such interpretations. One of the most important figures in this process, as in Christian exegesis more generally, was Origen. Variations on the temple-image regularly appear throughout his extensive corpus of exegesis.¹⁰¹ Origen made use of the standard Pauline interpretation of the temple as the individual and the Johannine interpretation of Christ's human body as the true temple.¹⁰² He considered the destruction of the physical temple to have been of great importance, not simply from a supercessionist perspective, but from an exegetical one: by rendering Jewish cult impossible to fulfil literally, God had shown that it ought to be interpreted

⁹⁸ John 2.19; 1 Peter 2.5; Ephesians 2.20. See the *Indices Scriptorum* of the relevant CCSL volumes.

⁹⁹ Bede commented on Stephen's speech, but diluted the suggestion that God had never desired the temple; the temple was inferior to what came after, but not idolatrous: *Act.*, p. 37. Interestingly, Bede never seems to have independently cited Isaiah 66.1-2's attack on the temple, which was Stephen's proof-text.

¹⁰⁰ *Epistle of Barnabas*, ed. and trans. Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 16 pp. 428-33; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. G. Reith, *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1867), XXII p. 115.

¹⁰¹ Carlo Lorenzo Rossetti, "*Sei diventato Tempio di Dio*": *Il mistero del Tempio e dell'abitazione divina negli scritti di Origene* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1998).

¹⁰² Individual as temple: Origen/Rufinus, *In Genesim Homiliae*, ed. W.A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke* 6 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1920), I.17 p. 22; *idem*, *In Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos explanationum*, ed. Caroline P. Hammond Bammel, *Der Römerbriefkommentar Des Origenes*, vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), VI.9 p. 511. Christ as temple: Origen/Rufinus, *In Exodum Homiliae*, ed. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke* 6, VI.12 pp. 202-3.

spiritually.¹⁰³ Hence, Origen's fascination with the Old Testament accounts of the tabernacle in particular. He read the description of the sacrifices of the temple-cult in the light of the Letter to the Hebrews: these presented types of Christ's own saving work.¹⁰⁴ Origen's interpretation of the tabernacle approached the image at two levels. Firstly, the tabernacle represented the Church, built up by the teachers of the faith (an idea which was central to Bede's exegesis),¹⁰⁵ secondly, the individual Christian could become a tabernacle through the virtues.¹⁰⁶ God desires the individual to move from earthly to heavenly things and be transformed into a higher being in the heavenly holy of holies.¹⁰⁷ The diversity and range of Origen's use of the temple-image anticipates its importance in Bede's work.¹⁰⁸ Did Bede, however, actually know Origen's exegesis, as represented in Rufinus' Latin translations? Hurst identified Origen's homily on the tabernacle as a source for *On the Tabernacle*, but Arthur Holder has convincingly demonstrated that Hurst's citations consist of, at best, vague reminiscences of Origen which do not suggest that Bede had access to the work.¹⁰⁹ However, Bede did directly quote from one of Origen's homilies concerning the temple on at least one occasion: in *On Luke* Bede, repeating Rufinus' translation of Origen, explained that the temple was destroyed by God

¹⁰³ Origen/Rufinus, *In Numeros Homiliae*, ed. W.A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke* 7 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich, 1921), XXIII.1 pp. 210-1. C.P. Bammel, 'Law and Temple in Origen', in *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple presented to Ernst Bammel*, ed. William Horbury (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), pp. 463-76.

¹⁰⁴ Origen/Rufinus, *In Leviticum Homiliae*, ed. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke* 6, IV.8 p. 327 'Igitur sacrificium, pro quo haec omnia sacrificia in typo et figura praecesserant, unum et perfectum, immolatus est Christus', IX.5 pp. 424-8.

¹⁰⁵ Origen/Rufinus, *In Exodum*, IX.3 pp. 239-40, XIII.4 p. 276 'Si doctor es, extruis tabernaculum aedificans ecclesiam Dei'. Bede and Origen quoted many of the same biblical texts (Psalms 11.7; Galatians 2.9, Ecclesiastes 4.12: *Tab.*, pp. 64, 74, 91) but rarely to the same effect

¹⁰⁶ Origen/Rufinus, *In Exodum*, IX.4 pp. 240-4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, IX.4 pp. 243-4; Origen/Rufinus, *In Leviticum*, IX.11 pp. 438-40. Rowan A. Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973), pp. 18-22.

¹⁰⁸ For Bede following in Origen's footsteps: O'Reilly, 'Library of Scripture', pp. 19-21.

¹⁰⁹ Holder, 'New Treasures and Old', pp. 245-8. Holder has similarly dealt with the suggestion that Origen was a direct source for *On the Song of Songs*: 'The Patristic Sources of Bede's Commentary on the Song of Songs', *Studia Patristica*, 34 (2001), pp. 370-5. The evidence for knowledge of Origen at Canterbury is rather vague: Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, pp. 219-20.

to prevent the external ceremonies of its cult from enrapturing those weak in the faith.¹¹⁰

This proves nothing about his wider access to Origen's corpus, but possibly other snippets from it reached Bede, who cited Origen by name in *On Genesis*.¹¹¹

The temple-image played its part in the controversies which disturbed the Church in the Greek-speaking world of the fourth and fifth centuries. To speak of the humanity assumed by the second person of the Trinity as the temple was 'typical' of the so-called 'Antiochene' theologians, who favoured a two-natures Christology.¹¹² A close reading of John 2.19 ('Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up'), they argued, showed a clear distinction between the temple/humanity which was to be destroyed and the divine Word who was to raise it up.¹¹³ Suspicion eventually fell upon the 'Antiochene' school due to association with the heretical Nestorius, who shared this understanding of the temple as the human nature assumed by God;¹¹⁴ in the long run, many of the 'Antiochene' thinkers were condemned. Describing Christ's body as the temple was never condemned, though such language came to be used with caution in the Greek East. The Formula of Reunion, signed by the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch in 433, spoke of the Word uniting himself to the temple he took from Mary and so the expression was canonized.¹¹⁵ While Bede condemned Nestorius, he often used the temple-image to stress Christ's human body, as we shall see.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ *Luc.*, p. 364; Origen/Rufinus, *In Leviticum*, X.1 pp. 441-2. Conor O'Brien, 'A Quotation from Origen's *Homilies on Leviticus* in Bede's Commentary on Luke's Gospel', *Notes and Queries*, 60 (2013), pp. 185-6.

¹¹¹ *Gen.*, p. 111 'Dicit autem Origenes quod...'.
¹¹² Greer, *Captain of Our Salvation*, pp. 280-1; J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th edn (London: Continuum, 1977), p. 329.

¹¹³ Paul B. Clayton, *The Christology of Theoderet of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 144; Frederick G. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 146.

¹¹⁴ John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 366; Greer, *Captain of Our Salvation*, p. 311.

¹¹⁵ McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 345.

¹¹⁶ On Nestorius: *Act.*, p. 83; *EpCath.*, p. 311; *Luc.*, p. 32. See pp. 151-5 below.

Many of the ‘Antiochene’ writers also ended up associated with another distinctive use of the temple-image: the belief in a tabernacle-shaped physical universe. Of course, cosmological interpretations of the tabernacle long played a part in the tradition, arising from Jewish exegesis, but only Theodore of Mopsuestia’s followers came to view the tabernacle as a literal image of the world. What had previously been symbolic became scientific.¹¹⁷ The *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Nestorian and flat-earthier, provides the most elaborate defence of this belief in a tabernacle-shaped universe.¹¹⁸ While ‘Antiochene’ uses of the temple-image may seem far removed from Wearmouth-Jarrow, many of these writers were known in Anglo-Saxon England. The output of the school of Canterbury, where Cosmas, for example, was explicitly cited, reveals the influence of the works of Theodore and his followers. It remains difficult, however, to determine whether this reflects Archbishop Theodore’s personal learning or the existence of actual copies of such works in England.¹¹⁹

The vast majority of Bede’s exegetical education came directly from the Latin Fathers; even a figure like Ambrose, of whose work Bede only had access to a small amount, probably proved more important than any Greek theologian. Ambrose frequently interpreted the Old-Testament priesthood in a distinctly clerical light, but his interpretation of the robes of the Aaronic high priest as symbolising the union of faith

¹¹⁷ Hervé Inglebert, *Interpretatio Christiana: Les mutations des savoirs (cosmographie, géographie, ethnographie, histoire) dans l’Antiquité chrétienne (30-630 après J.-C.)* (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 2001), pp. 55, 58-61; Wanda Wolska, *La Topographie Chrétienne de Cosmas Indicopleustes: Théologie et Science au VI^e siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), pp. 113-8; Holder, ‘Mosaic Tabernacle’. For Theodore: Robert Devreesse, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1948), p. 26. Origen/Rufinus, *In Exodum*, IX.4 p. 240, displays knowledge of, but little interest in, this interpretation.

¹¹⁸ For Cosmas’ intellectual outlook: Wolska, *La Topographie Chrétienne*. For his identity: Wanda Wolska-Conus, ‘Stéphanos d’Athènes et Stéphanos d’Alexandrie. Essai d’identification et de biographie’, *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 47 (1989), pp. 5-89, at 28-30.

¹¹⁹ Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries* pp. 205-33; Lapidge, *Library*, p. 33. See p. 63 below.

and works was more likely to be familiar to Bede.¹²⁰ Soteriologically, Ambrose often emphasised Christ's status as priest and victim, a status particularly linked to his humanity; Christ did not 'sacrifice for us in temples made by hand, but in the temple of his body'.¹²¹ In addition, the bishop of Milan liked the image of the temple-Church being built up from living stones – an image which he shifted towards emphasising the election of the gentiles, a concern which Bede would also share.¹²²

While Paul, breaking new ground, declared the body to be the temple of God, the Church Fathers received their education in a classical tradition which saw the soul as the only part of a human which one could consider divine; Ambrose and Jerome thus displayed a tendency towards speaking of the soul, rather than the body, as God's dwelling-place.¹²³ When they did speak of the body as the temple, they generally sought to condemn sexual sin and to celebrate the uncontaminated virgin body – an interpretation for which there existed scriptural justification.¹²⁴ Bede thus inherited a tradition that had shifted the

¹²⁰ Roger Gryson, 'Les Lévites, Figure du Sacerdoce Véritable, selon Saint Ambrose', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 56 (1980), pp. 89-112. For the High Priest's vestments: Ambrose, *De fide*, ed. O. Faller, CSEL 78, II.prol.11-13 pp. 61-2 (cf. *Tab.*, p. 106); Roger Gryson, 'Le Vêtement d'Aaron interprété par Saint Ambroise', *Le Muséon*, 92 (1979), pp. 273-80.

¹²¹ Ambrose, *De fide*, III.XI.86-7 pp. 139-40; *idem*, *Expositio Evangelii Secundum Lucam*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 14, prol.7 p. 5, I.23 p. 18 'qui non in manu factis templis sacrificaret pro nobis, sed in sui corporis templo'; *idem*, *De Spiritu Sancto*, ed. O. Faller, CSEL 79, I.prol.4 p. 17. Roger Gryson, *Le Prêtre selon Saint Ambroise* (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1968), pp. 45-62.

¹²² Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii*, II.75 pp. 62-3 (cf. *Luc.*, pp. 77-8), VII.169 p. 273, IX.1 p. 333. Ambrose's commentary is very anti-Jewish; he read the rending of the veil as the destruction of the Synagogue, while Bede followed Jerome in concentrating on the transference of the sacraments of the Law to the gentiles: X.128 p. 382; *Luc.*, pp. 406-7, quoting Jerome, *In Matheum*, ed. D. Hurst & M. Adriaen, CCSL 77, p. 275. See Maria Doerfler, 'Ambrose's Jews: The Creation of Judaism and Heterodox Christianity in Ambrose of Milan's *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*', *Church History*, 80 (2011), pp. 749-72.

¹²³ Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii*, X.6 p. 347, X.17 pp. 350-1; *idem*, *Exameron*, ed. C. Schenkl, CSEL 32, VI.6.39 p. 231 'non, inquam, caro es tu; neque enim carni dicitur: templum enim sanctum est, quod estis vos...'. Gryson, *Le Prêtre*, pp. 77-84, does not discuss this quotation as part of his study of Ambrose's use of the temple-image. Jerome, *Epistulae*, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 54, LVIII.7 p. 536, CSEL 55, CVII.4 p. 293; *idem*, *In Matheum*, p. 148.

¹²⁴ Ambrose, *De Virginitibus*, ed. and trans. Franco Gori, *Verginità e Vedovanza*, 2 vols (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 1989), II, II.18 p. 180. Jerome, *Epistulae*, CSEL 54, XXII.6 p. 150, LV.2 p. 489. For the tendency to relate the Jewish priesthood and cult to the position of virgins in the Church: Clark, *Reading Renunciation*, pp. 208-32.

image of the temple-as-individual in a more spiritual direction, away from Paul's focus on the body.

Jerome's primary interpretation of the temple-image remained ecclesiological. Indeed, he stated that any mention of building Jerusalem or its temple in the Old Testament should be understood as referring to the growth of the Church, on an institutional or individual level, in the current age.¹²⁵ A concern to refute so-called Jews and 'Judaizers', who read such passages as prophecies to be literally fulfilled in the future, seems to have driven Jerome.¹²⁶ He believed that the universal spread of the gospel had superseded the limitations of the material temple; the individual believer had become the locus of God's presence and thus access to God was available in Britain just as easily as in Jerusalem.¹²⁷ Jerome's interpretation of Ezekiel's temple provided a model for Bede's exegesis, interweaving textual criticism with mystical exegesis, calling on both linguistic competence and number symbolism.¹²⁸

Augustine was unusual in the degree to which he saw the Old Testament Jewish cult as an explicitly good thing. God had ordered blood sacrifices and the temple ritual not because of the weakness of a carnal people, but because these things bore a genuine sacramental relationship to the true sacrifice of Christ on the cross. God had intended the Jews to practice physical sacrifice and approved when they did so in the period before the

¹²⁵ Jerome, *In Amos*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 76, p. 346. Yvon Bodin, *Saint Jérôme et L'Église* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1966), pp. 283-9, emphasises the interiority of Jerome's presentation of the temple-Church.

¹²⁶ Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 126-48; *idem*, 'In novissimis diebus: Biblical Promises, Jewish Hopes and Early Christian Exegesis', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 1 (1993), pp. 1-19; Michael Graves, "'Judaizing" Christian Interpretations of the Prophets as seen by Saint Jerome', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 61 (2007), pp. 142-56.

¹²⁷ Jerome, *In Esaiam*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 73+A, pp. 86, 585, 634 'Domusque orationis Ecclesia est, quae in toto orbe diuiditur, et non templum Iudaeorum, quod breuissimis Iudaeae terrae arctabatur angustiis', 694; *idem*, *Epistulae*, CSEL 54, LVIII.3 p. 531 'uos estis templum dei et spiritus sanctus habitat in uobis. Et de Hierosolymis et de Britannia aequaliter patet aula caelestis'.

¹²⁸ Jerome, *Commentarii in Hiezechielem*, ed. F. Glorie, CCSL 75, XII pp. 549-604.

passion.¹²⁹ This approach clearly influenced Bede, who repeatedly quoted Augustine that, while there was a diversity of sacraments on account of the difference of times, the faith had been one always.¹³⁰ Augustine's positive view of the temple-cult derived from the centrality of Christ's sacrifice to his view of salvation, and, while not alone in this, he was probably the most influential theologian to transmit this view to Bede. In the form of the incarnation Christ existed as true Mediator, priest and sacrifice.¹³¹ He had offered the Church, in the form of his body, up to God in sacrifice; since Christ's own body was the temple, it followed that the Church must also be the temple.¹³²

The temple-image, therefore, proved primarily Christocentric for Augustine. Christians participate in Christ as parts of his body; Christ dwells within Christians as God in his temple.¹³³ Consequently, Augustine (just like Bede) was fond of applying architectural imagery to the Church.¹³⁴ The temple-image represented unity for Augustine: the unity of the individual with Christ, but also of all Christians with each other through charity.¹³⁵ In

¹²⁹ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* [hereafter *DCD*], ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCSL 47-8, X.5 pp. 276-8; *idem*, *Contra Faustum*, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 25, XIX.16-7 pp. 512-6, XX.18 pp. 558-9, XX.22 pp. 565-6. Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), esp. chs 9-10; Arthur F. Krueger, *Synthesis of Sacrifice according to Saint Augustine: A Study of the Sacramentality of Sacrifice* (Mundelein, IL: Seminary of St Mary of the Lake, 1950), pp. 49-67.

¹³⁰ *Act.*, pp. 26, 66-67; *Tab.*, p. 86; *Cant.*, p. 190; *Hom.*, II.3 p. 204. Cf. Augustine, *Epistulae*, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 57, CXC.6 p. 142.

¹³¹ Augustine, *DCD*, X.6 p. 279, X.20 p. 294; *idem*, *De Trinitate*, ed. W.J. Mountain, CCSL 50, IV.14 pp. 186-7. Gerald Bonner, 'The Doctrine of Sacrifice: Augustine and the Latin Patristic Tradition', in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S.W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 101-17; Earl C. Muller, 'The Priesthood of Christ in Book IV of the *De trinitate*', in *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard et al. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 135-49; Krueger, *Synthesis of Sacrifice*, pp. 68-99.

¹³² Augustine, *Sermones post Maurinos Reperti*, ed. G. Morin, *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, vol. 1 (Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1930), Morin.III.4 pp. 598-9 'Templum ergo dei, corpus Christi...dixit, Corpora vestra membra sunt Christi, quid ostendit, nisi quia corpora nostra et caput nostrum, quod est Christus, simul unum templum est dei?'

¹³³ Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont, CCSL 38-40, CXXXI.3 p. 1913; *idem*, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus*, ed. R. Willems, CCSL 36, XXVII.6 p. 272, CXI.6 pp. 632-3.

¹³⁴ Dominique Sanchis, 'Le symbolisme communautaire du temple chez Saint Augustin', *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, 37 (1961), pp. 3-30, 137-47; Finbarr G. Clancy, 'Augustine's Sermons on the Dedication of a Church', *Studia Patristica*, 38 (2001), pp. 48-55; Gérard Remy, 'La notion de fondement chez saint Augustin (II)', *Revue Thomiste*, 106 (2006), pp. 587-617.

¹³⁵ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, X.7 pp. 79-80, CXXX.1 p. 1898; *idem*, *Sermones*, PL 38, XV.1 col. 116; *idem*, *Epistulae*, CLXXXVII.38 p. 115.

his preaching Augustine tended towards emphasising the bodily nature of the individual-temple, for reasons of moral exhortation.¹³⁶ He both dismissed the idea that God's temple was the human mind and declared that the bodies of married women were temples of God just as much as those of virgins.¹³⁷ But, of course, the body of fallen humanity did not deserve this dignity automatically – individuals only became the temple of God once they had received the grace of baptism.¹³⁸

This idea was not unique to Augustine. The liturgical forms preserved in the Gelasian Sacramentary, for example, declare that the Christian becomes a temple of God through baptism.¹³⁹ This reminds us that exegesis and theological writings did not provide Bede's only sources for Christian views of the temple. The Gelasian liturgy of church dedication speaks of the church-building as a temple, and the link between new churches and the Jerusalem temple appears frequently, either in their design or through inscriptions and commemorative verses.¹⁴⁰ Anglo-Saxon Christians made the link in their own writings – Stephen's account of Wilfrid's church at Ripon, for example, compared it to both the temple and the tabernacle.¹⁴¹ Great preachers like Augustine and Caesarius of Arles made use of this tradition in sermons and homilies to mark the dedication, or anniversary of the dedication, of a physical church. They used Christian architectural language to direct

¹³⁶ Augustine, *Sermones*, IX.15 col. 86-7, CLXI.2 col. 878-9, CCLXXVIII.7 col. 1271.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, LXXXII.13 col. 512; Augustine, *De Bono Viduitatis*, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 41, VI.8 pp. 312-3.

¹³⁸ Augustine, *Epistulae*, CLXXXVII.31-3 pp. 108-11; *idem*, *Contra Iulianum*, PL 44, VI.XIV.42-3 col. 846-7.

¹³⁹ *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae Ordinis Anni Circuli*, ed. Leo Cunibert Mohlberg et al. (Rome: Herder, 1960), LXXV.607 p. 95, also XXXIII.294 p. 45. For the Gelasian liturgy in early Anglo-Saxon England and Bede's knowledge of it: Richard W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 40-5.

¹⁴⁰ *Liber Sacramentorum*, LXXXVIII pp. 110-1. Marie-Pierre Terrian, 'Religious Architecture and Mathematics during the Late Antiquity', in *Mathematics and the Divine: A Historical Study*, ed. T. Koetsier and L. Bergmans (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005), pp. 147-60, at 151-2; Robert Ousterhout, 'The Temple, the Sepulchre, and the Martyrion of the Savior', *Gesta*, 29 (1990), pp. 44-53. John Wilkinson, *From Synagogue to Church: The Traditional Design, Its Beginning, its Definition, its End* (London: Routledge, 2002), argues that synagogues, and subsequently churches, were deliberately built following the dimensions of the heavenly temple.

¹⁴¹ VW, XVII pp. 34-7 (for reference to the tabernacle: *Liber Sacramentorum*, LXXXVIII.700 pp. 109-10). Aldhelm's verses on the dedication of churches frequently describe the church-building as *templum*: *Carmina Ecclesiastica*, ed. R. Ehwald, MGH Auctores Antiquissimi 15, I-III pp. 11-8.

moral exhortations to their congregation or to speak about the congregation as the true temple.¹⁴² Bede himself participated in this tradition, taking exactly the same kind of approach in his homilies for the feast of a church's dedication (*Homilies* II.24 and II.25).

While all the Fathers had a claim on Bede's devotion, Gregory the Great, the 'Apostle of the English', had a special influence over the Northumbrian. One of Gregory's letters (known to Bede) concerning the mission to the Anglo-Saxons comments interestingly upon ancient Jewish cult. Suggesting that the Church reuse the sites of old pagan shrines, Gregory put forward the, un-Augustinian, argument that God ordered the Jews to sacrifice animals because they were already familiar with such a rite from paganism and it would ease their progress to the true faith.¹⁴³ Most commonly Gregory used temple-imagery to advance his vision of clerical reform and pastoral purity. For example, he returned to the story of the cleansing of the temple repeatedly to condemn simony among the clergy;¹⁴⁴ he interpreted the details of the tabernacle and its priesthood as giving rules for the Christian pastor in a manner which Bede later expanded upon.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Ambrose, *Exhortatio Virginitatis*, ed. and trans. Gori, *Verginità e Vedovanza*, II, 2.10 p. 206, 14.94 p. 270; Augustine, *Sermones*, CCCXXXVI-CCCXXXVII col. 1471-8; Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones*, ed. G. Morin, CCSL 104, CCXXVIII-CCXXIX pp. 901-10. See Brian Repsher, *The Rite of Church Dedication in the Early Medieval Era* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), esp. pp. 27-33, and, for the later Middle Ages, Ruth Horie, *Perceptions of Ecclesia: Church and Soul in Medieval Dedication Sermons* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

¹⁴³ Gregory, *Registrum Epistularum*, ed. D. Norberg, CCSL 140+A, XI.56 pp. 961-2; *HE*, I.30 pp. 106-9. See Flora Spiegel, 'The *tabernacula* of Gregory the Great and the Conversion of Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE*, 36 (2007), pp. 1-13. P.A. Gramaglia, 'Linguaggio Sacrificale ed Eucarestia in Gregorio Magno', in *Gregorio Magno e il suo Tempo*, vol. 2 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1991), pp. 223-65, at 231-6, gathers together many references to sacrifice throughout Gregory's work.

¹⁴⁴ E.g. Gregory, *Registrum*, V.58 p. 355, VI.7 p. 376, IX.219 p. 784; *idem*, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, ed. R. Étaix, CCSL 141, I.IV.4 pp. 30-1, I.XVII.13 pp. 126-7, II.XXXIX.6 p. 386. Cf. *Luc.*, p. 349; *Marc.*, p. 579; *Hom.*, II.1 pp. 186-7. For Gregory's fraught relationship with the Roman clergy: P.A.B. Llewellyn, 'The Roman Church in the Seventh Century: The Legacy of Gregory I', *JEH*, 25 (1974), pp. 363-80.

¹⁴⁵ Esp. Gregory, *Regula Pastoralis* [hereafter: *RP*], PL 77, II.2-7 col. 27-42, II.11 col. 48-50. Also *idem*, *Moralia*, XXV.XVI.39 pp. 1263-4; Gregory reused parts of *RP* such as at *idem*, *Registrum*, I.24 pp. 22-32. Bruno Judic, 'La Bible miroir des pasteurs dans la *Règle pastorale* de Grégoire le Grand', in *Le monde antique et la Bible*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Pietri (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985), pp. 455-73. Bede's description of the priests' garments (*Tab.*, pp. 95-124) includes many borrowings from Gregory: Holder, 'New Treasures and Old', p. 243.

Gregory's *Homilies on Ezekiel* probably presented Bede with the most influential example of Christian exegesis of the temple. His own approach became infused with the language and themes of Gregory's interpretation. The role of preachers and teachers building the Church, seen as an institution with twin origins in the Jewish and gentile peoples, provided the ecclesiological focus of Gregory's work on Ezekiel's vision.¹⁴⁶ While love of neighbour builds up the Church in this life, it is the desire for perfect contemplation of God which drives the faithful on towards heaven.¹⁴⁷ As elsewhere, Gregory's use of the temple-as-individual image tended to concentrate on the interior, the mind rather than body as the place of divine inhabitation.¹⁴⁸ As we shall see repeatedly, Bede built the edifice of his exegesis with words and imagery quarried from the Fathers, and Gregory above all.

Christian exegesis, of course, did not come to a halt in the seventh and eighth centuries: the Insular world produced commentaries of its own, although the debate concerning the extent of that achievement rages on.¹⁴⁹ Certainly teachers explaining the Bible orally abounded, and at least on occasion, in Ireland as well as at Canterbury, texts recorded the ideas of some of those teachers.¹⁵⁰ The temple-image fascinated Irish exegetes as it had the Church Fathers, and so we should think of Bede as part of an on-going tradition of interpretation even if evidence concerning his dependence upon Irish work remains

¹⁴⁶ Teachers: Gregory, *In Hiezechihalem*, II.I.17 p. 222, II.VI.6-8 pp. 297-300, II.IX.20-2 pp. 374-7. Jews & gentiles: Ibid., II.V.2 p. 276, II.VI.20 p. 309, II.X.11 pp. 386-7.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., II.I.5 p. 211, II.IV.3 p. 259, II.VII.5 p. 319, II.VIII.4 pp. 338-9, II.IX.10 p. 364.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., II.II.5 p. 228, II.II.14 p. 234 'Nos ergo templum illius sumus, in quorum mentibus habitare dignatur'; Gregory, *Moralia*, XXIV.VIII.18 p. 1200; *idem*, *In Evangelia*, II.XXXIX.7 pp. 386-7. Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 96-7, argues that Gregory did think of the body as the temple, at least in the case of saints.

¹⁴⁹ Michael Gorman, 'The Myth of Hiberno-Latin Exegesis', and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'Bischoff's Wendepunkte Fifty Years On', *RB*, 110 (2000), pp. 42-85 and 204-37, respectively.

¹⁵⁰ Michael W. Herren, 'Irish Biblical Commentaries before 800', in *Roma, Magistra Mundi: Itineraria Culturae Medievalis*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, vol. 1 (Louvain: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1998), pp. 391-407.

slight.¹⁵¹ In a similar way to some of the grand claims made of the Canterbury school, so too the distinctiveness of Irish exegesis has been exaggerated.¹⁵² Insular exegesis, including Bede's work on the temple-image, existed in essential continuity with the patristic tradition which it inherited.

We must temper a modern interest in authorial originality with an appreciation of this continuity. Holder has sought to identify an original contribution to the tradition in Bede's contrast between the tabernacle and the temple – interpreted either as the Synagogue (the tabernacle entirely built by Jews) and the Church (the temple built by both Jews and gentiles), or as the pilgrim Church of this world and the triumphant Church in heaven.¹⁵³ The first of these two contrasts does appear to be original to Bede but the second proves rather more complicated. Behind it we may readily identify 2 Corinthians 5, which speaks of a 'house not made with hands, eternal in heaven' contrasted with the temporal life of those *in tabernaculo*.¹⁵⁴ Whilst Paul probably meant the mortal body rather than the earthly Church by 'tabernacle', he had already established Bede's basic contrast of two different dwellings. Centuries of patristic thought elaborated on this. Augustine particularly enjoyed contrasting the *tabernaculum* of the earthly Church with the *domus* of the heavenly one.¹⁵⁵ Of course, *tabernaculum* can simply mean 'tent' and often need not have explicitly referred to the tabernacle of Exodus. Bede himself applied the earthly interpretation to *tabernacula* other than that in which God

¹⁵¹ For Irish use of the temple-image: O'Reilly, 'Exegesis and the Book of Kells'. Earlier claims as to Bede's use of Irish exegesis must be nuanced following recent work: Gryson's comments, CCSL 121A, pp. 155-7; Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei fedeli*, pp. 52-60.

¹⁵² Clare Stancliffe, 'Early "Irish" Biblical Exegesis', *Studia Patristica*, 12 (1975), pp. 361-70.

¹⁵³ Holder, 'New Treasures and Old', p. 239; *idem*, 'Mosaic Tabernacle', p. 105. *Temp.*, pp. 147-8; *Tab.*, pp. 42-3; *Hom.*, II.25 p. 369.

¹⁵⁴ 2 Corinthians 5.1-4 'Scimus enim quoniam si terrestris domus nostra huius habitationis dissolvatur quod aedificationem ex Deo habeamus domum non manufactam aeternam in caelis... nam et qui sumus in tabernaculo ingemescimus gravati...'

¹⁵⁵ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, XXX.8 pp. 218-9, CXXXI.10 p. 1916; *idem*, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, XXVIII.9 p. 282.

dwelt;¹⁵⁶ but it is, nonetheless, clear that here lies the origin of the tabernacle-temple contrast.

Other exegetes before Bede seem to have touched on this contrast. Isidore of Seville did so implicitly, beginning his exegesis of the tabernacle by saying that it symbolised ‘the Church established in the desert of this life’, and that on the temple by linking Solomon with Christ ‘who built a house for God in the heavens’.¹⁵⁷ Holder was unconvinced that this work influenced Bede, but similar ideas appear in works he certainly had read.¹⁵⁸ Cassiodorus interpreted ‘the place of the tabernacle’ as ‘the present Church’, which he contrasted with the Jerusalem and house of God ‘of the world to come’.¹⁵⁹ An Irish commentary understood 2 Peter 1.13’s tabernacle (a reference to the body) as being that of Exodus, contrasting it with the Jerusalem temple signifying heaven.¹⁶⁰ While Bede may have been the first to make this contrast clearly and explicitly, such ‘originality’ seems highly conservative – being nothing more than the development of a patristic commonplace.

Thus while we naturally seek to stress the differences between authors’ uses of the temple-image, we ought to remember that repetition is one of the most common features of these writings. Frequently in fact, Bede directly borrowed the very words of previous

¹⁵⁶ *Ezra.*, pp. 267-8; *Gen.*, pp. 138-9; *EpCath.*, pp. 265-6.

¹⁵⁷ Isidore of Seville, *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*, PL 83, Exodus.L.1 col. 313 ‘Tabernaculum hoc per allegoriam Ecclesia est in hujus vitae eremo constituta...’ (cf. *Tab.*, p. 128 ‘per heremum huius uitae’), RegIII.II.1 col. 415 ‘Nam id, quod aedificavit templum excellentissimum Domino, et ibi Christum significat, qui aedificavit domum Deo in coelestibus’; Isidore also linked the rebuilding of the temple to heaven: Esdra.I.1 col. 423. Isidore does not appear to have drawn on any direct source when interpreting the tabernacle as the Church militant: D.J. Uitvlugt, ‘The Sources of Isidore’s Commentaries on the Pentateuch’, *RB*, 112 (2002), pp. 72-100, at 97.

¹⁵⁸ Holder, ‘New Treasures and Old’, p. 248.

¹⁵⁹ Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 97-8, XLI.5 p. 382 ‘in locum tabernaculi; hoc est in Ecclesiam praesentem. Ibi enim dum ingrederetur amplius plorabat, amplius gemebat adhuc differri illam Ierusalem, quam sanctis suis Dominus repromisit...De isto uero tabernaculo usque ad illam futuri saeculi domum Dei pius incola festinabat’.

¹⁶⁰ *Commentarius in Epistolas Catholicas Scotti Anonymi*, ed. R.E. McNally, CCSL 108B, p. 36 ‘In hoc tabernaculo, id est quando migramus de Egypto in terram autem repromissionis. Templum in Hierusalem, id est caelesti.’ For Bede’s knowledge of this work see Gryson’s comments in CCSL 121A, p. 157 n. 20.

writers.¹⁶¹ This has often been linked to Bede's description of himself as 'following in the footsteps of the Fathers',¹⁶² consequently scholars once saw him as a conduit of patristic learning to an otherwise ignorant Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁶³ But Bede's works, formed of a mosaic of biblical citations, patristic quotations and echoes, and original comments, display great deliberation in their manipulation of patristic learning and, thus, when Bede chose to use the words of earlier writers, he had made a calculated decision to do so.¹⁶⁴

Often, no doubt, he used the words of other men because they genuinely expressed his views. Traditional interpretations and images were not external presences in his writings – they formed part of his living thought.¹⁶⁵ Bede's authorial identity did not rest upon modern conceptions of originality or individuality; in building his exegesis out of other authors' words he participated in a distinguished tradition of exegetical writing.¹⁶⁶ The communal context at Wearmouth-Jarrow had often mediated those words to Bede. For instance, his first encounter with the Church Fathers probably came via their use in the monastic liturgy.¹⁶⁷ Interaction with his brother monks thus framed Bede's understanding of patristic tradition. As I argue in what follows, Wearmouth-Jarrow's influence on Bede's temple probably went a lot further than simply providing a library upon which the great author could draw.

¹⁶¹ Michael Gorman, 'Source Marks and Chapter Divisions in Bede's Commentary on Luke', *RB*, 112 (2002), pp. 246-90, at 274, estimates that only 10% of *On Luke* was originally written by Bede.

¹⁶² *Sam.*, p. 10 'patrum uestigia sequens'. Also *Temp.*, p. 144 'sequens magnorum uestigia tractatorum'; *Act.*, p. 3 'iuxta uestigia patrum', etc.

¹⁶³ Holder, 'Patristic exegesis', p. 400; Ray, 'Bede's Commentaries?', pp. 10-1. See *Gen.*, pp. 1-2; *Luc.*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁶⁴ Bede's thoughtful manipulation of his source-materials has long been recognised: Jenkins, 'Exegete and Theologian', p. 165; Ansgar Willmes, 'Bedas Bibelauslegung', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 44 (1962), pp. 281-314, at 290-305; J.N. Hart-Hasler, 'Bede's Use of Patristic Sources: The Transfiguration', *Studia Patristica*, 28 (1993), pp. 197-204.

¹⁶⁵ Hilliard, 'Bede as Scholar', p. 103.

¹⁶⁶ Mark Stansbury, 'Early-Medieval Biblical Commentaries, Their Writers and Readers', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 33 (1999), pp. 49-82.

¹⁶⁷ Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei Fedeli*, pp. 65-6.

Chapter 3

Bede's Temple as Cosmos

Long before Bede, Jewish and Christian commentators had sought to make the sites of the Jewish national cult relevant to all peoples at all times. A popular way of doing this was to interpret the temple-image as symbolising the entire cosmos.¹ The tabernacle and temple were the universe writ small and, consequently, sites of no merely local religious significance. For Christians the Letter to the Hebrews could add to such a reading, speaking as it did of the tabernacle as just a shadow of the heavenly reality which had been shown to Moses.² The most extreme end of this path of interpretation is represented by the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes, a sixth-century Egyptian monk. In his view the tabernacle replicated the physical structure of the universe: a cuboid cosmos, with a flat earth at its base, split vertically between heaven and earth.³ Separated in time and place from the site of the physical temple, Bede may seem likely to have welcomed some such cosmic interpretation which would have made the temple-image relevant to his world. As we shall see in this chapter, his use of the temple-image does reveal many of his ideas about the created world and his own place, as an Anglo-Saxon, within it. These ideas find a striking parallel in the Codex Amiatinus, the creation of which may help explain Bede's use of the temple-image.

In this chapter I use the word cosmos to refer to the whole created universe – both heaven and earth. It might seem strange to describe the spiritual heaven as part of the same

¹ Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus' Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 53, 171; Flavius Josephus, *Judean Antiquities*, ed. Franz Blatt, *The Latin Josephus* (Copenhagen: Universitetsforlaget i Aarhus, 1958), III.181-7 pp. 241-2. See p. 48 above.

² Hebrews 8.5, 9.23.

³ Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie Chrétienne*, ed. and trans. Wanda Wolska-Conus, 3 vols (Paris: Cerf, 1968-1973), II, 38-74. See p. 52 above.

universe as the earth; but Bede clearly envisaged it this way. God had created heaven, as the unchanging location where angels dwell in ‘the glory of the divine presence’, along with the earth at the beginning of time.⁴ Bede even seems to have assigned the higher heaven of the angels a spatial location, suggesting that it had a physical relationship with earth.⁵ Of course, he never sought to precisely map that relationship or definitely place heaven within the cosmos described in his scientific works. But some confusion concerning the relationship between the spiritual heaven and the material world would not have been unusual in Anglo-Saxon England.⁶

Bede’s Use of the Cosmic Interpretation

The *Christian Topography* was known at Canterbury, and Wearmouth-Jarrow possessed a cosmographical codex which may have included Cosmas’ work – but Bede would certainly have dismissed the ideas expressed therein had he known them.⁷ Bede believed in the traditional cosmos consisting of a spherical earth at the centre of a spherical universe. He left his students in no doubt as to the shape of the world:

The reason why the same [calendar] days are of unequal length is the roundness of the Earth, for not without reason is it called “the orb of the world” on the pages of Holy Scripture and of ordinary literature. It is, in fact, a sphere set in the middle of the whole universe. It is not merely circular like a shield [or] spread out like a wheel, but resembles more a ball, being equally round in all directions...⁸

⁴ *Gen.* pp. 3-4: p. 4 ‘Ipsum est enim caelum superius quod, ab omni huius mundi uolubilis statu secretum, diuinae gloria presentiae manet semper quietum...quia nimirum suis incolis mox creatum, hoc est beatissimis angelorum agminibus, impletum est’; trans. Kendall, p. 69.

⁵ Bede, *De Natura Rerum*, ed. Charles W. Jones, CCSL 123A, VII pp. 197-8.

⁶ See Jennifer Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 23, 71, 142.

⁷ Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, pp. 208-11; Gorman, ‘Theodore of Canterbury’, pp. 191-2; *HA*, 15 p. 380. The codex was sold to King Aldfrith; Henry Mayr-Harting suggested to me that Wearmouth-Jarrow may have been willing to part with a work whose thesis was thought unacceptable. However, Paul Meyvaert has provided a plausible alternative explanation of this codex: ‘Discovering the Calendar (*Annalis Libellus*) attached to Bede’s own Copy of *De Temporum Ratione*’, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 120 (2002), pp. 5-64, at 17-8.

⁸ *DTR*, XXXII p. 380 ‘Causa autem inaequalitatis eorundem dierum terrae rotunditas est; neque enim frustra et in scripturae diuinae et in communium literarum paganis orbis terrae uocatur. Est enim re uera orbis idem in medio totius mundi positus, non in latitudinis solum giro quasi instar scuti rotundus sed instar potius pilae undique uersum aequali rotunditate persimilis’; trans. Wallis, p. 91.

Whether Bede's insistence on the point suggests some alternative way of thinking which contradicted his teaching, or is merely the exactness of a good teacher, is difficult to say.⁹ There is evidence from Irish cosmological texts to suggest that some scholars were confused by the difference between a spherical and a merely circular world.¹⁰ But the spherical earth was clearly the dominant model in learned Anglo-Saxon writings during Bede's lifetime and for Bede himself the tabernacle could not possibly be a literal image of the cosmos.¹¹

A comparison between Bede and Cosmas draws out their radically different approaches. Cosmas described the table of the showbread as an image of the earth: its four corners refer to the four seasons of the year and the complicated pattern around the edge represents the encircling Ocean and the land beyond it.¹² Bede avoided such blatantly physical interpretations. The crown of the table represents the gospels (not the mountains that hold up heaven, as for Cosmas); its legs signify the four senses of scriptural interpretation.¹³ The only cosmic element in Bede's interpretation of the table is the four corners, which symbolise the spread of the gospels throughout the world.¹⁴ Nonetheless, Bede and Cosmas do seem to have shared some cosmological ideas. Bede happily stated that God divided the world, 'although it is one house', into two parts: the one for angels

⁹ Wesley M. Stevens, *Bede's Scientific Achievement*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Pauls' Church, 1985), p. 8; Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), p. 162, suggest that Bede was here arguing against 'real doubt and disbelief'.

¹⁰ Marina Smyth, *Understanding the Universe in Seventh-Century Ireland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1996), pp. 271-9.

¹¹ Gopa Roy, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Shape of the World', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 455-81.

¹² Cosmas, *Topographie*, II, 62.

¹³ *Tab.*, pp. 23-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24; see pp. 76-8 below.

and the other for humans. He quoted the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* here, but Cosmas had advanced the same idea.¹⁵

This is one of a few suggestive hints scattered throughout Bede's work of a cosmic temple or similar structure. Caedmon's hymn on creation quoted in the *Ecclesiastical History*, divinely inspired and thus presumably to be taken as an accurate description of reality, refers to God building the firmament as a roof for men.¹⁶ Bede opened *On Genesis* by comparing the work of God to that of a man setting about the construction of a stone building of some kind;¹⁷ later he, briefly but significantly, linked God's rest upon the seventh day to Solomon's dedication of the temple after its completion.¹⁸ The concept of a 'cosmic hall' or world-hall 'appears to be the only particularly Anglo-Saxon cosmological image that occurs in Old English poetry'.¹⁹ Elements of this image may be found in Bede's work, such as the famous account of human life as the swift passage of a sparrow through a king's hall, though I think it unlikely that Bede would ever have considered it an alternative to the authoritative image of the spherical earth he obtained from classical sources.²⁰ Knowledge of Cosmas' cuboid world perhaps partly lay behind

¹⁵ *Gen.*, p. 12 'In principio cum fecisset Deus caelum et terram, tamquam domum unam...ita totius mundi machinam cum una domus esset in duas diuisit regiones. Diuisionis autem haec fuit causa ut superna regio angelis habitaculum, inferior uero praerberet hominibus'; adapted from trans. Kendall, pp. 77-8; Pseudo-Clement/Rufinus, *Recognitions*, ed. Bernhard Rehm and Georg Strecker, *Die Pseudoklementinen II* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), I.27 pp. 23-4. Cf. Cosmas, *Topographie*, I, 322-4.

¹⁶ *HE*, IV.24 pp. 416-7 'filiis hominum caelum pro culmine tecti'. Bede made clear the divine origins of Caedmon's verse at the beginning of the chapter: p. 414 'Namque ipse non ab hominibus neque per hominem institutus canendi artem didicit, sed diuinitus adiutus gratis canendi donum accepit'; echoing Galatians 1.1.

¹⁷ *Gen.*, p. 3; Ruth Wehlau, "The Riddle of Creation": *Metaphor Structures in Old English Poetry* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 7, suggests that Bede was concerned about the physicality of this metaphor; actually he used the metaphor to explain that while human work takes time, proceeding by stages, God can work instantaneously. It is the issue of time, and not physicality, which Bede addressed.

¹⁸ *Gen.*, p. 33.

¹⁹ Neville, *Representations*, p. 147. Also Wehlau, "Riddle of Creation", pp. 15-54; Alvin A. Lee, *The Guest-Hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of Old English Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), esp. p. 24.

²⁰ *HE*, II.13 pp. 182-5. For more examples of how the 'cosmic hall' may have influenced Bede's thought: Faith Wallis, 'Caedmon's Created World and the Monastic Encyclopedia', in *Caedmon's Hymn and Material Culture*, ed. Frantzen and Hines, pp. 80-110, esp. 98.

the ‘cosmic hall’ of vernacular works, but the sources of Old English verse remain to a large extent obscure and the origin of this image cannot be asserted with certainty.²¹

Bede knew of the common interpretation of the temple veil as heaven, even overtly interpreted it as the physical heavens at one point, but he avoided using the cosmic reading of the veil which connected it, through its constituent colours, with the four elements from which all creation was made.²² The four colours of the veil and the priestly vestments – purple, red, white (i.e. linen) and violet/blue (*hyacinthum*) – had often been connected with the elements by previous exegetes.²³ For Bede, as in much Insular writing on creation, the Christian universe followed classical cosmology and the elements remained the essential building blocks of the universe.²⁴ In the temple-commentaries, however, Bede preferred moral interpretations of the four colours and focused discussion of the elements upon the human body rather than the cosmos.²⁵ Only on one occasion did he link the colours of the high priest’s robes with the four elements. By pointing out that this was what ‘the Hebrews say’, Bede made such an interpretation an objective fact which could be interpreted, rather than a Christian interpretation itself.²⁶

This reveals Bede’s standard approach to cosmological references in *On the Tabernacle*. They did not serve as meaningful interpretations, but were rather the means to get to the spiritual interpretation. For example, the uppermost layer of skins covering the tabernacle

²¹ Neville, *Representations*, p. 147: ‘The likelihood that a Greek cosmological work found followers amongst poets writing in Old English is probably not great...’

²² Veil as heaven: *Sam.*, p. 67 ‘uelum caeli’; *Tab.*, pp. 71, 130; *Temp.*, p. 187. *Tab.*, p. 71, draws upon Hebrews in discussing Christ’s passage through the veil of heaven but also provides a second interpretation ‘iuxta litteram’, where the beauties of the firmament are symbolised by the colourful tapestry of the veil..

²³ E.g. Cosmas, *Topographie*, II, 62; Jerome, *Epistulae*, CSEL 54, LXIV.18 p. 605; Ambrose, *De fide*, II.prol.12 pp. 61-2.

²⁴ *DTR*, XXXV pp. 391-5. For Irish cosmological work: Smyth, *Understanding the Universe*, pp. 47-87.

²⁵ *Tab.*, pp. 11, 89-90; *Temp.*, p. 188. Bede derived the moral interpretation of the colours from Gregory: e.g. *RP*, II.3 col. 29-30; see p. 170 below. For the four elements as the constituent parts of the human body: *Temp.*, p. 227; *Tab.*, pp. 61, 87.

²⁶ *Tab.*, p. 123 ‘aiuntque Hebraei quod ideo pontifex omnium figuram elementorum in suo habitu gestauerit’; trans. Holder, p. 142.

was blue because ‘blue is the colour of heaven’ but the significance of this is that it represents those who ‘live a pure heavenly life on earth’.²⁷ Similarly, the four rows of three stones on the priestly rational/breastplate clearly correspond to the year ‘which is divided into four seasons of three months each.’ The signified year, however, is itself a signifier of ‘the time of our salvation’.²⁸ In other words, Bede transferred the cosmic meanings of the Jewish holy things to the literal level; the cosmological interpretation was, therefore, the basis for a spiritual interpretation which arose from it. In this approach Jerome, who had outlined the Jewish understanding of the priestly robes, before developing the deeper, Christian interpretation, had undoubtedly influenced him.²⁹

The key biblical text for the cosmic interpretation (as emphasised by the writer to the Hebrews) was Exodus 25.9, where Moses is told to make the tabernacle according to the pattern that had been shown to him on the mountain.³⁰ According to Hebrews, Moses saw the heavenly reality; Cosmas believed that he saw the universe itself as made in Genesis 1.³¹ Despite a number of opportunities (the statement is repeated three times in the biblical text³²) Bede in *On the Tabernacle* never suggested that Moses had been shown the structure of the cosmos. Rather he proposed that the heavenly pattern may have been a way of life (the love-filled existence of the angels which humans should imitate) or the secrets of Christ and the Church which the tabernacle typologically foretold.³³ Bede’s cosmic language did not aim to do the same thing as that of Cosmas Indicopleustes. The

²⁷ *Tab.*, p. 58 ‘Hyacinthus namque caelestis est coloris...quid per pelles hyacinthinas nisi uirtus exprimitur illorum qui...caelestem quodam modo in terris uitam gerunt’; trans. Holder, p. 64.

²⁸ *Tab.*, p. 113 ‘Nam et hoc quod quattuor ordines in rationali ternos habebant lapides congruit anni uertentis ordini qui per ternos menses in quattuor tempora distinguitur. Annum autem in scripturis uocari totum hoc salutis nostrae tempus...’; trans. Holder, p. 130.

²⁹ Jerome, *Epistulae*, CSEL 54, LXIV.18 p. 605 ‘dicamus prius, quod ab Hebraeis accepimus, et iuxta morem nostrum spiritali postea intelligentiae uela pandamus.’ Cf. Holder, ‘New Treasures and Old’, p. 243.

³⁰ Hebrews 8.5.

³¹ Cosmas, *Topographie*, I, 448-50.

³² Exodus 25.9, 25.40, 26.30.

³³ *Tab.*, pp. 12, 40, 69-70.

Egyptian monk was trying to find in scripture ways to describe locations, while the Northumbrian monk used scripture to talk about moral states.

This becomes clear when one examines those instances where Bede did describe the temple-image as representing heaven and earth. He followed the Letter to the Hebrews in associating Christ's passion with entrance into the heavenly holy of holies through the veil.³⁴ Hence Bede interpreted the holy of holies as heaven where Christ reigns having passed from earth to his rest (the Ark of the Covenant being the body of the incarnate Christ) and the sanctuary in front of the veil as the earth, where the Church militant draws near but as yet is still waiting to pass through the veil.³⁵ This reading places heaven and earth within the temple horizontally, but they also appear there vertically – thus problematising the horizontal reading. Bede read the lower storey of the temple as the Church on earth, the middle storey as the Church currently at rest in heaven and the upper storey as the Church of the resurrected at the end of time. This vision of the temple adds a temporal element to the cosmic contrast: the individual Christian can progress step by step through each of these three stages through the saving work of Christ.³⁶

These two interpretations contradict each other on the literal level since the holy of holies, heaven on the horizontal analysis, forms part of the earthly ground floor according to the vertical interpretation. Bede used number symbolism to back up his analysis and here too apparent contradictions can arise: the sanctuary measured forty cubits in length 'for this number is often used to signify the present labour of the faithful', but the entire length of the temple (i.e. sanctuary and holy of holies) is sixty cubits, which refers to the

³⁴ Hebrews 7-10.

³⁵ *Tab.*, pp. 72-3, 129-30; *Temp.*, pp. 171, 176-7; *Hom.*, II.1 p. 190, II.25 p. 376; *DTR*, VIII p. 303; *Reg.*, XIV p. 306 'domus templi exterior peregrinantem in terris ecclesiam sancta autem sanctorum internam supernae patriae felicitatem designat'. Also *Sam.*, p. 67; *Apoc.*, p. 301; *Luc.*, p. 362 'in caeli penetralibus'.

³⁶ *Hom.*, II.1 p. 191 'Inferior ergo domus praesentem sanctorum conuersationem significat superior requiem animarum quae post hanc uitam percipitur suprema gloriam resurrectionis quae nullo umquam fine mutabitur', II.25 p. 375; *Temp.*, pp. 166-7; *Ezra.*, p. 301; *Gen.* pp. 109-10; *Reg.*, XII p. 304.

earth ‘because the Lord completed the creation of the world in six days, and because there are six ages of this world’.³⁷ These different ways of dividing up the temple sit alongside the simple fact that the temple *tout court* could symbolise heaven.³⁸ All these interpretations have some justification depending on whether one is seeking to emphasise the relative holiness of the Church on earth and in heaven, the progression of the individual toward God or the life of heaven as being a temple-liturgy consisting of the sacrifice of praise.³⁹

The difficulty arises, then, when one seeks to read these interpretations as descriptions of the literal structure of the cosmos and the actual relationship between heaven and earth, for on such a level they make no sense. Occasionally for Bede, the temple could symbolise the heavenly things which a Christian ought to contemplate or desire, rather than heaven itself. To be in the temple, therefore, meant that one concentrated on heavenly things – something which can be done while yet on the earth.⁴⁰ It has been argued that when Bede related the temple courtyards, each more restrictive than the previous, to a hierarchy of holiness within the Church, he sought to map the locations in heaven to which the various grades of Christian could expect to go.⁴¹ However, Bede never stated such a literal agenda; indeed the tone of his language, with a focus on the life

³⁷ *Temp.*, p. 172 ‘qui numerus saepe in significatione ponitur praesentis fidelium laboris’; trans. Connolly, p. 38. *Hom.*, II.25 pp. 374-5 ‘...dominus sex diebus mundi ornamentum perfecit et sex sunt huius saeculi aetates...’; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 263. The symbolism of the numbers four and forty is discussed at pp. 76-7 below. For medieval number theory: Vincent Foster Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), esp. ch. 5; Heinz Meyer and Rudolf Suntrup, *Lexikon der Mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1987). Augustine was fond of six, celebrating its perfection as a fitting symbol of the completion of good works, and developing the theory of six world ages which Bede then took up and expanded upon: Augustine, *DCD*, XI.30 p. 350, XXII.30 pp. 865-6; cf. *DTR*, LXVI pp. 463-5.

³⁸ *Act.*, p. 24 ‘templum regni caelestis’; *Luc.*, pp. 21-2, 61; *Hom.*, I.19 p. 135, II.16 p. 296, II.25 pp. 377-8; Bede, *Oratio ad Deum*, ed. J. Fraipont, CCSL 122, p. 445.

³⁹ *Hom.*, I.11 p. 77, II.24 pp. 365-6; *Apoc.*, p. 301.

⁴⁰ *Sam.*, pp. 35 ‘Templum quippe a contemplando ibi diuina et caelestia sacramenta dictum perhibent ubi est arca Dei, id est gloria summae trinitatis diuini totius sola conscia secreti’, 39; *Luc.*, p. 29.

⁴¹ Collins, *Carolingian Debate*, pp. 30-3.

and works (preaching, alms-giving, fasting, etc.) of the various types of Christian, implies that he was thinking of the current state of the soul, rather than its future destination.⁴²

Bede did speak in *On the Tabernacle* in spatial terms of the disposition of the elect in heaven: ‘the ones who endeavour to cleave to Christ higher up in this life will enjoy a closer vision of him in that life.’⁴³ In this case we could perhaps say that the candelabrum maps the position of souls in heaven. Certainly Bede believed that one’s earthly holiness affected one’s eventual celestial location; there were many mansions in God the Father’s house to match the different merits of the faithful.⁴⁴ Diversity of merits easily connects with ideas about hierarchy and Bede frequently read various architectural and design features of the temple-image as referring to some hierarchical structuring of the Church.⁴⁵ But he does seem to have warned against seeking to discover the exact nature of these heavenly distinctions, stating that ‘what the actual conditions and mode of life are like in that heavenly homeland, is clear only to those of its citizens who have gained entrance to it’.⁴⁶ The fact that the opposite walls of the temple symbolised the Jews and gentiles should not be taken as proof that those peoples would be kept separate in heaven.⁴⁷ We should not be looking for any detailed images of the universe or heaven in Bede’s use of the temple-image, therefore. But Bede’s temple does still speak of cosmic realities – in particular it sheds light on the relationship between heaven and earth.⁴⁸

⁴² *Temp.*, pp. 194-6 ‘perfectorum in sancta ecclesia et sublimium uitam...carnalium in sancta ecclesia uitam moresque...in uerbo praedicando laborant pauperibus omnia sua tribuunt uigiliis ieiuniis hymnis et canticis spiritualibus...’.

⁴³ *Tab.*, p. 32 ‘quanto quisque altius in hac uita Christo adhaerere curauerit tanto uicinior in illa uita eius uisione fruatur’; trans. Holder, p. 35.

⁴⁴ John 14.2. *Tab.*, p. 22; *Temp.*, pp. 233-4; *Ezra.*, pp. 376, 383; *Hom.*, II.24 p. 367. Cf. Gregory, *In Hiezechihelam*, II.IV.6 pp. 262-3.

⁴⁵ As well as *Temp.*, pp. 194-6, see *ibid.*, p. 163; *Tab.*, pp. 31-5. See pp. 119-21 below; Holder, ‘Mysteries of Our Salvation’, pp. 151-2.

⁴⁶ *Temp.*, p. 205 ‘status et conuersatio patriae illius caelestis quomodo sese habeat solis eis qui hanc intrare meruerunt eius ciuibus patet’; trans. Connolly, p. 82.

⁴⁷ *Temp.*, p. 181.

⁴⁸ Cf. Holder, ‘Mysteries of Our Salvation’, pp. 159-61.

That heaven and earth are opposites, eternally separate, seems to be a given. Bede used the temple-image to explore the separation between the states associated with the two.⁴⁹ The temple was built on a mountaintop having been divinely inspired, but valley-dwellers built its evil counterpart, the tower of Babel, with materials mined from the earth which symbolised their base minds.⁵⁰ Bede used the temple-image to contrast the different states of the Church or individual Christian: the mobile tabernacle represented the ‘exile’ of this current life, one of struggle and suffering, the fixed mountaintop temple the life to come, one of rest in the vision of God.⁵¹ While the various locations of the ark’s wanderings call to mind the diversity of the present life, its arrival in Jerusalem symbolises the departure from the body into heaven.⁵² This Augustinian contrast between the two states of the Church (the one a pilgrim upon the earth and the other triumphant in heaven) is one which clearly spoke deeply to Bede – perhaps because of the importance of religious exile in Insular culture.⁵³ Heaven and earth were different then – but not entirely incompatible since the Church existed contemporaneously in both. This is the special meaning of the temple-image, which can contain both heaven and earth within its symbolism.

Bede’s use of the temple-image thus serves frequently to undermine the distinction between heaven and earth. The Church in this life may be the wandering tabernacle but it

⁴⁹ See pp. 68-9 above.

⁵⁰ *Gen.*, pp. 158-61. Cf. *Ezra.*, p. 247; *Apoc.*, p. 247.

⁵¹ *Temp.*, pp. 147-8; *Tab.*, p. 42 ‘in utriusque constructione domus haec principalis solet esse distantia figurarum quod tabernaculum praesentis aedificium ecclesiae quo cotidie in laboribus exercetur templum futurae requiem designet’. Jennifer O’Reilly, ‘Bede on Seeing the God of Gods in Zion’, in *Text, Image, Interpretation*, ed. Minnis and Roberts, pp. 3-29, at 6-13.

⁵² *Sam.*, pp. 59-60.

⁵³ E.g. *Hom.*, II.16 p. 294 ‘Nam quia sancta ecclesia in quibusdam suis membris adhuc pro aeterna requie laborat in terris in quibusdam uero omni finito laborae cum Christo iam regnat in caelis’; *Cant.*, p. 237. M.A. Claussen, “Peregrinatio” and “Peregrini” in Augustine’s “City of God”, *Traditio*, 46 (1991), pp. 33-75; Augustine, *DCD*, XV.1 p. 454, XIX.17 pp. 683-5; *idem*, *Doctrina*, I.8-9 pp. 14-7; *idem*, *Enarrationes*, CXXV.3 pp. 1846-7. Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*’, *Celtica*, 11 (1976), pp. 43-59.

in fact is carrying the Christian, a citizen of heaven, homeward.⁵⁴ While the old temple was built on earth, the new temple of the living God, the Church, actually has its way of life in heaven.⁵⁵ The temple veil did not reach the chamber roof but left a gap open through which the scent of sacrifices could waft as prayers made on earth can still reach God in heaven.⁵⁶ Angels in heaven and humans on earth are both part of one temple-Church.⁵⁷ Contemplation allows the perfect to draw near the veil and see part of the heavenly life – if not the ark itself, at least the poles extending from it.⁵⁸ Many holy people in this life have earthly bodies but heavenly minds; standing near the veil they are liminal figures encompassing in themselves both cosmic extremes.⁵⁹ While Cosmas' cosmology was based on a contrast between now and then, here and there, Bede saw the Church as coexisting in many times and places. Its members, despite their separation by time, place, or nature, are built together into the one temple.⁶⁰

How has this unity of heaven and earth within the temple-image come about? As we have seen, the house of God sits upon a mountain – and that mountain is the incarnate Christ.⁶¹ Bede explicitly played with the dual interpretation of mountains (*in bono* and *in malo*) when he stated that the building of the temple transfers humans from 'the mountain of pride to the mountain of the house of the Lord'.⁶² Christ can be portrayed as a mountain because while born of the earth through his incarnation his divine nature raises him up

⁵⁴ *Tab.*, pp. 42, 85; *Temp.*, pp. 160, 172-3; *Ezra.*, pp. 267-8, 369.

⁵⁵ *Apoc.*, p. 385. Philippians 3.20. Cf. *Ezra.*, pp. 266, 327, 365.

⁵⁶ *Temp.*, p. 172.

⁵⁷ *Tab.*, pp. 72-3; *Temp.*, pp. 147, 179-81; *Ezra.*, pp. 300 'Christi domus ac templum eius... hoc est congregationem omnium electorum et angelorum et hominum', 371, 384.

⁵⁸ *Reg.*, XIV p. 307.

⁵⁹ *Tab.*, pp. 22, 58-9; *Ezra.*, p. 370. Gregory, *In Hiezechihalem*, II.X.21-22 pp. 395-6, presented the altar of incense as the saints who, while still in their bodies, draw near to Christ in heaven through love; Bede then picked up on this idea: *Temp.*, pp. 224-5.

⁶⁰ *Temp.*, p. 185; *Sam.*, p. 60; *EpCath.*, p. 235; *Tab.*, p. 48. Cf. Augustine, *DCD*, X.7 pp. 279-80.

⁶¹ *Cant.*, pp. 245, 305-6; *Sam.*, p. 221; *Marc.*, pp. 527-8; *Tab.*, p. 21.

⁶² *Temp.*, p. 152 'de monte superbiae et in montem domus domini transferimur'; trans. Connolly, p. 12. For *in bono* and *in malo* interpretations: Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, p. 18.

above all men.⁶³ Christ raises the Church along with himself; through his incarnation humanity has gained entrance to the heavenly temple.⁶⁴ This relates to a common patristic topos that by lowering himself Christ raised up humanity, God became man so that man might become God.⁶⁵ The joining of paradoxical natures in Christ not only reversed the effects of the Fall but served to join the, hitherto separated, parts of the universe.

For Bede, the Ark of the Covenant represented Christ's earthly body, his human nature, which now resides in heaven: the divine Christ had stooped down to earth to become incarnate and had then carried human flesh into heaven at his ascension.⁶⁶ The temple for Bede, just as for the Jews originally, proved that God 'ruled in heaven in such a way that he was nevertheless with his faithful on earth', i.e. through it God transcended the cosmic divide.⁶⁷ This transcendence came about through the incarnation and ascension – '[b]ecause he who was taken up into heaven is both God and a human being, he remains on the earth with the saints in the humanity which he took from the earth'.⁶⁸ The incarnation then seems to have two interlinking aspects: it allowed fallen humanity to regain connection with divinity by making the divine human, and it brought together the cosmic opposites of heaven and earth. This is not merely a metaphor for speaking of humanity's salvation; rather Bede suggested that the incarnation had a cosmic element.

⁶³ *Temp.*, p. 158. Cf. *Hom.*, II.15 p. 283. A link between Christ as mountain and the incarnation was also made by Gregory, *In Hiezechelem*, II.I.4 pp. 209-10.

⁶⁴ *Ezra.*, pp. 329-30, 351; *Hom.*, I.6 p. 41; *Temp.*, p. 187; *Tab.*, p. 12.

⁶⁵ E.g. Gregory, *Moralia*, XXII.XVII.42 pp. 1121-2; *idem*, *In Evangelia*, I.VIII.2 p. 56; Augustine, *Sermones*, CXCII.1 col. 1012. Straw, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 147-55; Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', *JTS*, 37 (1986), pp. 369-86.

⁶⁶ *Tab.*, pp. 13-7, 72; *Apoc.*, pp. 301, 385; *Reg.*, XIV p. 306; *Hom.*, II.25 p. 376. One of Bede's major sources for the commentary on Apocalypse may have introduced him to this interpretation: Primasius, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, ed. A.W. Adams, CCSL 92, III.11 p. 177; Gerald Bonner, *Saint Bede in the Tradition of Western Apocalyptic Commentary*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 1966). The key source he is drawing on, however, is probably Gregory, *In Hiezechihelem*, II.X.21 p. 395 'Arca intra uelum est Redemptor noster in caelo'.

⁶⁷ *Ezra.*, p. 246 'ita in caelis regnare credidit ut nihilominus cum suis fidelibus esset in terra'; trans. DeGregorio, p. 15.

⁶⁸ *Hom.*, II.8 p. 235 'Quia enim ipse Deus et homo est adsumptus est in caelum humanitate quam de terra susceperat manet cum sanctis in terra...'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 72.

We saw above that, while elsewhere in *On the Tabernacle* Bede simply spoke of the elements as the constitutive parts of the human body, he did once provide the four elements with a cosmic meaning.⁶⁹ However, here too, after explaining that the elemental colours of the high priest's vestments suggest that his sacrifices had universal significance, Bede explained the link with the human body and that 'for this same reason, Greek natural science refers to the human being as a "microcosm", that is, a "little world"'.⁷⁰ This has obvious significance when the Exodus text is read in the light of the Letter to the Hebrews: 'But if we understand the high priest whom Moses consecrates as the Lord Saviour, it is quite right that he carries in his vesture a figure of the whole world, and of a human being as well'.⁷¹ Bede went on to show that the dual meaning of the vestments is appropriate as Christ rules the entire world and takes away the sins of the world (John 1.29). The reference to the human body as microcosm suggests a link between Christ's incarnation in a human body and the wider macrocosmic universe to which that body is connected by a basic set of concordances.⁷² When Christ entered into the physical elements he changed them, as he turned water into a means of grace through baptism when he stepped into it.⁷³

The incarnation sanctified all of the created cosmos then. Hence Bede's concern to show the great universal stretch of the Church through the dimensions created in the beginning:

⁶⁹ See p. 66 above.

⁷⁰ *Tab.*, p. 123 'Vnde et a physiologis Graece homo microcosmos, id est minor mundus, uocatur'; trans. Holder, p. 143. Jerome, *Epistulae*, CSEL 54, LXIV.18 pp. 605-9, deals with the cosmic meaning of the elements, but does not go on to connect this to man as microcosm; Isidore of Seville is Bede's probable source for this idea, e.g. *De Natura Rerum*, ed. and trans. Jacques Fontaine, *Traité de la Nature* (Bordeaux: Féret et Fils, 1960), IX.2 p. 207. Marie-Thérèse D'Alverny, 'L'homme comme symbole. Le microcosme', *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 23 (1975), pp. 124-83.

⁷¹ *Tab.*, p. 123 'Quod si in pontifice quem consecrat Moyses dominum saluatorem intellegimus iure in habitu suo totius mundi figuram simul et hominis habet'; adapted from trans. Holder, p. 143.

⁷² For the various fours (elements, humours, seasons) which link all of creation: *DTR*, XXXV pp. 391-5; J.A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), esp. pp. 12-16; Wallis, *Bede: On the Reckoning of Time*, p. 319.

⁷³ *Temp.*, p. 222. Cf. Clare Stancliffe, 'Creator and Creation: A Preliminary Investigation of Early Irish Views and their Relationship to Biblical and Patristic Traditions', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 58 (2009), pp. 9-27, at 21-5.

space and time. Bede developed from Gregory the idea that the entrance portico to the temple symbolised the elect who had come before the incarnation – as one walked through the portico toward the doors of the temple one actually journeyed through history from Abel to Simeon (the last stone before the door, which was Christ).⁷⁴ The tabernacle signifies the pre-incarnation Church, the Synagogue, the temple, the post-incarnation Church of Jews and gentiles: the temple-image as a whole thus covers the entire historical society of the elect.⁷⁵ The seven years which Solomon took to build the temple represented the entirety of the temporal world through which Christ built up his Church from living stones, row upon row, generation upon generation. The temple's dedication in the eighth year symbolised the eighth age, that of the resurrection, when all the elect will reign in the completed temple-Church.⁷⁶ This interpretation of the temple-image in the light of history strengthened the Church's claim to be a truly universal temple.

The Anglo-Saxons' Place in the World

History obviously mattered a great deal to Bede, but perhaps the spatial extension of the Church mattered much more to him. Bede's temple-Church was truly cosmic because it was an entirety which stretched throughout the universe. This universal span of the Church justified its earthly unity also: just as one house of Christ encompassed both angels and humans so too the churches of many peoples were all part of one Catholic Church throughout the world.⁷⁷ Bede's use of the temple-image drew upon a wider

⁷⁴ *Temp.*, pp. 161-2; *Hom.* II.25 pp. 376-7. Cf. Gregory, *In Hiezechihelam*, II.III.16 pp. 247-8. Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, pp. 14, 17-8. The pre-incarnation elect were symbolised inside the temple also: *Temp.*, pp. 174-5. The entrance to the tabernacle is the early Church: *Tab.*, p. 74.

⁷⁵ *Tab.*, pp. 42-3; *Temp.* pp. 148, 157. *Hom.* II.25 p. 369, seems to suggest that the difference is between the two peoples called to Christ, Jews and gentiles, rather than the elect from two different eras – though the interpretations are close in practice.

⁷⁶ *Hom.* II.1 p. 191, II.24 pp. 364-5; *Temp.* pp. 196-7; *Ezra.*, p. 241; *DTR*, LXVI p. 476. Bede developed his theory of the eight world-ages from the work of Augustine and it appears frequently throughout his work: Paolo Siniscalco, 'Le età del mondo in Beda', *Romanobarbarica*, 3 (1978), pp. 297-332; Darby, *End of Time*, chs 1-3.

⁷⁷ *EpCath.*, p. 235.

Insular and patristic discourse to celebrate the Church's catholicity. The first thing to note is that although I began this chapter by stating that Bede would have dismissed any idea of the earth as flat and rectangular, he seemingly appealed to this image repeatedly throughout the temple-commentaries.

In numerous places Bede spoke of the earth as represented by the number four, talking of a square world, or simply of the four parts of the world.⁷⁸ He of course had a good scriptural basis for doing so as the four corners are regularly the means by which the earth is described in the Bible.⁷⁹ The language is thus highly stereotyped and primarily metaphorical; Bede had not rejected the spherical earth but rather was using an accepted image which could help explain the text he had before him.⁸⁰ He was here drawing upon imagery common in Insular (especially Irish) exegesis, which tended to link the gospels with the four-fold world; Bede adapted this imagery, almost always referring it to the global mission or universal spread of Christianity.⁸¹ When he could he interpreted circular objects as referring to this universal mission, but the simple fact is that such objects are rare in these texts and references to four or rectangular objects are a lot more frequent.⁸² For Bede's allegorical purposes the weight of the biblical tradition won out over his own scientific knowledge.

The four-fold world may mainly have been forced upon Bede by circumstances but the image also contained important symbolic resonances. The primary reference is the four

⁷⁸ *Tab.*, pp. 10, 112; *Temp.*, pp. 172, 213; *Luc.*, p. 132.

⁷⁹ Isaiah 11.12; Ezekiel 7.2; Matthew 24.31; Apocalypse 7.1.

⁸⁰ Wallis, 'Caedmon's Created World', p. 99: 'To be functional, even in a "scientific" context, visual representation did not necessarily have to be mimetic...'. Also Wolska, *Cosmas Indicopleustès*, pp. 133-6.

⁸¹ Jennifer O'Reilly, 'Patristic and Insular Traditions of the Evangelists: Exegesis and Iconography', in *Le Isole Britanniche e Roma in Età Romanobarbarica*, ed. A.M. Luiselli Fadda and É. Ó Carragáin (Rome: Herder, 1998), pp. 49-94.

⁸² I have only found two references to the circular world being used in the context of universal mission: *Temp.*, pp. 183, 207. Such interpretations using four are much more common: *Temp.*, pp. 210, 221; *Luc.*, p. 86; *Marc.*, pp. 469-70; *Tab.*, pp. 16, 20, 77, 82. Cf. *Ezra.*, p. 286.

cardinal points, biblical shorthand for the whole earth and all peoples in it and thus often called upon when speaking of the universal spread of the Good News or the destruction of all things at the End Times.⁸³ From this beginning, four, and as a consequence forty also, had come to stand as symbolic shorthand for this world, the temporal and material earth as a place of penance and struggle.⁸⁴ When Bede spoke of the four-fold world, he thought not just of the created world, but of that world as the desert where the Church suffers and works.⁸⁵ All of human life is thus seen as a journey towards heaven, a process of progression.⁸⁶ The four-fold world was also connected with the cosmic reach of the cross.⁸⁷ The laborious work of the Church in this world, as of Christ on the cross, is the salvation of mankind – and thus the four-fold world became for Bede the allegorical location of evangelisation.

For Bede the rectangular objects of Jewish cult (the altars for example) suggested the four corners of the world to which the four books of the gospel or faith in the Trinity would be taken by the missionary work of the Church.⁸⁸ One of the primary purposes of Bede's exegesis of the temple-image was to prove that it depicted the universal mission of the Church; it represented a symbol of God's intention to save the gentiles, existing long

⁸³ Matthew 24.31 and Apocalypse 7.1 are eschatological in meaning; Isaiah 11.12 is about the return of the Jews from exile but the chapter would be reinterpreted in a Christian context, e.g. the letter from Pope Vitalian to Oswiu of Northumbria which saw the spread of orthodoxy to the Anglo-Saxons as prophesied in scripture, quoting Isaiah 11: *HE*, III.29 pp. 318-21; Georges Tugène, 'L'histoire "ecclésiastique" du peuple anglais: Réflexions sur le particularisme et l'universalisme chez Bède', *Recherches augustiniennes*, 17 (1982), pp. 129-72, at 161. Cf. Jerome, *In Esaiam*, pp. 154-6.

⁸⁴ Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism*, pp. 8-9, 83-4; Meyer and Suntrup, *Lexikon*, pp. 332-7, 710-4. Also Anna C. Esmeijer, *Divina Quaternitas: A Preliminary Study in the Method and Application of Visual Exegesis* (Assen: Gorcum, 1978). Augustine was clearly influential for passing this idea to Bede: *Sermones*, CCLXIII.4 col. 211-2 appears at *Luc.*, p. 94; *Ret.*, p. 142; *Temp.*, p. 173.

⁸⁵ E.g. *Temp.*, pp. 172-3; *Hom.*, II.25 p. 376.

⁸⁶ For this theme in Bede's works: O'Reilly, 'Seeing the God of Gods'.

⁸⁷ E.g. *Luc.*, p. 401, quoting Sedulius, *Carmen Paschale*, ed. J. Huemer, CSEL 10, V.188-95 p. 128; *Apoc.*, p. 311 – the source to which Bede referred here is unknown: see Gryson's notes in CCSL 121A, pp. 165-6.

⁸⁸ *Tab.*, pp. 16 'Quattuor autem angulos habet archa quia sacramentum dominicae incarnationis per omnes mundi plagas in quibus sancta ecclesia dilatatur celebrari non desinit', 77, 82; *Temp.*, pp. 210, 217; *Luc.*, p. 132. Cf. Gregory, *RP*, II.11 col. 49.

before the coming of Christ in the flesh.⁸⁹ The wanderings of the Jewish ark were a sign of the faith's progression from Israel to all the gentile nations.⁹⁰ When the veil ripped at Christ's death, the sacraments of the Law were uncovered and passed over to the gentiles.⁹¹ The temple was to be built of living stones and the gentiles could rightly be represented by the stones which once they worshipped; they were the stones that Christ turned into children of Abraham.⁹² In a Bedan reading, the temple-image never simply represented the site of a national religion; it was for all nations, a symbolic place reaching out to the ends of the earth.⁹³

At every available opportunity Bede stated that Jews and gentiles were both called by God. While the temple-image might seem to be exclusively Jewish, Bede's exegesis drew out the unity of the two peoples symbolised in its decorations.⁹⁴ The two pillars at the entrance to Solomon's temple represented the teachers to the Jews and gentiles respectively.⁹⁵ The temple was rebuilt from old and new stones, representing the Church's construction from both peoples.⁹⁶ Christ as the cornerstone of the temple-Church linked the two nations through himself. Sometimes Bede emphasised that Christ the cornerstone was also the stone which the Jews rejected;⁹⁷ but the attempt to foil God's plan for universal salvation failed – both Jews and gentiles were joined together in the

⁸⁹ *Temp.*, pp. 149, 182-3; *Ezra.*, p. 347; *Sam.*, p. 32 'Videbunt posteri tui populum gentium in fide quae est dilectum Deo templum'.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-6. Also Bede, *VIII Quaestiones*, VIII pp. 71-2; for doubts about the authenticity of all this work: Eric Knibbs, 'The Manuscript Evidence for the *De Octo Quaestionibus* ascribed to Bede', *Traditio*, 63 (2008), pp. 129-83.

⁹¹ *Luc.*, pp. 406-7 (= *Marc.*, p. 636); cf. Jerome, *In Matheum*, p. 275.

⁹² *Luc.*, pp. 78, 346 (cf. Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii*, II.75 pp. 62-3); *EpCath.*, p. 234. Luke 3.8; 1 Peter 2.5. O'Reilly, 'Multitude of Isles', pp. 209-12. A pun on the name *Saxones* (*saxonus* = stony) is in the background here: James Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690-900* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 138-9; O'Reilly, 'Multitude of Isles', pp. 217-9.

⁹³ *Marc.*, p. 579 '*Quia domus mea domus orationis uocabitur omnibus gentibus?* [Mark 11.17; Isaiah 56.7] Omnibus, inquit, gentibus non uni genti Iudaeae nec in uno Hierosolimae urbis loco sed in toto orbe terrarum'; cf. Jerome, *In Esaiam*, p. 635.

⁹⁴ O'Reilly, 'Introduction', p. xxxix.

⁹⁵ *Temp.*, pp. 198-9; *Hom.*, II.25 p. 377.

⁹⁶ *Ezra.*, p. 291.

⁹⁷ *Luc.*, pp. 354-5 (= *Marc.*, p. 586); *Act.*, p. 26; *Hom.*, II.3 p. 204.

one Church of Christ.⁹⁸ The idea that while the Jews were once the chosen people, Christ has since transferred that elect status to the gentiles appears rarely in Bede's work.⁹⁹

Indeed sometimes Bede seems to have been as much pleading for the place of Jews amongst the elect, as for that of the other nations of the earth.¹⁰⁰

The importance of this theme throughout Bede's use of the temple-image requires explanation. It is hard to read this material without the sense of the Anglo-Saxon monk arguing for his people's place, as the latest nation converted, within the temple.¹⁰¹

Explicit references to the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons are understandably rare in the exegesis on the Old Testament but do appear. In an extended section from *On the Temple* on the universal mission of the Church, the role of baptism and the gospels in bringing the God of Solomon to all peoples, a reference to the Roman mission to Britain appears, with Gregory, Augustine and Paulinus mentioned.¹⁰² Elsewhere Bede transported himself and his audience into the meaning of the biblical text, reminding them at the end of *On the Tabernacle* for instance, that '[w]e are not born of the lineage of Aaron, but we have believed in him in whom Aaron also, with the saints of that age, believed'.¹⁰³ Throughout the exegesis we see a self-conscious awareness that 'our Church' is that 'of the

⁹⁸ *Tab.*, p. 76; *EpCath.*, pp. 233, 236; *Sam.*, pp. 64, 167; *Ezra.*, p. 352. Ephesians 2.20. O'Reilly, 'Multitude of Isles', pp. 219-24. The image was traditional in the Latin West: Gerhart B. Ladner, 'The Symbolism of the Biblical Corner Stone in the Mediaeval West', *Mediaeval Studies*, 4 (1942), pp. 43-60, at 47-52.

⁹⁹ *EpCath.*, p. 237 'Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis [1 Peter 2.9; Exodus 19.6]. Hoc laudis testimonium quondam antiquo Dei populo per Moysen datum est quod nunc recte gentibus dat apostolus Petrus, quia uidelicet in Christum crediderunt qui uelut lapis angularis in eam quam in se Israhel habuerat salutem gentes adunauit'.

¹⁰⁰ Georges Tugène, 'Le Thème des deux peuples dans le *De Tabernaculo* de Bède', in *Bède Le Vénérable*, ed. Lebecq et al., pp. 73-84; Diarmuid Scully, 'Introduction', in *Bede: On Tobit and On the Canticle of Habakkuk*, trans. Seán Connolly (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 17-37.

¹⁰¹ Jones, 'Introductory Remarks', p. 129: '...a people so newly come to Christ as the English needs all assurance of Election.' For the relevance of Bede's attitudes to the Jews to his ideas about the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons: Andrew P. Scheil, *The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 78-97; Scully, 'Introduction', pp. 30-7.

¹⁰² *Temp.*, p. 218. Paul Meyvaert, "'In the Footsteps of the Fathers": The Date of Bede's *Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings* to Nothelm', in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honour of R.A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 267-86, at 278-9.

¹⁰³ *Tab.*, p. 139 '...non quidem de Aaron stirpe nascendo sed credendo in eum in quem et Aaron cum sanctis illius aevi credidit'; trans. Holder, p. 162. Also *Hom.*, I.4 p. 29.

gentiles'.¹⁰⁴ Imagery of the four corners of the world, or of Christ as cornerstone, may have spoken particularly clearly to the Anglo-Saxon situation of being *Angli* living in a corner (*angulus*) of the earth.¹⁰⁵

Hence, Bede clearly intended the universal scale of the temple-image to show that the Anglo-Saxons were included within the spread of the missionary Church. The image of the four-fold world plays its part in this goal. The southern wall of the tabernacle is the Jewish people who came first to God, the northern wall the gentiles who had languished 'in the darkness and cold of unbelief right up to the time of the Lord's incarnation'.¹⁰⁶

While it might be a step too far to see this as a reference to chilly Northumbria, it calls to mind a similar use of the idea of the frozen North in terms of the coming of Christianity to Britain in the British historian Gildas.¹⁰⁷ Bede declared that 'we are rightly compared to the...north wall, for to us it was granted to know the light of truth after...the darkness of idolatry.'¹⁰⁸ He here expanded upon the Greco-Roman association of the frozen North with uncivilised barbarians – a topos which papal writers had picked up on to refer to the pagans, appearing for example in a letter from Pope Boniface to Edwin, king of Northumbria.¹⁰⁹ The two walls of the tabernacle, the two peoples, meet in the western

¹⁰⁴ *Sam.*, p. 204 'nostram, id est gentium...ecclesiam'.

¹⁰⁵ Gregory, *Registrum*, VIII.29 p. 551 'gens Anglorum in mundi angulo posita'; Palmer, *Frankish World*, pp. 51-2; O'Reilly, 'Multitude of Isles', pp. 220-1. O'Reilly's article in part responds to the large literature (fitting into an even larger discussion about the roots of English identity) on the word *Angli* and of Bede's influential choice of it over *Saxones* to describe his people: Patrick Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', repr. in *Times of Bede*, ed. Baxter, pp. 207-28; Michael Richter, 'Bede's *Angli*: Angles or English?', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), pp. 99-114; Sarah Foot, 'The Making of *Anglecynn*: English Identity before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series 6 (1996), pp. 25-49; Nicholas Brooks, *Bede and the English*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ *Tab.*, p. 64 'tenebris ac frigore infidelitatis usque ad tempus dominicae incarnationis'; trans. Holder p. 71.

¹⁰⁷ Gildas, *De Excidio Britanniae*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978), pp. 18, 91. Bede knew Gildas' work well: Lapidge, *Library*, pp. 208-9.

¹⁰⁸ *Temp.*, p. 183 'post incarnationem dominicam ad fidem uenimus et secundo parieti, hoc est septemtrionali, recte comparatur quibus post figuram ac tenebras idolatriae lucem ueritatis cognoscere datum est'; trans. Connolly, p. 52. Also *Temp.*, p. 221; *Hom.*, II.25 p. 377. Scheil, *Footsteps of Israel*, pp. 92-3.

¹⁰⁹ *HE*, II.10 pp. 168-9. Gregory made use of this theme on a number of occasions: the different sides of the temple as the Jews and gentiles – *In Hiezechihelam*, II.VI.20 p. 309; gentiles as being represented by the

wall.¹¹⁰ The teleology where salvation is seen as progressing from the East to the West is here at work: the end times will start in the West when the ends of the earth are converted to Christ.¹¹¹ Bede went out of his way to emphasise that the fact that scripture states that the western wall of the tabernacle ‘looks to the sea’ heightens this eschatological geography.¹¹²

Here we have an image of the universal Church of the four-fold world, where the cold North is seen as the location of non-Jewish would-be Christians and where the End will come about when the Church reaches a location in the West facing the sea. Is it too much to imagine a hint here of Britain and the standard tropes regarding its representation? The classical geographical tradition located Britain in the far northwest, either in Ocean or upon its edge, in either case removed from the rest of the world.¹¹³ Greek or Roman authors who wrote of Britain, from Vergil on, saw it and its inhabitants at or near the ends of the earth, in an *alter orbis*, another world.¹¹⁴ Britain was remote, distant, other. A whole set of topoi could be drawn upon by classical writers which shaped how the ‘ends of the earth’ were used for political or poetical purposes.¹¹⁵ Bede, like other educated

cold North – *Moralia*, XXVII.XLIII.71 p. 1386, quoted at *Act.*, p. 56. Diarmuid Scully, ‘Location and Occupation: Bede, Gildas, and the Roman Vision of Britain’ in *Anglo-Saxon Traces*, ed. Roberts and Webster, pp. 243-72, at 253-7.

¹¹⁰ *Tab.*, p. 65.

¹¹¹ Fabienne Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest: Imaginary Geography and Sense of Space in Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 158-9; Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, pp. 18-9, esp. n. 96; Davidse, ‘Sense of History’, p. 665.

¹¹² *Tab.*, p. 66 ‘Respicit ergo mare plaga occidentalis tabernaculi’; trans. Holder, p. 73. For a different view of this passage: Tugène, ‘Deux Peuples’, pp. 76-7.

¹¹³ Diarmuid Scully, ‘Bede, Orosius and Gildas on the Early History of Britain’, in *Bède Le Vénérable*, ed. Lebecq et al., pp. 31-42, at 32-5; Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, pp. 119-26. For Bede’s use of classical geographical sources in *HE*, I.1 pp. 14-21: A.H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 249-68.

¹¹⁴ Vergil, *Eclogues*, ed. and trans. Guy Lee (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1980), I.66 pp. 10-1; Solinus, *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, ed. Theodor Mommsen (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), pp. 99-100. For Bede’s knowledge of Solinus: Lapidge, *Library*, p. 225.

¹¹⁵ James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 140-9, 156-71.

Insular figures, inherited this tradition and seems to have had a strong sense of Britain's peripherality and the need to overcome it through his reading and writing.¹¹⁶

Scholars have shown how Bede's geographical opening to the *Ecclesiastical History* portrays Britain from the point of view of the continent, from which it lies in the distant northwest.¹¹⁷ The significance of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons is that they were a gentile people living in the isles at the end of the earth; their conversion thus proved Christianity's universal truth, fulfilled biblical prophecies, and played an important role in the history of the sixth (and final) world-age.¹¹⁸ Adomnán's work *On the Holy Places*, which made the Holy Land present for the Insular reader, seemed so important to Bede that not only did he edit his own version of it, but included large parts of it in the final book of the *Ecclesiastical History*.¹¹⁹ Such work sought to close the gap between the Insular periphery and the heart of the Christian world. What could be more of a reminder of the Anglo-Saxons' peripheral place in the universal religion to which they had been converted than the sites of Jewish cult? These were places no Anglo-Saxon had ever seen, belonging to a nation foreign to Britain, from which as gentiles Bede's people had been historically remote.¹²⁰ Yet from these things Bede drew proof of his people's pre-

¹¹⁶ E.g. *Cant.*, p. 180; *Hom.*, II.10 p. 252 'nos qui de finibus terrae...aduocauit'. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, p. 126, has suggested that Anglo-Saxons are unlikely to have felt peripheral, but the evidence suggests otherwise.

¹¹⁷ Merrills, *History and Geography*, pp. 254-60; Diane Speed, 'Bede's Mapping of England', in *Travel and Travellers from Bede to Dampier*, ed. Geraldine Barnes with Gabrielle Singleton (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005), pp. 9-23, at 15-6.

¹¹⁸ Jennifer O'Reilly, 'Islands and Idols at the Ends of the Earth: Exegesis and Conversion in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*', in *Bède Le Vénérable*, ed. Lebecq et al., pp. 119-45; Davidse, 'Sense of History', pp. 662-6.

¹¹⁹ *HE*, V.16-7 pp. 508-13; Adomnán, *De Locis Sanctis*, ed. L. Bieler, CCSL 175, pp. 175-234; Bede, *De Locis Sanctis*, ed. J. Fraipont, CCSL 175, pp. 249-80. Thomas O'Loughlin, *Adomnán and the Holy Places* (London: T&T Clark, 2007).

¹²⁰ *Act.*, p. 64 'populum gentium longe a legis templique religione remotum'.

ordained place in heaven.¹²¹ Hence the significant presence of the gentiles in his use of the temple-image; but unity with the Jews was equally as important.

The Insular world's fierce debates arising from the Easter Controversy during the seventh and eighth centuries addressed the nature of the universal Church and the rhetoric of centre and periphery played an important part in these debates.¹²² From early days Christians had emphasised the universal nature of the Church as proof of its orthodoxy; Christ had clearly given a mandate to the apostles to spread the word and localised cults were by their nature the opposite of such a mandate.¹²³ Thus a rhetoric of orthodoxy developed, especially in polemic against the Donatists, which condemned heretics as peripheral, vainly believing that holiness existed only in their own rites or the Church only in that corner of the world they inhabited. The temple-image often played a part in this rhetoric of the united Church – split by heretics.¹²⁴ Church Fathers also associated heresy with Judaism, represented as an exclusive religion, narrowly focused on the temple and Jerusalem unlike the truly open and universal Christianity.¹²⁵ This patristic discourse on unity and universality, centred on Rome, came to be used in the Insular world in relation to the Easter Question.¹²⁶

¹²¹ For the Anglo-Saxons as pre-destined: *HE*, I.22 pp. 68-9 'non...diuina pietas plebem suam, quam praesciuit, deseruit'.

¹²² On the Easter Question and how it related to the Insular Church: Charles W. Jones, *Bedae Opera de Temporibus* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1943), pp. 6-113; Kenneth Harrison, 'A Letter from Rome to the Irish Clergy, AD 640', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), pp. 222-9; Wallis, *Bede: On the Reckoning of Time*, pp. xxxiv-lxiii; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 391-415.

¹²³ E.g. Matthew 24.14.

¹²⁴ Optatus of Milevis, *Libri Septem*, ed. C. Ziwsa, CSEL 26, II.1 pp. 32-6, III.10 p. 95 (use of cornerstone imagery); for Augustine's use of the temple-image against the Donatists: Sanchis, 'Le symbolisme communautaire', pp. 137-47.

¹²⁵ For this train of thought in one particular patristic author (Athanasius of Alexandria): David Brakke, 'Jewish Flesh and Christian Spirit in Athanasius of Alexandria', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 9 (2001), pp. 453-81; *idem*, "'Outside the Places, Within the Truth": Athanasius of Alexandria and the Localization of the Holy', in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, ed. David Frankfurter (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 445-81.

¹²⁶ Damian Bracken, 'Rome and the Isles: Ireland, England and the Rhetoric of Orthodoxy', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 157 (2009), pp. 75-97; *idem*, 'Juniors Teaching Elders: Columbanus, Rome and

The Irish monk Cummian attacked the adherents of the Columban dating of Easter on the grounds that the entire world practised the Roman dating, bar a few people in two islands at the end of the earth; God had ordered one temple and one tabernacle to be built to symbolise the desired unity of his Church.¹²⁷ An opponent was a ‘whited-wall...who did not make both one, but divided’ – an implicit contrast with the unifying cornerstone.¹²⁸ Bede used the same type of arguments: he put a speech detailing the universality of the Church and the liminality of the Insular element within it into the mouth of Wilfrid at the Synod of Whitby.¹²⁹ Peripherality remained a real danger since it could lead to unintended schism; Bede emphasised that the monks of Iona fell into wrong practices not from bad will but because, being set apart from the rest of the world, there was no one to set them right.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, he did identify the insularity of heterodox Britons and Ionans as being a mark of ‘Jewishness’ – an attempt to reject the cornerstone which united them with the gentile Anglo-Saxons.¹³¹

Bede clearly used the temple-image to address his concerns about the Anglo-Saxon church in the light of recent Insular history. Indeed, he seems to have completed *On the Temple* shortly before his *Ecclesiastical History* and probably worked on both simultaneously on occasion.¹³² These works’ thematic connections have long been recognised: the *History* tells the story of how the Anglo-Saxons were built up into part of

Spiritual Authority’, in *Roma Felix – Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome*, ed. Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 253-75, at 253-7.

¹²⁷ Cummian, *De Controversia Paschali*, ed. and trans. Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988), pp. 72-5, 78-81.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 92 ‘quidam paries dealbatus...qui utraque non fecit unum, sed diuisit’ (cf. Optatus, *Libri*, III.10 pp. 94-5; Ephesians 2.14) – my translation, Walsh and Ó Cróinín have interpreted the text differently.

¹²⁹ *HE*, III.25 pp. 300-7. Stephen’s, much briefer, account of Wilfrid’s speech does not share the emphasis on Insular peripherality: *VW*, X pp. 20-3.

¹³⁰ *HE*, III.4 pp. 224-5.

¹³¹ W. Trent Foley and Nicholas J. Higham, ‘Bede on the Britons’, *EME*, 17 (2009), pp. 154-85. Bede condemned the Jews for trying to keep salvation for themselves: *Act.*, p. 26; cf. Arnobius Junior, *Commentarii in Psalmos*, ed. K.-D. Daur, CCSL 25, CXVII p. 186.

¹³² Bede, *Epistola ad Albinum*, ed. Joshua A. Westgard, ‘New Manuscripts of Bede’s Letter to Albinus’, *RB*, 120 (2010), pp. 208-15, at 213-5; an earlier edition was printed by Plummer, *Opera Historica*, I, 3.

that universal temple-Church which the commentary describes.¹³³ Bede understood his people's conversion within an entirely biblical and patristic frame of reference; his analysis of the struggle for orthodox catholicity in the Insular world derived from those exegetical themes concerning Jews and gentiles I have outlined above.¹³⁴ The struggle to create the united Anglo-Saxon church of Bede's own day from its diverse origins could easily have led to triumphalist rhetoric at the Columban community's expense – but Bede eschewed such an approach. His willingness to give credit to the Ionan role in the conversion of Northumbria in the *Ecclesiastical History* matches his sympathy towards Jews and the ancient Jewish cult in the temple-commentaries.¹³⁵

We have seen how Jerome contrasted the narrowness of the material temple with the expansiveness of the universal Church and some Insular writings emphasised that the spiritual temple had to replace the corrupt physical one.¹³⁶ Such an approach would clearly have been useful to Bede in contrasting the local and the universal. Certainly, early in his career, he celebrated the fact that the physically limited temple had been replaced by the universal Church.¹³⁷ The cosmic effect of the incarnation, highlighted in the last section, meant that Christian universalism could replace Jewish localism – as a comment in the *Retraction on Acts* makes clear. Bede declared that the Lord's blood cleansed the entire globe just as the blood of victims had once cleansed the tabernacle or temple. Through the passion all the world had become a dedicated 'holy house' in which

¹³³ Mayr-Harting, *Rule of St Benedict, and Social Class*, pp. 12-3, 20-2; O'Reilly, 'Multitude of Isles', pp. 213-6.

¹³⁴ O'Reilly, 'Introduction', pp. xxxiv-xxxix; *eadem*, 'Islands and Idols'.

¹³⁵ Conor O'Brien, 'Bede on the Jewish Church', in *The Church on its Past*, ed. Peter D. Clarke and Charlotte Methuen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), pp. 63-73.

¹³⁶ See p. 54 above; *Tractatus Hilarii in Septem Epistolas Canonicas*, ed. R.E. McNally, CCSL 108B, p. 82 – see pp. xii-xvii in the same volume for the evidence that Bede had access to this work.

¹³⁷ *Apoc.*, pp. 385, 443.

worship could take place, unlike under the previous narrow dispensation.¹³⁸ However, the temple was not denigrated too much, for Christ had scattered the seeds of the gospel there, from which the shoots of faith and truth filled the whole world.¹³⁹ Overall Bede seems to have preferred to read the Church's universalism into, rather than as opposed to, the temple-image.

I have located the emphasis upon universality and unity which we see in Bede's writings within an Insular Christian discourse, shaped by classical geography and the Easter Controversy. The same emphasis appears in the dedications of the churches at Wearmouth-Jarrow: Saints Peter and Paul, apostles to the Jews and gentiles respectively, patrons of Rome, linked both communities with each other and with the universal Church. Bede's own monastery would surely have framed how Bede approached the wider discourse. Wearmouth-Jarrow was at the forefront when it came to connecting Northumbria with Rome, from its founding by Benedict Biscop onwards. Biscop's ceaseless travels to and from Rome and efforts to create a distinctly Catholic monastery were seen by Bede as building a truly universal network of Christian love: 'not only was he held in deserved veneration by everyone in this land...but even in Gaul, and in Italy, in Rome too, and in the islands of the sea, he was loved by everyone who was able to know him' and as a consequence Biscop linked Wearmouth-Jarrow to the Roman Church through the daily liturgy and the stone churches in which it took place.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ *Ret.*, p. 112 'uniuersum orbem sanguine domini esse abluendum, ut, sicut aliquando tabernaculum siue templum sanguine uictimarum erat domino consecratum, ita nunc per omnem mundum populus fidelium illi in domum sanctam ipsius sanguine dedicaretur, nec solum Hierosolymis esset locus orandi, uerum in omni loco dominationis eius leurent electi manus suas per orationes puras ad dominum.'

¹³⁹ Bede, *Abacuc*, p. 385 'dominus in carne apparens, in ipso templo prima euangelii semina sparsit, atque exinde orbem totum germine suae fidei et ueritatis impleuit.'

¹⁴⁰ *Hom.*, I.13 p. 92 'non solum a cunctis in hac terra...ueneratione habitus est sed et in Gallia atque in Italia Roma quoque ac maris insulis ab omnibus qui eum nosse potuere dilectus'; trans. Martin & Hurst, I, 129-30. On this homily: Michael Winterbottom, 'Bede's Homily on Benedict Biscop (*Hom.* i.13)', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 21 (2011), pp. 35-51. On the liturgy: *HA*, 6 p. 369; *Hom.*, I.13 p. 92; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *The City of Rome and the World of Bede*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 1994), esp.

At a time when many educated Christian Anglo-Saxons would have looked to Rome as the centre of their world this must have been all the more so for Bede and his brothers at Wearmouth-Jarrow.¹⁴¹ In the words of Jennifer O'Reilly: 'Through the sign of the studied *romanitas* of its buildings and art, liturgy and relics, library and script, the monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow made petrine Rome present at the ends of the earth; by implication the universal church of Christ was being built up in that place.'¹⁴² We might expect Bede's approach to unity via the temple-image to share this Roman focus. In the *Ecclesiastical History* the papal and Roman nature of the initial mission to the Anglo-Saxons guarantees the subsequent place of their national Church within the universal Church.¹⁴³ But despite a pope and Roman missionaries being the only named moderns in *On the Temple*, Bede never found cause to discuss Roman centrality through his use of the temple-image.¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, there may still be a link between Bede's temple and papal Rome. The transfer of goods and knowledge between Wearmouth-Jarrow and Rome was not all one way; during Bede's own lifetime, an image of the Jewish tabernacle produced at his monastery served as a gift to the pope. I close this chapter with a study of that image.

The Codex Amiatinus

Had Bede's family never sent him to learn at the feet of Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrith, or had he been carried off as a boy when plague rampaged through the monastery,

pp. 9-14. But also Catherine Cubitt, 'Diversity and Unity in the Early Anglo-Saxon Liturgy', in *Unity and Diversity in the Church*, ed. R.N. Swanson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 45-57.

¹⁴¹ Nicholas Howe, 'Rome as Capital of Anglo-Saxon England' and 'From Bede's World to "Bede's World"', both in *idem*, *Writing the Map in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 101-24 and 125-48, respectively.

¹⁴² Jennifer O'Reilly, "'All that Peter Stands For": The *Romanitas* of the *Codex Amiatinus* Reconsidered', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 157 (2009), pp. 367-95, at 395.

¹⁴³ Tugène, 'Le particularisme et l'universalisme', pp. 132-40.

¹⁴⁴ For a study of what light Bede's exegesis might shed on his ideas of papacy (with the conclusion that he was not as convinced of petrine authority as some of his countrymen): John Moorhead, 'Bede on the Papacy', *JEH*, 60 (2009), pp. 217-232.

Wearmouth-Jarrow would still have a place in history.¹⁴⁵ While the writings of Bede are without a doubt the monastery's most famous product, they are not its sole claim to recognition, for the Codex Amiatinus was produced there.¹⁴⁶ The codex is a major book in European history: the oldest surviving complete copy of the Vulgate (and as such an important aid to determining the modern biblical text) and one of the most splendid achievements of Insular artisans and scribes.¹⁴⁷

Both the anonymous *Life of Ceolfrith* and Bede's *History of the Abbots* state that Ceolfrith had three pandects (i.e. single-volume copies of the Bible) created under his rule. One went to the Church of St Peter at Wearmouth and one to St Paul's at Jarrow.¹⁴⁸ Barring a few folios currently held in the British Library, these codices have been lost.¹⁴⁹ Ceolfrith announced that he himself would take the third pandect to Rome, suddenly resigning the leadership of Wearmouth-Jarrow and setting off on a final pilgrimage to the relics of St Peter.¹⁵⁰ Ceolfrith never made it to Rome, dying en route at Langres, although the codex did reach Italy.¹⁵¹ There the dedication text was interfered with and the origin of the volume obscured for centuries as a result.¹⁵² Only long after the codex arrived in Florence was the connection with Ceolfrith rediscovered, for centuries the Mediterranean

¹⁴⁵ The plague at Wearmouth-Jarrow: *VCeol.*, 13-4 pp. 392-3.

¹⁴⁶ Florence, Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Amiatino 1.

¹⁴⁷ Marsden, *Text of the Old Testament*, p. 76.

¹⁴⁸ *VCeol.*, 20 p. 395.

¹⁴⁹ On the surviving leaves from the sister pandects: Marsden, *Text of the Old Testament*, pp. 90-8.

¹⁵⁰ *HA*, 16-21 pp. 380-6; *VCeol.*, 20-32 pp. 394-400; *DTR*, LXVI p. 534.

¹⁵¹ Richard Marsden, 'Amiatinus in Italy: The Afterlife of an Anglo-Saxon Book', in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, ed. Hans Sauer and Joanna Storey, with Gaby Waxenberger (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011), pp. 217-39.

¹⁵² In the inscription as it currently reads at fol. 1v/1v Ceolfrith's name is overwritten in a hand different from that of the rest of the inscription.

aspects of the art and the *Romanitas* of the uncial script having been taken as proof of the manuscript's Italian origins.¹⁵³

The author of the *Life of Ceolfrith* recorded a version of the dedication which allows us to reconstruct what Ceolfrith originally intended to be read at Rome; the text reveals a definite sense of Anglo-Saxon peripherality and the desire of the community at Wearmouth-Jarrow to be united with the core of the Church at Rome.¹⁵⁴ The original inscription would have read:

To the body of the sublime Peter, justly venerated, whom ancient faith declares to be head of the Church, I, Ceolfrith, abbot from the furthest ends of the Angles send pledges of my devoted affection, desiring that I and mine may ever have a place amidst the joys of so great a father, a memorial in heaven.¹⁵⁵

All the details of the manuscript's production display this overwhelming longing for unity with the head of the Church. The entire codex is written in highly legible and distinguished uncial script, of a type clearly much admired at Wearmouth-Jarrow, which seems to have been based closely on that of the Rome of Gregory the Great.¹⁵⁶ Hundreds of calf-skins went into the production of the volume as well as uncountable man-hours in the scriptorium; the creation of all three pandects establishes Wearmouth-Jarrow as a wealthy and exceptionally well-run house which invested substantial resources in this project.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ H.J. White, 'The Codex Amiatinus and its Birthplace', *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica*, 3 (1890), pp. 273-308; Michael Gorman, 'The Codex Amiatinus: A Guide to the Legends and Bibliography', *Studi Medievali*, 44 (2003), pp. 863-910, is not as helpful as the title might suggest.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. O'Reilly, '*Romanitas* of the *Codex Amiatinus*', pp. 368-73.

¹⁵⁵ *VCeol.*, 37 p. 402 'Corpus ad eximii merito uenerabile Petri, / dedicat aecclesiae quem caput alta fides, [the manuscript here has a different word order to that of the *Life*: 'quem caput ecclesiae dedicat alta fides'] / Ceolfridus, Anglorum extremis de finibus abbas, / deuoti affectus pignora mitto mei. / Meque meosque optans tanti inter gaudia patris / in caelis memorem semper habere locum?'; adapted from trans. Farmer, p. 227. Barbara Apelian Beall, 'The Illuminated Pages of the Codex Amiatinus: Issues of Form, Function and Production' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brown University, 1997), pp. 99-120, argues that these verses were not actually a dedication, but Ceolfrith's epitaph, added possibly as he was dying at Langres.

¹⁵⁶ Parkes, *Scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ Richard Gameson, 'The Cost of the Codex Amiatinus', *Notes and Queries*, 39 (1992), pp. 2-9.

Decoration is limited but striking in appearance. The New Testament is introduced by an image of Christ in Majesty, with angels on either side and surrounded by the four evangelists and their symbolic beasts. Most of the decoration, and that which concerns us the most, is contained in the opening quire, or gathering, of the codex: the dedication verses; the prologue and table of contents (on recto and verso of a purple folio); three sets of diagrams explaining different systems for dividing scripture according to different Fathers; the verso of the folio dedicated to the division according to ‘Pope Hilarus’ has a large cross made up of five interlinking circles, each of which contains text by Jerome relating to the books of the Pentateuch; an image of Ezra writing in the vestments of a Jewish high priest; and, the largest drawing in the entire pandect, an image of the tabernacle in the desert, spread across an entire bifolium.¹⁵⁸

Bede indicated that the three pandects were related to an earlier pandect of the Old Latin Bible which Wearmouth-Jarrow had obtained from Rome.¹⁵⁹ The temple-commentaries provide a possible identity for this book. Bede noted that he derived various details for both the temple and tabernacle from a picture (or two?), which he had seen, placed in a pandect by Cassiodorus Senator.¹⁶⁰ Cassiodorus himself recorded that at his monastery in Vivarium in the sixth century he caused to be made two pandects – one smaller in size and containing Jerome’s Vulgate text, and the other larger (hence, the Codex Grandior)

¹⁵⁸ The folios of the opening quire have gone through a number of different orderings. For the current order (in which the folios were kept for most of the codex’s life according to scientific analysis): Paul Meyvaert, ‘The Date of Bede’s *In Ezram* and his Image of Ezra in the Codex Amiatinus’, *Speculum*, 80 (2005), pp. 1087-133, at 1104. High quality images of the manuscript’s entire opening quire can be found in Celia Chazelle, ‘Christ and the Vision of God: The Biblical Diagrams of the Codex Amiatinus’, in *The Mind’s Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 84-111.

¹⁵⁹ *HA*, 15 p. 379 ‘tres pandectes nouae translationis, ad unum uetustae translationis quem de Roma adtulerat, ipse super adiungeret’.

¹⁶⁰ *Tab.*, p. 81 ‘in pictura Cassiodori Senatoris...uidimus’; *Temp.*, p. 192 ‘Cassiodorus Senator in pictura templi quam in pandecte posuit’.

consisting of Jerome's hexaplaric revision of the Septuagint.¹⁶¹ It was in the Grandior that Cassiodorus included images of the tabernacle and the temple, as they were described to him by a blind Greek monk called Eusebius.¹⁶² He also added diagrams of the divisions of scripture according to Jerome, Augustine and Hilary of Poitiers, amongst others – which diagrams of course appear in the Codex Amiatinus.¹⁶³

Thus the Grandior must itself be the copy of the old translation which Ceolfrith brought back to Northumbria from his trip to Rome and which served as the exemplar for the Codex Amiatinus and its Mediterranean script and imagery. In the past scholars even suggested that the opening quire of the pandect actually consisted of that of the Grandior sewn into a new codex, but the idea has been scotched by art historians. The opening quire, including the images of the tabernacle and of Ezra, is Northumbrian work.¹⁶⁴

Recent work has directed attention to the differences between what currently exists in the pandect and what may have existed in the Codex Grandior.¹⁶⁵ This suggests that the Codex Amiatinus provides us with evidence concerning the ideas and outlook of the Wearmouth-Jarrow community.

¹⁶¹ See Marsden, *Text of the Old Testament*, pp. 131-2. On Cassiodorus: J.J. O'Donnell, *Cassiodorus* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979).

¹⁶² Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), I.V.2 pp. 22-3.

¹⁶³ For the possibility that Pope Hilarus replaced Hilary of Poitiers due to confusion at Wearmouth-Jarrow: Paul Meyvaert, "Bede, Cassiodorus and the Codex Amiatinus", *Speculum*, 71 (1996), pp. 827-83, at 841-44; for the argument that it was a deliberate choice to celebrate a papal defender of orthodoxy: Celia Chazelle, 'Ceolfrid's Gift to St Peter: the First Quire of the Codex Amiatinus and the Evidence of its Roman Destination', *EME*, 12 (2004), pp. 129-57, at 147.

¹⁶⁴ R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford, *The Art of the Codex Amiatinus*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 1967) remains the classic work here. For the suggestion that the art is the work of an Italian artist in Northumbria: Per Jonas Nordhagen, *The Codex Amiatinus and the Byzantine Element in the Northumbrian Renaissance*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 1977).

¹⁶⁵ Celia Chazelle, "'Romanness' in Early Medieval Culture", in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 81-98; Lawrence Nees, 'Problems of Form and Function in Early Medieval Illustrated Bibles from Northwest Europe', in *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible*, ed. John Williams (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), pp. 121-77.

Cassiodorus implied that he added two images to the Grandior, one each of the tabernacle and the temple, but yet the Codex Amiatinus only contains one.¹⁶⁶ The diagrams of the divisions of scripture according to the work of different Fathers are certainly Cassiodoran since remarkably similar diagrams circulated in copies of his *Institutiones*. The similarity has led some scholars to suggest that a copy of the *Institutiones* was the source used in Wearmouth-Jarrow and that the Codex Grandior never reached there.¹⁶⁷ If that were the case then it seems likely that the Northumbrian monks would have known Cassiodorus' explanation of how a blind monk from the east came to him and explained that the tabernacle and the temple had been made 'ad instar caeli' – 'according to the likeness of heaven'. Thus it seems that Cassiodorus had the cosmic interpretation of the temple explained to him as it may then have circulated in Greek Christendom.¹⁶⁸

The similarities between the image which appears in the Codex Amiatinus and other diagrams of the tabernacle in Greek Octateuchs and copies of Cosmas' *Christian Topography* should be noted. The depiction of the barrier, and its individual columns, around the tabernacle is common to these images.¹⁶⁹ The distinctive angled bird's-eye view of the enclosure where the near sides of the barrier are seen from the outside (the East and South sides in the Amiatinus image) while the far sides are seen from the inside (the North and the West in the Amiatinus image) clearly develops the approach taken by

¹⁶⁶ For the belief that it was a single 'joint depiction' in the Grandior: Bianca Kühnel, 'Jewish Symbolism of the Temple and the Tabernacle and Christian Symbolism of the Holy Sepulchre and the Heavenly Jerusalem', *Jewish Art*, 12/13 (1986/1987), pp. 147-68, at 165; but see, Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus', p. 834 n. 41.

¹⁶⁷ Karen Corsano, 'The First Quire of the Codex Amiatinus and the *Institutiones* of Cassiodorus', *Scriptorium*, 41 (1987), pp. 3-34; Gorman, 'The Codex Amiatinus: A Guide', pp. 869-72.

¹⁶⁸ Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, I.V.2 p. 23 'commonuit etiam tabernaculum templumque Domini ad instar caeli fuisse formatum'; *Cassiodorus: Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning and On the Soul*, trans. James W. Halporn (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), p. 122: 'He also advised us that the tabernacle and temple of the Lord were shaped like the celestial vault.' Celia Chazelle, 'Painting the Voice of God: Wearmouth-Jarrow, Rome and the Tabernacle Miniature in the Codex Amiatinus', *Quintana*, 8 (2009), pp. 15-59, at 46, suggests that this phrase implies the bird's-eye view from which the tabernacle is seen in the diagram, but such a reading of the phrase does not strike me as the most obvious interpretation.

¹⁶⁹ See Elisabeth Revel-Neher, 'La page double du Codex Amiatinus et ses rapports avec les plans du tabernacle dans l'art juif et dans l'art byzantin', *Journal of Jewish Art*, 9 (1982), pp. 6-17, at 12-3.

the Greek tradition.¹⁷⁰ The inclusion of the cardinal points in Greek derives from that tradition.¹⁷¹ While all the surviving Greek images postdate the pandect, they seem clearly to be reaching back to a tradition which providing it with its exemplar.¹⁷² This tradition is one which was related to the cosmic interpretation of the temple-image.

This would suggest that the Codex Amiatinus depicts the cosmic tabernacle and that, if the *Institutiones* were indeed at Wearmouth-Jarrow serving as the exemplar, Bede almost certainly knew of this cosmic interpretation. Unfortunately for that line of argument, little proof exists that Bede, or anybody else at his monastery, knew the *Institutiones*. Most of the studies of the library at Wearmouth-Jarrow have expressed doubt about the presence of Cassiodorus' book there.¹⁷³ Bede himself explicitly stated that his knowledge of Cassiodorus' link to these images comes from the *Commentary on the Psalms*; he never mentioned any other work of Cassiodorus from which he might he might have learnt about this.¹⁷⁴ It has been suggested that Bede's florilegium of extracts from Augustine on the Pauline epistles was prompted by the *Institutiones*, but explicit cases of Bedan reliance upon this work of Cassiodorus have not so far been discovered.¹⁷⁵ Wearmouth-Jarrow's extraordinary library may well have contained the *Institutiones* but for the moment I feel that Ockham's razor must apply: the Codex Grandior was almost certainly there; the presence of the *Institutiones* remains an open question.

¹⁷⁰ Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus', pp. 847-53.

¹⁷¹ O'Reilly, 'Library of Scripture', p. 33.

¹⁷² The Octateuch tradition of images probably derived from earlier editions of Cosmas' work: John Lowden, *The Octateuchs: A Study in Byzantine Manuscript Illustration* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 86-93. Cassiodorus almost certainly had a manuscript of Cosmas: Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus', p. 883.

¹⁷³ Lapidge, *Library*, p. 29; Dionisotti, 'Bede, Grammars, and Greek', p. 129.

¹⁷⁴ *Temp.*, p. 192 'in pictura templi quam in pandecte posuit ut ipse in psalmorum expositione commemorat'; Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum*, LXXXVI.1 pp. 789-90. Richard Bailey, 'Bede's Text of Cassiodorus' Commentary on the Psalms', *JTS*, 34 (1983), pp. 189-93.

¹⁷⁵ Thacker, *Bede and Augustine*, pp. 7-8; Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus', pp. 829-30.

Thus the monks at Wearmouth-Jarrow created the Codex Amiatinus, and its image of the tabernacle, adapting and changing details from their exemplar. The *Institutiones* would have revealed to them that they were dealing with a cosmic use of the temple-image, but without it they would have been forced to rely upon their own interpretation. The pandect may, therefore, provide important evidence of the Northumbrian community's attitude towards the temple-image. The question remains of Bede's relationship with the Codex Amiatinus. Often scholars seem to assume that Wearmouth-Jarrow's most famous son must have played a significant role in the production of the monastery's most famous manuscript.¹⁷⁶ The image of Bede the individual, the great genius, has obviously proved more compelling than a faceless mass of monks. Hardly anything has survived from Wearmouth-Jarrow that someone has not laid claim to on Bede's behalf: both the anonymous *Life of Ceolfrith* and the letter on the Easter Question which he assigned to Ceolfrith have been ascribed to Bede.¹⁷⁷ In terms of the Codex Amiatinus there has been an understandable desire to see the hand of Bede in that of one of the scribes who worked on the text: Meyvaert suggested that Bede may have been responsible for the entire arrangement of the opening quire, or that he drew its images himself.¹⁷⁸ While constantly praising Bede's modesty, scholars have not tended to be modest on his behalf.

One ought to be careful here. Wearmouth-Jarrow was a large monastery when Ceolfrith left and any establishment capable of creating a Bede could nurture half-a-dozen monks of lesser, but still considerable, intellectual ability.¹⁷⁹ The astounding degree of conformity in the hands of different scribes suggests a body of monks at Wearmouth-

¹⁷⁶ Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 156, 399; Chazelle, "Romanness", p. 87.

¹⁷⁷ Judith McClure, 'Bede and the Life of Ceolfrid', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), pp. 71-84; that Bede did not write the *VCeol.* seems now established: Wood, 'Gifts of Wearmouth and Jarrow', p. 114; Major, 'Words, Wit, and Wordplay', pp. 193-5. On Ceolfrith's letter: Plummer, *Opera Historica*, II, 332. If Bede rewrote the letter for inclusion in *HE*, V.21 pp. 534-51, this does not prove his responsibility for Ceolfrith's original missive.

¹⁷⁸ Paul Meyvaert, 'Dissension in Bede's Community Shown by a Quire of the Codex Amiatinus', *RB*, 116 (2006), pp. 295-309, esp. 304-8; *idem*, 'The Date of Bede's *In Ezram*', pp. 1115-26.

¹⁷⁹ Bede gives the figure of six hundred 'fratres': *HA*, 17 p. 382; but see Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 172-3.

Jarrow who were solidly and consistently educated in the skills which the creation of these pandects required.¹⁸⁰ It is clearly implausible to suppose that the monastery ‘only [had] one intellectual amongst its brethren’.¹⁸¹ Evidence of links between Bede’s work and the Codex Amiatinus does not automatically prove Bede’s responsibility for the ideas or programme of the pandect. The influence of ideas may have gone in the other direction also. As the dedication verses suggest, the codex was at the least nominally the responsibility of Ceolfrith as abbot; as the palaeographical evidence makes clear, it was the product of a team of scribes working together. All this suggests that we will read it most fruitfully as the product of a religious *community*, which makes a statement about the (official) shared outlook of its members.

There is certainly no reason why Bede might not have worked on the project since he was about forty-four when the Codex Amiatinus left the monastery. Evidence of a scribe amending the text of the codex and the sister pandects over time suggests an individual interested in finding new textual variants and improving earlier readings where possible. It seems reasonable to connect adjustments of the text of Ceolfrith’s Bible with the same readings as noted in Bede’s exegesis.¹⁸² The codex has one clear verbal parallel with the work of Bede. The Ezra image is so-called because of a couplet written above the picture itself which reads: ‘The sacred books having been burned by enemy destruction, / Ezra, zealous for God, restored this work’.¹⁸³ The phrase ‘burned by enemy destruction’ appears in *On Ezra and Nehemiah* in the context of the destruction of, and consequent need to replace, the sacred scriptures, thus serving as an introduction for the arrival of

¹⁸⁰ Parkes, *Scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow*, pp. 20-2.

¹⁸¹ Simon Coates, ‘Ceolfrid: History, Hagiography and Memory in seventh- and eighth-century Wearmouth-Jarrow’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 25 (1999), pp. 69-86, at 86.

¹⁸² Richard Marsden, ‘*Manus Bedae*: Bede’s Contribution to Ceolfrith’s Bibles’, *ASE*, 27 (1998), pp. 65-85.

¹⁸³ Codex Amiatinus, fol. 2r/IVr. ‘Codicibus sacris hostili clade perustis / Esdra Deo feruens reparuit opus’ – translation from O’Reilly, ‘Library of Scripture’, p. 22.

Ezra.¹⁸⁴ At most this suggests that Bede is himself the author of the couplet and responsible for adding it to the pandect, but it could as easily indicate his familiarity with and dependence upon the wording used in the codex.¹⁸⁵

Some evidence does indeed suggest that the Codex Amiatinus influenced Bede to write about Ezra. It has been suggested that Bede was actually writing *On Ezra and Nehemiah* during the years immediately before Ceolrith's departure with the codex to Rome.¹⁸⁶ The majority of critical opinion sees the commentary as being much later than that, but the question is not necessarily settled.¹⁸⁷ Bede wrote about Ezra and his restoration of the scriptures in his commentary on 1 Samuel (three-quarters finished when Ceolfrith left for Rome in 716) and in *Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings*, a work which should probably be dated to c.715.¹⁸⁸ In the latter work he also referred to the ancient picture of the layout of the temple; he would later identify the picture as that of Cassiodorus.¹⁸⁹ If we accept the later dating for *On Ezra and Nehemiah* then these may be the earliest occasions when Bede wrote about Ezra. The only other such candidate is his early version of *On Genesis*, where Bede wrote to Bishop Acca that he was breaking off his work, hoping to continue on at a later date, in order to 'investigate, however inadequately, the

¹⁸⁴ *Ezra.*, p. 307 'Verum quia templo incenso atque urbe Hierosolima subuersa scripturae quoque sanctae quae ibidem seruabantur simul fuerant hostili clade perustae...'

¹⁸⁵ The couplet also appears in Alcuin, *Carmina*, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Poetae Latini Medii Aevi I, LXIX p. 292. This has led to the suggestion that Alcuin (having read Bede's commentary on Ezra?) composed the couplet, which was only later added to the Codex Amiatinus; Meyvaert suggests that this is unconvincing on two grounds. Firstly, the language of the couplet is highly Bedan, having analogues in many texts other than the parallel in *Ezra*; secondly, the poem appears to be inspired by a Bible bearing numerous other similarities to the codex. The most likely scenario is that Alcuin drew the couplet from the pandect and not vice-versa. Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus', pp. 877-80; *idem*, 'The Date of Bede's *In Ezram*', p. 1127; Corsano, 'First Quire', pp. 20-2.

¹⁸⁶ Meyvaert, 'The Date of Bede's *In Ezram*', pp. 1089-97, suggests c.711-715.

¹⁸⁷ DeGregorio, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah*, pp. xxxvii-xlii; Chazelle, "Romanness", p. 90.

¹⁸⁸ *Sam.*, p. 80; *Reg.*, VII pp. 301-2. Bede had written three books of the commentary on Samuel by the time Ceolfrith departed: *Sam.*, p. 212. For the date of *Thirty Questions*: Meyvaert, "Footsteps of the Fathers", pp. 267-77.

¹⁸⁹ *Reg.*, XVIII p. 312; *Temp.*, pp. 192-3.

book of the holy prophet and priest Ezra...'.¹⁹⁰ Bede probably returned to writing *On Genesis* by 720, so presumably his earlier break from writing to study Ezra came sometime in the years before that – it cannot have been any earlier than Acca becoming bishop of Hexham in 710.¹⁹¹ The evidence is complicated at times and many questions remain about the dating of Bede's works. However, it seems clear that at some point in the years around the Codex Amiatinus' departure Bede became interested in the figure of Ezra and his work. Something inspired him to think more about Ezra, and the inclusion of an image of Ezra in the codex is the most likely 'something'.¹⁹²

It should thus be clear that bringing the Codex Amiatinus into an investigation of Bede's thought may prove fruitful. I do not think Bede was responsible for the ideas expressed through the pandect (not, at least, as an individual); rather the codex shows us something of the communal ideology and spirituality of Wearmouth-Jarrow which would have influenced Bede's writings. This is a theme to which I will return throughout the chapters below. For the remainder of this chapter I wish to explore this idea with reference to the tabernacle diagram in the codex. A cosmic tabernacle, borrowed (unwittingly?) from Cassiodorus, found its way into the Wearmouth-Jarrow pandect and I will argue that it may well have helped shape Bede's own interpretation of scripture. While Cassiodorus thought of the tabernacle as being an image of heaven, the Amiatinus tabernacle seems distinctly earthbound.

The tabernacle image must on the whole be noted for its fidelity to the biblical description of the tabernacle although a few key details remind the reader not to be fixed

¹⁹⁰ *Gen.*, p. 2 'librum sancti Esrae prophetae ac sacerdotis...parum perscrutatus fuero'; trans. Kendall p. 66. There is a later mention of Ezra's restoration of scripture at *Gen.*, p. 181, but this section of the commentary postdates 720.

¹⁹¹ Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, pp. 45-53, suggests that the first version of *On Genesis* should be dated to 717/718; Darby, *End of Time*, p. 82, would prefer a date some years earlier but still after 710.

¹⁹² Cf. Chazelle, "'Romanness'", pp. 89-91.

solely on its historical meaning.¹⁹³ A small cross above the entrance to the tabernacle proper is obviously anachronistic in the depiction of a Jewish holy site. The laver or basin of water has been placed in the wrong location in the enclosure – not where it should be in the tabernacle but closer to its location in the temple.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel have been added around the edges of the enclosure wall, exactly as they would have been encamped during the forty years in the desert, and Moses and Aaron are named within the tabernacle-precincts.¹⁹⁵ This mixture of the literal and the spiritual is entirely in keeping with the medieval monastic fondness for pictures which provide an opportunity to engage in prolonged meditation.¹⁹⁶ The cross reminds one that the historic tabernacle, in its material reality, also referred to the Christian Church and the heavenly Jerusalem which waits outside history.¹⁹⁷ In other words, the diagram is itself a work of spiritual exegesis.¹⁹⁸

As mentioned above, the four cardinal points add a clear cosmic element to the diagram: all the earth is summed up within those four directions. It should be noted that often in the Cosmas/Octateuch tradition the cardinal points are outside the tabernacle enclosure, whereas here they are within it.¹⁹⁹ Taking the commonplace interpretation of the temple-image as the Church as read, the obvious meaning is that the Church has spread out to enclose all the four corners of the world; if the tabernacle is the earth here it is because the Church fills the earth through evangelisation. The cardinal directions emphasise this

¹⁹³ Codex Amiatinus, fols 6v-7r/IIv-IIIr. Revel-Neher, 'La page double', pp. 8-9; Chazelle, 'Painting the Voice of God', pp. 44-5.

¹⁹⁴ O'Reilly, 'Introduction', p. liii.

¹⁹⁵ Bede interpreted the encampment of the tribes around the tabernacle in relation to the Church's mission to all peoples: *Marc.*, p. 470.

¹⁹⁶ Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: meditation, rhetoric, and the making of images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 168-70.

¹⁹⁷ See Kühnel, 'Jewish Symbolism', p. 166. For the importance of the figural meaning: Thacker, *Bede and Augustine*, pp. 28-9.

¹⁹⁸ For the exegetical reading of another Insular manuscript: Carol Farr, *The Book of Kells: Its Function and Audience* (London: British Library, 1997); O'Reilly, 'Exegesis and the Book of Kells'.

¹⁹⁹ O'Reilly, 'Library of Scripture', p. 33.

twice over. The basic point could have been made with the directions in Latin, but by adding them in Greek the monks of Wearmouth-Jarrow included a further mystical significance. The first letters of the Greek names for the cardinal points (Arctos, Dysis, Anatol and Mesembria) spell out Adam, a point common in Irish exegesis; the Amiatinus tabernacle-Church is depicted containing all of Adam, i.e. the entire human race descended from him.²⁰⁰ Augustine declared that the numerical value of Adam was forty-six, the number of years which it took to rebuild the temple, and the number of days it took to form the body of Christ in Mary's womb.²⁰¹

To say that the Amiatinus diagram of the tabernacle can be read as a map is, therefore, not to see it solely as the depiction of a specific location.²⁰² Rather the common figural interpretation of the Old Testament details is here used to depict a spiritual truth about the world. The image makes a grand statement about the universal spread of the Church, Christ's body, to all peoples and all places.²⁰³ Possible this is a compliment, or stern reminder, to the pope of the importance of upholding his universal authority.²⁰⁴ I feel that we see it most productively as, in common with the rest of the pandect, declaring Northumbria to be part of the Catholic Church which has its head in Rome.²⁰⁵ Like the monastery which Benedict Biscop built, the Codex Amiatinus is a deliberate recreation of Roman art and imagery, designed presumably as a deliberate assumption of Roman

²⁰⁰ *Gen.*, p. 93 'multumque decebat ut nomen protoplasti omnes mundi plagas in se mystice contineret, per cuius progeniem mundus erat omnis implendus'; O'Reilly, 'Traditions of the Evangelists', p. 67; Corsano, 'First Quire', p. 10.

²⁰¹ Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, X.12 p. 108; Walter Berschin, 'Opus deliberatum ac perfectum: Why did the Venerable Bede write a second prose life of St. Cuthbert?', in *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner et al., pp. 95-102, at 99-101. See pp. 151-3 below.

²⁰² P.D.A. Harvey, *Maps in the Age of Bede*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 2006), pp. 14-5, describes the diagram as the only map surviving from Bede's own lifetime.

²⁰³ Reading Cassiodorus' commentary on the Psalms without knowledge of the *Institutiones* might have encouraged such an interpretation of the image in the Grandior: *Expositio Psalmorum*, XIV.1 p. 133 'fides catholica, quae per Ecclesias toto orbe diffusa est, Dei tabernaculum nuncupetur... quod nos fecimus pingi et in Pandectis maioris capite collocari.'

²⁰⁴ Chazelle, 'Painting the Voice of God', p. 52.

²⁰⁵ Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 63.

authority and orthodoxy.²⁰⁶ Recent scholarship has argued persuasively that the pandect was designed from the beginning as a present for the pope, and as such must be understood as a celebration of Roman authority and centrality.²⁰⁷ In such a context a reading of the diagram of the tabernacle as the universal Church convinces all the more. Just as the ‘three Bibles joined together three sites of the one Church of Rome’, the Amiatinus diagram argues that the four corners of the world are now united within the one Church, an event seen as, implicitly, the fulfilment of biblical prophecy.²⁰⁸

Connections between Bede’s work and the cosmological ideas of the *Christian Topography* are tenuous and vague; but here is a cosmic tabernacle of which we know Bede was aware. The concerns in Bede’s work noted above regarding the Anglo-Saxons’ peripheral place in the world and the consequences that could have on their orthodoxy, mirror those of Ceolfrith which seem to be expressed here. The Amiatinus diagram places the points of the compass right beside the enclosure walls, inviting the two to be read as connected; Bede read the tabernacle walls in just this way in *On the Tabernacle* – as linked to the universalising message of the cardinal points.²⁰⁹ It seems likely that when writing his commentary he visualised the enclosure as he had seen it drawn in the codex. If there had been discussions surrounding the meaning of the image during its production in the scriptorium, then they too would have influenced Bede’s exegesis. We should note then that Bede did not introduce the universal interpretation when the biblical text mentioned the first cardinal point (South representing the Jews). Rather this interpretation emerged when the focus shifted to gentile (and, therefore, Anglo-Saxon) conversion.²¹⁰

That was almost certainly also the important issue for the creators of the diagram in the

²⁰⁶ For a somewhat different reading of the manuscript’s invocation of Rome: O’Reilly, ‘*Romanitas* of the *Codex Amiatinus*’.

²⁰⁷ Esp. Chazelle, ‘Ceolfrid’s Gift’.

²⁰⁸ Chazelle, ‘Painting the Voice of God’, p. 48.

²⁰⁹ See pp. 80-1 above.

²¹⁰ *Tab.*, p. 64.

Codex Amiatinus. It seems clear that five years or so after the pandect left for Rome Bede continued to elaborate on its exegetical imagery in his commentaries.

The universal Church depicted in the Codex Amiatinus is of course also the earthly Church; universal mission primarily relates to the Church still preaching in this world. As previously discussed the exegetical shorthand for that mission in Bede's writings is the four-fold world, and this rectangular tabernacle maps out just such a world. This image of the earthly tabernacle comes before the Old Testament and may be contrasted with the image before the New Testament which depicts Christ enthroned between seraphim and surrounded by the evangelists with their beasts – a clear depiction of heavenly and, perhaps, apocalyptic revelation.²¹¹ I would, therefore, argue that the Amiatinus tabernacle presents a this-worldly image of the pilgrim Church, contrasted with the heavenly Church in Christ's presence. Interestingly, while Cassiodorus chose to draw both the temple and the tabernacle, Ceolfrith's pandect seems to have only ever contained the tabernacle; this must have required an active decision to deliberately discard the diagram of the temple.²¹² We have seen how Bede's exegesis developed the patristic distinction between the temple and the tabernacle, seeing the temple as the Church triumphant in heaven, the tabernacle the Church militant struggling on earth.²¹³ The drawing of the Amiatinus tabernacle as the four-fold world, whilst the image of the temple from the Codex Grandior was deliberately left uncopied, may be just the sort of occasion which would have given rise to this development of a patristic commonplace.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Codex Amiatinus, fol. 796v. O'Reilly, 'Library of Scripture', pp. 11-3.

²¹² See Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus', pp. 854-60.

²¹³ *Tab.*, p. 42; *Temp.*, pp. 147-8. See pp. 59-60 above.

²¹⁴ Thacker, *Bede and Augustine*, pp. 28-30, believes that the Amiatinus diagram represents the intermingling of the distinctions between the temple and the tabernacle. He argues that the mystical meaning of Adam, referring to the length of time it took to build the second temple, suggests that the image can be interpreted as the temple and that the enclosure walls could double as the colonnades around the temple. One thing we know about Cassiodorus' image of the temple, and a point Bede noted with great

A depiction of the universal Church reaching the ends of the earth makes sense in a Northumbrian Bible; but a depiction of the tabernacle as four-fold world as a frontispiece to scripture is appropriate even outside this Anglo-Saxon context. The work of Jennifer O'Reilly and Mary Carruthers has shown how the tabernacle image functioned as a meditational locus which provided the stimulus to compunction, thus aiding the *lectio divina*.²¹⁵ '*Lectio divina*...requires repentance' and suffering, and hence the tabernacle, with its reminders of the wanderings through the desert, is highly appropriate in this context.²¹⁶ These are the same factors (repentance, suffering, the journey towards the heavenly) which Bede's use of the four-fold world highlighted.²¹⁷ Autodidact or not, Bede must have been influenced by the community in which he lived. That he favoured an exegesis of the tabernacle as the earthly Church, journeying to heaven through a desert of repentance and compunction may well be explained by the fact that the Amiatinus tabernacle was produced in his monastery with just such an exegesis in mind.

Of course, multivalency always marks Bede's exegesis: he remained willing to interpret aspects of the tabernacle in a heavenly light. In particular we have seen his fondness for interpretations of the temple-image which represent Christ's role in moving humanity from earth to heaven. In this light, it has been argued of the Amiatinus image that '[a] cross on the curtain of the Holy of Holies...calls to mind the sacrifice that annulled all others', and that this cross, therefore, turns the diagram into a representation of the movement between heaven and earth.²¹⁸ It should be noted that the cross in the Amiatinus tabernacle is above the main doorway to the tabernacle and not on the veil of the holy of

interest, was that there were three sets of colonnades around the temple, not just one: *Temp.*, pp. 192-3; *Reg.*, XVIII pp. 311-2.

²¹⁵ O'Reilly, 'Library of Scripture'; Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 231-7.

²¹⁶ Chazelle, 'Painting the Voice of God', p. 49.

²¹⁷ See p. 77 above.

²¹⁸ Herbert L. Kessler, 'Through the Temple Veil: The Holy Image in Judaism and Christianity', *Kairos*, 32/33 (1990/91), pp. 53-77, at 71.

holies. The cross here and the cross formed deliberately by the cardinal points emphasise rather the figural interpretation of the temple-image, in which the Christian mysteries of both the Church and heaven are understood as hidden within the old Jewish structures. The monks of Wearmouth-Jarrow might not have considered a cross appearing on the desert tabernacle as inappropriate – Bede believed that Moses had actually been given knowledge of Christ and the Church.²¹⁹ Of course, a hint of the movement towards heaven does not in any way contradict a simultaneous reading of the diagram as representing the earthly Church.²²⁰

I would not suggest that the Amiatinus image could not cause a viewer to think about the heavenly tabernacle; the ‘memory’ of heaven is certainly present in the drawing, but the details are designed to draw the meditating mind back to earth. Just as the tabernacle had to be pinned down lest it blow away, the meditational import of the image is weighted towards earth. For Bede, dwelling in the tabernacle was not a simple escape from the earth; one had to live in this world as if a pilgrim, but that did not excuse one from ‘the duty of the day’, that is to do ‘those things that pertain to the service of brotherly love’.²²¹ The image of the tabernacle is not one which allows a Church leader to meditate upon his heavenly reward in a self-satisfied manner. Rather it is a reminder that he is still on pilgrimage and must still devote himself to the business of building up the temple in this world. Such an interpretation of the Amiatinus tabernacle ties in with the depiction of Ezra elsewhere in the codex, as I shall go on to show.

²¹⁹ *Tab.*, p. 40.

²²⁰ Revel-Neher, ‘La page double’, p. 17, suggests that the cross calls to mind the sense of movement into the heavenly tabernacle (as per the Letter to the Hebrews), but without the mistaken detail of the cross being on the veil.

²²¹ *Ezra.*, p. 268 ‘debemus in tabernaculis manere... tota mente hunc mundum uelut extraneum arentemque deserere... opus uero diei in die suo in illis quae ad obsequium fraternae dilectionis attinent ut est esurienti panem potum sitiendi algenti uestem hospitium peregrino infirmo uisitacionem sepulturam mortuo erranti doctrinam dolenti solatium ministrare’; trans. DeGregorio, p. 48.

This chapter has examined how ideas about the earth and cosmos pervade Bede's temple, but the overarching interpretation which gives sense to all these ideas is that of the temple as Church. The Church is the cosmic temple that connects the followers of Christ on earth and heaven; the Church is the earthly tabernacle that carries Christians through the sufferings of the world; the Church links Rome and Anglo-Saxon Northumbria in one temple of universal orthodoxy; and the Church is the meaning of the temple to which we now turn.

Chapter 4

Bede's Temple as Church

'The house of God...was made as a figure of the holy universal Church': thus Bede began his exegesis of Solomon's temple.¹ The building up of the temple represented the great development of the Church through time; the richness of the temple's decoration signified the diversity of different people within the community of the elect. We have just seen how Bede drew upon cosmic interpretations of the temple in order to portray the Church as a body which reached all times, all places and all peoples, but Bede lived his daily life within the quotidian reality of the institutional Church. In this chapter I look at how Bede used the temple to understand that institution, its members and its relationship with rival religious groupings. One central preoccupation dominating recent research on Bede – the idea of reform – provides a starting-point before I move on to study the little-discussed excursus on the temple in *On Genesis*. In conclusion I consider how the Church as earthly institution of this chapter relates to the Church as cosmic community which we explored in the last chapter.

The Temple and Reform

Bede's temple-commentaries display an unfavourable opinion of his own times. Just as the sons of Aaron suffered death for offering illicit fire on the altar to God, Bede wrote, many priests and teachers of 'our unhappy time...are consumed by the fire of heavenly vengeance' for their greed.² The two pillars at the entrance to the temple displayed the characteristics expected of teachers of the Church and 'note tacitly the sluggishness of

¹ *Temp.*, p. 147 'Domus Dei...in figuram facta est sanctae uniuersalis ecclesiae'; trans. Connolly, p. 5. Also *Ezra.*, p. 241; *Tab.*, pp. 42-3.

² *Tab.*, p. 96 'miserabilis nostri temporis...igne supernae ultionis absumuntur'; trans. Holder, p. 110. Also *Tab.*, p. 115.

our time'.³ The present times contrasted negatively with the zealous activity of the Jewish return from Babylon; Bede even called out for a Nehemiah to come in his age to help reform the Church.⁴ *On Ezra and Nehemiah* contrasted the Jewish people who, having rebuilt the temple, supplied it with priests and Levites for its service with contemporaries who built magnificent monasteries and failed to provide 'teachers to exhort the people to God's works'.⁵

Scholars have long recognised such statements as part of an agenda to reform the Northumbrian Church which permeates Bede's exegesis. Thacker originally highlighted this and DeGregorio has subsequently developed his approach, especially in the context of work concerning *On Ezra and Nehemiah*.⁶ Historians now agree that Bede's sense that contemporary ecclesiastical and monastic affairs had suffered a great falling off from the 'golden age' of the seventh century shaped his vision of the Church. The institution required reform and Bede set about providing it. His writings consistently outline a vision of the Church focused heavily on the pastoral and missionary obligations of its leadership. Church rulers should provide preaching and sacramental care to the laity in the way which the saintly missionaries of seventh-century Northumbria had once done. This vision relates to a Gregorian conception of the preacher, the ascetic *pastor* who carefully mixed the contemplative and active lives in order to bring both themselves and their flock to salvation.⁷

³ *Temp.*, p. 207 'nostrique temporis inertia tacite notaretur'; trans. Connolly, p. 84. Also *Reg.*, XXX pp. 320-1.

⁴ *Ezra.*, pp. 277-8, 360. For a list of parallels between the *Letter to Ecgberht* and *On Ezra and Nehemiah*: DeGregorio, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah*, p. xxxii.

⁵ *Ezra.*, p. 303 'doctores qui ad opera Dei populum cohortentur'; trans. DeGregorio, p. 102.

⁶ Thacker, 'Ideal of Reform', esp. pp. 130-3; DeGregorio, 'Reforming Impulse'; *idem*, 'Reform of the Northumbrian Church'; *idem*, 'Footsteps of His Own: Bede's Commentary on Ezra-Nehemiah', in *Innovation and Tradition*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 143-68.

⁷ Thacker, 'Ideal of Reform', pp. 133-5. For the contemplative and active lives in Bede's representation of Cuthbert and bishops in general: Clare Stancliffe, 'Cuthbert and the Polarity between Pastor and Solitary',

Bede's letter to Bishop Ecgberht of York provides the key which unlocks the reform agenda in his exegesis.⁸ There he declared that bishops failed to provide adequate pastoral care to their dispersed flocks, highlighting especially the need for preaching, baptism and the laying on of hands.⁹ Greed had come to dominate the Northumbrian Church, as bishops oppressed their flocks with heavy taxation and aristocrats set up false monasteries under royal charter, which they ruled despite remaining married.¹⁰ Such foundations proved 'useful neither to God nor man'.¹¹ Bede outlined a series of reforms which included the suggestion that Ecgberht should appoint more priests and teachers (*doctores*) to assist in providing pastoral care and preaching.¹² Religious leaders must renounce material wealth and live their lives in line with what they preach as a good example to others.¹³ The bishop should tear up the charters for false monasteries and seize their land. Monasteries would become the seats for the new bishops whom these communities would elect.¹⁴ Bede hoped that King Ceolwulf, Ecgberht's kinsman, would assist the bishop in these reforms.¹⁵

Bede suggested Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis* to Ecgberht as vital reading for a bishop.¹⁶ Some argue that the pope opened the role of *rector* or *praedicator* to any

in *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner et al., pp. 21-44; Simon Coates, 'The Bishop as Pastor and Solitary: Bede and the Spiritual Authority of the Monk-Bishop', *JEH*, 47 (1996), pp. 601-19.

⁸ The letter presents Bede's viewpoint, rather than an objective one: Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 126-9; Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 100-8.

⁹ *EpEcg.*, pp. 408, 410.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 409-12, 414-8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 414, '...neque Deo neque hominibus utilia sunt...'; trans. Whitelock, p. 804. Bede argued that these monasteries endangered the safety of the kingdom. Either the charters granted to monasteries exempted them from providing military service or they granted land in perpetuity, which could otherwise have been reused by the king to reward future warriors. Growth in monastic establishments thus reduced the amount of land with which the king could attract military support. Wormald, 'Charter Evidence'; Richard Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: British Museum Publications, 1988), pp. 28-30.

¹² *EpEcg.*, pp. 408-9, 412-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 405-7, 419-23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 413-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

suitably moral Christian;¹⁷ was this also the case for Bede? Thacker suggests that while Bede's order of teachers overlaps with the clerical hierarchy, on occasion it goes beyond it.¹⁸ Bede suggested that the term *pastor* applied not exclusively to bishops, priests, deacons and abbots but also possibly to lay heads of household.¹⁹ At one point in *On Ezra and Nehemiah* Bede seems to have supported female preachers.²⁰ If such a comment stands up then it would seem difficult to maintain, as some have, that Bede conceived of missionary work and pastoral care as provided entirely by ordained 'priest-preachers'.²¹ The issue has attracted much attention because Bede's outlook may help to expand our understanding of the provision of pastoral care in early Anglo-Saxon England.²² The 1990s saw an important scholarly debate about the importance of monastic communities to the development of parochial structures which fuelled this interest in pastoral care.²³

Bede used a number of words to describe people whose function he conceived of as broadly the same: *doctores*, *praedicatores* and *magistri* seem the most common, but also related are *rectores*, *ministri verbi/sermonis* and (albeit in a complicated fashion)

¹⁷ Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 157; R.A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great's *Rector* and His Genesis', in *Grégoire Le Grand*, ed. Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris: CNRS, 1986), pp. 137-46.

¹⁸ Thacker, 'Ideal of Reform', p. 131; *idem*, 'Ordering of Understanding', p. 43; *idem*, 'Priests and Pastoral Care in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Study of Medieval Manuscripts of England: Festschrift in Honor of Richard W. Pfaff*, ed. George Hardin Brown and Linda Ehrsam Voigts (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), pp. 187-208, at 203.

¹⁹ *Hom.*, I.7 p. 49.

²⁰ *Ezra.*, p. 257.

²¹ T.R. Eckenrode, 'The Venerable Bede and the Pastoral Affirmation of the Christian Message in Anglo-Saxon England', *Downside Review*, 99 (1981), pp. 258-78, at 259; Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 242-6; Catherine Cubitt, 'Pastoral Care and Conciliar Canons: the Provisions of the 747 Council of *Clofesho*' in *Pastoral Care*, ed. Blair and Sharpe, pp. 193-211.

²² E.g. Eckenrode, 'Pastoral Affirmation of the Christian Message'; Thacker, 'Monks'; Sarah Foot, 'Parochial Ministry in Early Anglo-Saxon England: The Role of Monastic Communities' in *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay*, ed. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 43-54.

²³ Eric Cambridge and David Rollason, 'Debate: The Pastoral Organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church: a Review of the "Minster Hypothesis"' and John Blair, 'Debate: Ecclesiastical Organization and Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England', *EME*, 4 (1995), pp. 87-104 and pp. 193-212, respectively. Also p. 23 above.

sacerdotes.²⁴ While the choice of title may imply some differences of emphasis, in practice Bede used these words interchangeably, suggesting that usually in his exegesis he considered them to describe the same group of people.²⁵ Preachers were the successors of the apostles (Bede spoke of apostles and ‘apostolic men’ together), but they consisted not just of missionaries to non-Christians: some built up the Church within existing Christian societies also.²⁶ As the heirs to the apostolic mission these individuals seem to have shared in the power of binding and loosing, identified with their control over membership of the Church.²⁷

Examining Bede’s use of the temple-image may illuminate some of the issues here – his interest in the contemporary Anglo-Saxon Church probably influenced more of his exegesis than just the explicitly reformist statements.²⁸ Certainly his presentation of the priests of the temple-cult seems infused with his reforming interest in teachers. Zacharias sacrificing at the altar inside the temple, while the people pray outside, represents the contrast between the teacher enkindled with divine wisdom and the less-learned who wait

²⁴ Thacker, ‘Ideal of Reform’, p. 130, agrees that these terms mean the one thing, but in ‘Ordering of Understanding’, p. 43, suggests a differentiation between the scholarly *doctor* and the more active *praedicator*.

²⁵ Examples of *praedicator*es and *doctores* being equivalent: *Reg.*, XIV p. 306; *Tab.*, p. 57; *Ezra.*, pp. 274-5; *Temp.*, pp. 200-6. *Doctores* and *magistri*: *Sam.*, p. 102; *Tab.*, pp. 52-3. *Rectores* and *doctores* or *praedicator*es: *Sam.*, p. 122; *Tab.*, p. 51. *Doctores* are associated with *pastores* (*Luc.*, p. 234), *praesules* (*Ezra.*, p. 379), *sacerdotes* (*Temp.* p. 232) and *interpretes* (*Tab.*, p. 65). Cf. Markus, ‘Gregory the Great’s *Rector*’, p. 142.

²⁶ *Tab.*, pp. 27, 58, 97; *Temp.*, pp. 210, 227; *Ezra.*, p. 321 ‘duodecim apostolos per quorum doctrinam ecclesia...fundata est et usque ad finem saeculi per successores eorum aedificari non desinit’. For two concepts of mission, i.e evangelising non-Christians and strengthening the faith of existing Christians: *Temp.* p. 218.

²⁷ *Temp.*, pp. 186, 217 ‘sancti doctores...iudicium sui timent auctoris ne forte iniuste ligando aut soluendo quempiam’; *Ezra.*, p. 364. Bede understood that the power to bind and loose had been given to all the apostles and thence to the entire Church hierarchy: *Hom.*, I.20 pp. 145-6; Moorhead, ‘Papacy’, pp. 224-5; Donald J. Grimes, ‘Petrine Primacy: Perspectives of Two Insular Commentators (A.D. 600-800)’, *Proceedings of the PMR Conference*, 12-13 (1987-88), pp. 149-58.

²⁸ Cf. Scott DeGregorio, ‘Monasticism and Reform in Book IV of Bede’s “Ecclesiastical History of the English People”’, *JEH*, 61 (2010), pp. 673-87, at 674-5; but see N.J. Higham, ‘Bede’s Agenda in Book IV of the “Ecclesiastical History of the English People”: A Tricky Matter of Advising the King’, *JEH*, 64 (2013), 476-93, at 478.

humbly for his teaching.²⁹ The link did not only carry positive association: Heli's sons seduced women at the door of the tabernacle just as wicked preachers prevent weak souls entering through the door of life.³⁰

This link between the Old Testament priesthood and the *doctores* and *praedicatores* of the Church, therefore, seems worth investigation. Bede provided, in *On the Tabernacle*, an exhaustive commentary on the vestments of the Jewish priests. In these garments he saw the model for his own reformed pastorate displayed; they reveal 'the works of righteousness and holiness which the Scripture of the sacred law recommends [the Church's] rulers to possess'.³¹ Any summary runs the risk of being selective, but taken together the vestments display the purity of word, thought and deed necessary for a pastor. The preacher actualises in deed the care for their flock, the models of the saints and the heavenly virtues which they hold in the mind. The message of the robes of the Aaronic priests matches that of Bede's other reforming texts: 'the faith of faithful teachers is joined together with action'.³²

Here again the creation of the Codex Amiatinus may have provided the inspiration for Bede's ideas. We have already discussed the image of Ezra in the codex and shown that sufficient grounds exist for connecting Bede's writings with this image.³³ In this portrait Ezra appears as a Jewish high priest, clad in the vestments which Bede went on to interpret in such detail in *On the Tabernacle*.³⁴ Traditionally art historians have denied

²⁹ *Luc.*, p. 29.

³⁰ *Sam.*, p. 30.

³¹ *Tab.*, p. 97 'opera sunt iustitiae et sanctitatis quae scriptura sacrae legis rectoribus habenda commendat'; trans. Holder, p. 111.

³² *Tab.*, p. 106 'doctorum fidelium ... fides cum operatione coniungitur'; trans. Holder p. 122. For the entire commentary on the sacerdotal vestments: *Tab.*, pp. 97-123.

³³ See pp. 95-7 above.

³⁴ O'Reilly, 'Library of Scripture', p. 20, and DeGregorio, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah*, p. 232, argue that the eight garments do not all feature in the Ezra portrait. One should be wary of nit-picking, however, as no artist could have adequately depicted all of the clothes – including the linen undergarments and tunic worn beneath the rest. I would argue that four of the garments appear in some fashion: the rational/breastplate,

that this image casts any light on Wearmouth-Jarrow, arguing ‘that the figure represented in this miniature is not primarily Ezra, but essentially Cassiodorus in the guise of Ezra’.³⁵ This depends upon the probable connection between nine codices in the bookcase of the image and Cassiodorus’ *novem codices*, a nine part division of the bible he produced at Vivarium.³⁶ However, we have no reason for believing that Cassiodorus would ever have depicted himself as Ezra other than the Amiatinus diagram; the evidence increasingly suggests that the iconography of the image was designed for the first time at Wearmouth-Jarrow.³⁷ Even if Cassiodorus had created the image, we would still need to investigate what it meant to the community at Wearmouth-Jarrow.

Scholars have suggested numerous interpretations: that Ezra here represents Christ in his role as author of both testaments;³⁸ that the Jewish high priest’s vestments link the image with the codex’s papal audience: the artists intended it to speak to the pope of ‘the combined role of pontiff and scholar of holy scripture that Bede considered paradigmatic of papal virtue’.³⁹ O’Reilly has suggested that the image does not represent Ezra at all – rather the depiction of the priestly scribe calls the reader to undertake the work of studying, interpreting and internalising scripture.⁴⁰ For DeGregorio, Ezra symbolises the Wearmouth-Jarrow community’s commitment to reform of the Northumbrian Church.⁴¹ Bede wrote *On the Tabernacle* years after the Codex Amiatinus had left Northumbria and we might question, therefore, whether Bede’s statements there reflect the manuscript’s

the head-dress (Meyvaert, ‘Bede, Cassiodorus’, pp. 876-7) and the superhumeral and blue tunic (Meyvaert, ‘The Date of Bede’s *In Ezram*’, pp. 1120-2).

³⁵ Bruce-Mitford, *Codex Amiatinus*, p. 14; questioned first in Corsano, ‘The First Quire’, then in the work of Celia Chazelle.

³⁶ Richard Marsden, ‘Job in his Place: The Ezra Miniature in the Codex Amiatinus’, *Scriptorium*, 49 (1995), pp. 3-15.

³⁷ Corsano, ‘The First Quire’, pp. 15-20; Chazelle, “‘Romanness’”, p. 87.

³⁸ Meyvaert, ‘Bede, Cassiodorus’, pp. 881-2.

³⁹ Chazelle, ‘Ceolfrid’s Gift’, p. 155.

⁴⁰ O’Reilly, ‘*Romanitas* of the *Codex Amiatinus*’, pp. 379-84.

⁴¹ DeGregorio, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah*, pp. 231-3.

intellectual programme. However, he mentioned the priestly vestments a number of times in passing in the commentary he was writing on the book of Samuel at the time of the codex's departure from Wearmouth-Jarrow. There they symbolised the grace of different virtues in the holy man, the examples of good works and the preaching by word and example of the teachings of the fathers.⁴² David putting on the ephod reminds us that *doctores* engaged in the ministry of the word ought always to clothe themselves in the reading of sacred scripture.⁴³ In other words, in years when the Codex Amiatinus likely dominated much discussion and thought at Wearmouth-Jarrow, Bede interpreted the vestments of the Aaronic priesthood as emblematic of the kind of preachers which he wanted in the Church.⁴⁴

Of course, Bede could have commented upon the priestly vestments even if none of his colleagues had ever thought about the matter. His detailed exegesis owes much to Gregory the Great's previous interpretation of the same garments.⁴⁵ But Bede cannot have been alone at Wearmouth-Jarrow in reading Gregory's advice for pastors. No doubt the brothers working on the Codex Amiatinus would have discussed Gregory's interpretation of the priestly robes and other influences at the time. We should not imagine the major work in the scriptorium as removed from the communal life of the monastery, nor should we see Bede's writings as distant from such activity. The link between the priestly vestments and preachers appears in Bede's earliest exegesis, alongside a Christological interpretation, the significance of which appears much reduced

⁴² *Sam.*, pp. 27, 118, 209, 214-5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 261-2 'Dauid igitur applicata ad se stola pontificali. . . cum pastores ecclesiae gratia sui auctoris intus edocti per scripturae sacrae lectionem qua doctores in ministerio uerbi semper oportet indui...'

⁴⁴ Thacker, 'Ordering of Understanding', p. 54, sees the commentary on 1 Samuel as the turning-point in Bede's exegesis which introduced his distinctive later themes.

⁴⁵ Gregory, *RP*, II.2-4 col. 23-32; Holder, 'New Treasures and Old', p. 243; Thacker, 'Ideal of Reform', p. 134.

in later work.⁴⁶ The Ezra image did not make available to Bede otherwise unknown interpretations of the priestly garb, but does seem to have inspired a particular interest in interpretations focused upon preachers.

The role of the wider Wearmouth-Jarrow community may also help us to understand why Bede thought that he had the right and authority to lecture a bishop as he did in the *Letter to Ecgberht*. A simple priest and choir monk, he possessed no official authority over anyone other than perhaps his students. Ecgberht may once have been one of those, but even assuming such a master-pupil relationship does not explain a reform agenda reaching back long before Ecgberht's accession to the episcopate.⁴⁷ Seeing Bede not simply as an individual author speaking with personal authority, but as a monk within a wealthy and powerful community where his ideas had arisen from a collective discussion, goes some way towards explaining this situation; the call for more monasteries to become episcopal seats may represent an attempt by Wearmouth-Jarrow to improve its own status.⁴⁸ In Bede's texts we may hear not just the voice of one monk, but that of a vocal element in the community at Wearmouth-Jarrow.

Bede opened his discussion of the Aaronic priesthood's vestments with the declaration that their details provide precepts for the 'priests of the Church'.⁴⁹ The Codex Amiatinus shows Ezra robed as an Old Testament high priest (*pontifex*) and DeGregorio has discussed in detail the word *pontifex* in the context of Bede's account of Ezra.⁵⁰ He claims that Bede deliberately embraced the anachronism of making Ezra high priest to heighten his relevance to the contemporary Northumbrian Church. Discussing Ezra's role

⁴⁶ *Apoc.*, pp. 527, 559; *Sam.*, p. 27; *Tab.*, pp. 96-7.

⁴⁷ *Vita Alcuini*, ed. W. Arndt, MGH Scriptores 15, 4 p. 186.

⁴⁸ *EpEcg.*, p. 413; Vicky Gunn, *Bede's Historiae: Genre, Rhetoric and the Construction of Anglo-Saxon Church History* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), pp. 92-3.

⁴⁹ *Tab.*, p. 95 'habitus recte ecclesiae sacerdotibus congruit'; trans. Holder, p. 109.

⁵⁰ DeGregorio, 'Reform of the Northumbrian Church', pp. 19-20; *idem*, 'Footsteps of His Own', pp. 164-5.

in correcting the leaders of the community, Bede explained the word *pontifex* with ‘i.e. an archbishop’; the Jewish hierarchy thus became directly analogous to the ecclesiastical hierarchy and Ezra’s behaviour formed the model for how an archbishop must correct his erring clergy.⁵¹ One need hardly point out the relevance to the *Letter to Ecgberht*.

Interestingly Bede seems to have used *pontifex* in a similar way some years previously, when he spoke of how ‘the *pontifex* of our time’ ought to pray for the entire human race.⁵² He clearly did not mean the Aaronic high priest here, nor Christ; rather Bede seems to have referred to the duties of contemporary bishops to offer up prayers not simply for themselves.

All this strengthens the link we might want to make in Bede’s work between the Jewish priesthood and the ordained clergy. Christian thinkers established this link long before the eighth-century and the liturgy for the ordination of bishops explicitly played with spiritual interpretations of the Aaronic vestments.⁵³ The Irish clerical élite saw themselves as heirs to the ancient Jewish priesthood and so such ideas may have circulated in an Insular context.⁵⁴ But Bede also inherited a tradition from the Fathers which emphasised that the entire Church formed a ‘kingly priesthood’.⁵⁵ Hence he interpreted the *sacerdotes* of the Old Testament as on occasion referring to all Christians or all the perfect.⁵⁶ God called all Christians, lay and ordained, to fulfil a spiritual ministry; all the living stones of the temple built up the Church through ‘teaching and

⁵¹ *Ezra.*, p. 327 ‘id est archiepiscopum’. Also Plummer, *Opera Historica*, II, 384. For other examples of Bede connecting ranks in the Jewish hierarchy to those in the Church: *Ezra.*, pp. 255, 262, 279-80.

⁵² *Tab.*, p. 123 ‘nostri temporis pontifex’.

⁵³ Holder, *Bede: On the Tabernacle*, p. 109 n. 2; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae sive Origines*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), VII.XII.13-33; *Liber Sacramentorum*, XCVIV.769 pp. 120-1.

⁵⁴ Donnchadh Ó Corráin et al., ‘The Laws of the Irish’, *Peritia*, 3 (1984), pp. 382-438, at 394-400.

⁵⁵ 1 Peter 2.9; Yves Congar, *L’Écclésiologie du Haut Moyen Âge: De saint Grégoire le Grand à la désunion entre Byzance et Rome* (Paris: Cerf, 1968), p. 109 esp. n. 216. The idea appears in Irish exegesis known to Bede: *Commentarius in Epistolas Catholicas*, p. 31, quoted at *Apoc.*, p. 239.

⁵⁶ *Tab.*, p. 138; *Temp.*, pp. 194, 207, 214; *Ezra.*, pp. 242, 264.

patience'.⁵⁷ Were all Christians, therefore, also called to act as pillars of the temple, those *doctores* who would spearhead Bede's envisioned reform?⁵⁸

Recent scholarship has noted Bede's clear interest in the priesthood of all believers; he in fact seems to have used this non-clerical interpretation of biblical *sacerdotes* far more often than many of his patristic predecessors.⁵⁹ The much more exact term *presbiter* appears rarely in Bede's commentaries.⁶⁰ His use of both the terms 'ministry of the altar' and 'ministry of the word' may also imply a theoretical division between the ordained and preachers.⁶¹ Sometimes Bede conflated 'priests' with those who teach within the Church, but if he referred on such occasions to the spiritual priesthood then he may in fact have sought to justify lay preachers.⁶² We ought, therefore, to carefully determine the significance of the spiritual priesthood of all believers in Bede's writings. All members of the Church deserved the title 'priest' because all belong to the body of Christ, the true high priest.⁶³ The theme of spiritual priesthood is ecclesiological insofar as it describes the Church's true nature as one with its saviour, but it has almost no institutional significance.

⁵⁷ *EpCath.*, p. 234 'Et sicut ordines lapidum in pariete portantur alii ab aliis, ita portantur fideles quique a praecedentibus in ecclesia iustis, portant ipsi sequentes per doctrinam et tolerantiam'; *Temp.*, pp. 156, 169-70. Cf. Gregory, *In Hiezechihelam*, II.I.5 p. 211.

⁵⁸ *Hom.*, II.25 p. 377; *Temp.*, pp. 198-207; *Tab.*, pp. 74-5, 88-90; *Cant.*, p. 240.

⁵⁹ Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei Fedeli*, throughout but esp. pp. 84-143 on the temple-commentaries; Georges Tugène, *L'idée de nation chez Bède le Vénérable* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 2001), pp. 252-8.

⁶⁰ *Presbiter* means the specific clerical grade of priest (Bede always described his own status as this); *sacerdos* has a wider meaning, sometimes applying to priests, sometimes also to bishops – it includes anyone who possesses sacerdotal authority in a general sense: *Luc.*, pp. 213-4; Putnam Fennell Jones, *A Concordance to the Historia Ecclesiastica of Bede* (Cambridge, MA.: Medieval Academy of America, 1929): *presbyter* pp. 417-8; *sacerdos* pp. 472-3; Benjamin Thomas, 'Priests and Bishops in Bede's Ecclesiology: the use of sacerdos in the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*', *Ecclesiology*, 6 (2010), pp. 68-93.

⁶¹ *Tab.*, pp. 26, 97; *Temp.*, pp. 194, 209. But *Ezra.*, p. 256, states that preaching, as well as administering the sacraments, is the role of the minister of the altar.

⁶² *Sam.*, p. 27; *Temp.*, pp. 150, 232; *Tab.*, p. 112; *Marc.*, p. 438.

⁶³ *EpCath.*, pp. 235, 237; *Apoc.*, pp. 239, 247-9, 509; *Temp.*, p. 214. Cf. Augustine, *DCD*, XX.10 pp. 719-20.

Therefore, Bede interpreted the laver in which the priests of the temple washed as a reference to baptism in which all Christians become joined with Christ.⁶⁴ The theme of spiritual priesthood appeared in his interpretation of David and his men eating the loaves usually reserved for the priests; once again we see the focus on sacramental union with Christ (in the eucharist this time) influencing Bede here.⁶⁵ Participation in Christ means that all the faithful become ‘kings’ and ‘christs’ as well – but this hardly meant that Bede believed that all the baptised laity possessed royal power or practical messiah-ship in any earthly sense.⁶⁶ In other words, the reality of the spiritual priesthood in no way undermined or replaced the institutional reality of the clerical hierarchy.⁶⁷ Bede also knew, of course, that when Peter called the entire Church ‘a kingly priesthood’ he had quoted the words of Exodus 19.6 addressed to Israel. Thus Bede interpreted the Jewish priesthood as a figure of the new priesthood in the Church; the image signified the transference of election from Israel exclusively to all the gentile nations.⁶⁸

In other words, no contradiction exists between Bede having interpreted the Jewish priesthood as symbolising all Christians in certain cases and only the Christian clergy in others. Indeed, the very structure of the temple’s priesthood served as a forerunner for the institutional Church of Bede’s own day.⁶⁹ The Jewish *sacerdos* can symbolise Christians who possess the *officium altaris*.⁷⁰ Hence, we should take the association of the Aaronic priesthood with the ‘priests of the church’ at face value: Bede intended the image of the

⁶⁴ *Temp.*, pp. 207, 214; *Tab.*, p. 138 is very similar but refers to the compunction of tears, not baptism.

⁶⁵ 1 Kings 21.4-6; *Luc.*, p. 129 (= *Marc.*, p. 464); *Sam.*, p. 196; cf. Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii*, V.33 p. 147.

⁶⁶ *Hom.*, I.16 p. 114; *Apoc.*, p. 509; *Sam.*, p. 25 ‘Omnes quippe unctos eius chrismate recte christos appellamus...’. Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei Fedeli*, pp. 148-51.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-5, 111-13.

⁶⁸ *EpCath.*, pp. 237-8; *Sam.*, p. 197; *Luc.*, p. 312; *Reg.*, I p. 297

⁶⁹ *Hom.*, II.19 p. 320 ‘eligens ceteros qui in partibus erant sacerdotii minoris qui nunc presbyteratus uocatur’.

⁷⁰ *Luc.*, p. 245 (cf. *Apoc.*, p. 487).

teacher pure in mind and action for the clergy.⁷¹ We can follow Bede's train of thought in one section of *On Ezra and Nehemiah* to see how he connected the ordained with the *doctores* through the image of the Jewish priesthood. Ezra gave the precious vessels of the temple to priests to carry because those who wish to enter the Church must do it through baptism at 'the hands of priests' and those being reconciled to the Church do penance 'through the office of a priest'; the twelve Jewish priests, Bede went on to make clear, also symbolised the apostles and their successors, the *doctores*.⁷² The sacramental ministry of the ordained unites here with the apostolic mission of evangelisation and preaching.

Bede further linked these potentially separate offices through the image of sacrifice, the supreme duty of the Jewish hierarchy. Preachers aimed to turn Christians into 'living sacrifices' and Bede saw the act of converting someone as offering a sacrifice to God.⁷³ This imagery makes the most sense when read in connection with Bede's analysis of how Christian priests offer sacrifice through the sacraments. Baptism itself was a sacrifice;⁷⁴ or, more correctly explained, baptism proved analogous to the washing of victims in preparation for sacrifice. The Christian only became a burnt offering for the Lord when the fire of the Spirit descended in confirmation through the mediating hands of the bishop.⁷⁵ Conversion without sacramental initiation would likely have made little sense to

⁷¹ See p. 113 above.

⁷² *Ezra.*, p. 321 'apte...uasa sacerdotibus commendat Ezras...quia per sacerdotum necesse est manus diluantur in baptismo et consecrentur domino quicumque ad consortium sanctae ecclesiae pertingere desiderant, per sacerdotum aequae officium debent reconciliari sanctae ecclesiae paenitendo...bene duodecim sunt sacerdotes quibus haec cura delegata est propter duodecim apostolos per quorum doctrinam ecclesia et per orbem primo fundata est et usque ad finem saeculi per successores eorum aedificari non desinit' – Bede went on to interpret Ezra's advice to the priests with reference to 'doctores ecclesiae'; trans. DeGregorio, p. 130.

⁷³ *Ret.*, pp. 140-1; *Luc.*, p. 128 (= *Marc.*, p. 463) 'Hostia enim Deo placabilis hominum salus est', quoting Jerome, *In Matheum*, p. 88. Giovanni Caputa, 'Aspects of the Priestly Ministry according to Saint Bede', in *Priests of Christ: In the Church for the World*, ed. Giovanni Caputa and Julian Fox (Jerusalem: Studium Theologicum Salesianum, 2010), pp. 70-95, at 82-3.

⁷⁴ *Hom.*, II. 17 p. 308; *Sam.*, p. 81.

⁷⁵ *Temp.*, p. 214; *Cant.*, p. 322. Caputa, 'Priestly ministry', pp. 83-6.

Bede, thus preachers probably offered sacrifice via the performance of the sacraments. Hence, he even spoke of *doctores* administering baptism – a statement which makes perfect sense in the light of this analysis and which reveals that usually when Bede thought of *doctores*, he thought of ordained clergy.⁷⁶ Bede's focus on the sacramental aspects of pastoral care in the *Letter to Ecgberht* proves understandable in this light.

We must remember that Bede's audience was not primarily lay: while he dedicated the *Ecclesiastical History* to a layman, whether King Ceolwulf could read remains an unanswered question.⁷⁷ Bede's corpus appears, in intention, overwhelmingly aimed at and, in practice, read by clerical figures in monastic communities.⁷⁸ This means that frequently when Bede seems to have given general advice on how to behave, he probably had this audience primarily in his mind. Such an audience could include women, and Bede explicitly wrote his commentary on the Canticle of Habakkuk for a nun;⁷⁹ but on the whole it would not have been dissimilar to that found at his own monastery. We must keep in mind the underlying context of an environment where mutual religious teaching and support was expected and where many (though not all) of the male inmates had received ordination. Of course, such an audience in turn had to engage with the laity, had to teach them and inculcate a sense of the dignity of being Christian in them. Thus on occasion he certainly gave advice for all Christians, and on occasion for religious in particular.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ *Temp.*, pp. 218, 220; Thacker, 'Priests and Pastoral Care', p. 203.

⁷⁷ Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede*, pp. 41-44.

⁷⁸ Much secondary literature has presented Bede's works as designed to train other monks or priests to engage in preaching: Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, p. 154; McClure, 'Bede's *Notes on Genesis*'; Thacker, 'Ordering of Understanding'.

⁷⁹ Bede, *In Canticum Abacuc*, pp. 381, 409.

⁸⁰ For the moral advice in *On Ezra and Nehemiah* having a monastic/Benedictine hue: DeGregorio, 'Benedict of Nursia', pp. 158-62. For Bede conceiving of a wider audience than just his fellow clerics: Gerald Bonner, 'The Christian Life in the Thought of the Venerable Bede', *Durham University Journal*, 63 (1970), pp. 39-55, at 44-6.

Clearly Bede felt that simply by living an exemplary Christian life, one could preach: ‘For it is not only one who instructs a brother by word who carries on the ministry of a teacher, but also one who by his example turns him to better things.’⁸¹ Bede stressed the importance of good works and setting a good example to others so frequently that it certainly had a general application to the Christian life. But the very fact that he described individuals as ‘ordained’ to the specific role of *doctor* implies that he did not see it as the automatic state of all Christians.⁸² Bede certainly allowed women some teaching role in a monastic context, but studies of his attitudes have depicted him as trying to downgrade the female role in the public life of the Church and society in general.⁸³ In *On Ezra and Nehemiah* we find that his female ‘preachers’ (only mentioned because of the specific wording of the biblical text) seem reduced to helping the builders of the temple, rather than building it themselves.⁸⁴ Looking at Bede’s temple-commentaries for evidence of his ideal reformed Church suggests that hierarchical divisions remained important in this purified institution.

A number of different hierarchies appear in the commentaries. Bede made a frequent simple distinction between the perfect (*perfecti*) and the majority of Christians, the carnal

⁸¹ *Hom.*, I.21 pp. 150-1 ‘Neque enim solum qui uerbo fratrem erudit sed etiam qui exemplo ad meliora conuertit ministerium gerit doctoris’; trans. Martin & Hurst, I, 208. Also *EpCath.*, pp. 223-4.

⁸² *Tab.*, p. 29; *Temp.*, p. 151; *Ezra.*, p. 277; *Hom.*, I.7 p. 49. We must remember that ordination in the early middle ages may not have had a sacramental meaning but rather a broader implication of someone being appointed to a specific office: Gary Macy, *The Hidden History of Women’s Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 23-48.

⁸³ Bede called Aelfflaed ‘magistra’ and ‘doctrix’ (*HE*, III.24 p. 292, IV.26 p. 430): in both cases seemingly in relation to her monastic role. Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), esp. pp. 269-70 n. 136 on female preachers; Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, ‘Birthing Bishops and Fathering Poets: Bede, Hild, and the Relations of Cultural Production’, *Exemplaria*, 6 (1994), pp. 35-65; David Pelteret, ‘Bede’s Women’, in *Women, Marriage, and Family in Medieval Christendom: Essays in Memory of Michael M. Sheehan, C.S.B.*, ed. Constance M. Rousseau and Joel T. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), pp. 19-46.

⁸⁴ *Ezra.*, p. 257 ‘plurimae...personae quae non solum uiuendo uerum etiam praedicando corda proximorum ad laudem sui creatoris accendant et quasi suauitate sanctae uocis aedificantium templum domini adiuuent laborem’.

(*carnales*).⁸⁵ All Christians must obey the ten commandments but those who go further and do things not strictly required for salvation become more perfect; in particular Bede emphasised the rejection of private property and celibacy as optional routes leading to perfection.⁸⁶ Such a focus makes it very probable that he considered perfection as a reward for the monastic state, separated from the rest of society by vows of chastity and poverty.⁸⁷ The contrast between the (bronze) altar of holocausts and the (gold) altar of incense also helps explain the difference between the perfect and the carnal. The altar of holocausts represents those who offer up their own fleshly desires to God by struggling against them; the altar of incense symbolises those who have escaped all such desires and thus constantly offer prayers of love and longing to God.⁸⁸ Bede understood this contrast in relation to ideas about compunction arising from a deeply Gregorian background. The perfect of the altar of incense possess the compunction of love, the end state to which the monastic life leads.⁸⁹ Sometimes Bede did differentiate between the perfect and beginners (*incipientes*), implying room for development, but usually he insisted that the perfect, an élite minority, were always much fewer in number than the carnal.⁹⁰

Alongside this twofold division appear a number of threefold divisions deriving from the patristic hierarchy of the married, continent and the rulers/preachers of the Church.⁹¹

Initially Bede seems to have followed this traditional approach with some variations in

⁸⁵ Perfection is relative: *Temp.*, p. 165 ‘nullus uere perfectus et absque macula quamdiu in huius uitae uia est incedere potest’.

⁸⁶ *Temp.*, pp. 175, 194-6; *Ezra.*, pp. 259, 269; *Tab.*, p. 24.

⁸⁷ Bede’s homily on Benedict Biscop links the perfection of renouncing wealth (Matthew 19.21) with the monasticism of Wearmouth-Jarrow very clearly: *Hom.*, I.13 pp. 88-94.

⁸⁸ *Temp.*, pp. 176, 224-5; *Tab.*, pp. 125-6, 131-2.

⁸⁹ *Tab.*, pp. 132, 136-7. Cf. Gregory, *In Hiezechihelam*, II.X.21 pp. 395-6. Straw, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 223-5; Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, pp. 29-32. Note that at *Ezra.*, p. 269, where only the altar of holocausts appears, Bede understood it with reference to monastic perfection: DeGregorio, ‘Bede, the monk’, pp. 355-7.

⁹⁰ *Sam.*, p. 20; *Luc.*, p. 200; *Temp.*, pp. 194, 225-6. Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio*, pp. 123-4; Holder, ‘Mysteries of Our Salvation’, pp. 151-2.

⁹¹ Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 12, 156; Gregory, *In Hiezechihelam*, II.IV.5 pp. 261-2; Augustine, *Enarrationes*, CXXXII.4-5 pp. 1928-30.

vocabulary.⁹² In *On the Tabernacle*, however, a slippage occurs between the continent and the *rectores*, as the virginity which marks the one group passes to the other.

Preaching *and* virginity mark out *rectores*: ‘the merit of those who preach is more sublime than that of those who are zealous to devote themselves to continence only, and not to the work of teaching as well’.⁹³ Indeed when Bede came to sum up on his extended discussion *uirgines* replaced the word *rectores*.⁹⁴ A few years later in *On the Temple* he had completed the transformation of the hierarchy; virgins had become the top level of the hierarchy with the continent reduced to those partaking of conjugal abstinence.⁹⁵

Aldhelm set out a very similar threefold hierarchy of chastity; but whereas that concerned sexual purity, Bede’s hierarchy had a wider significance as virgins clearly performed leadership duties within the Church.⁹⁶ One could not consider the paterfamilias of a secular household a *praedicator* under such a scheme which significantly combined preaching, virginity and leadership.

This seems to indicate a monastic ideal for preaching. Many early Anglo-Saxon monastic foundations did engage regularly with the surrounding laity, and members would have provided essential pastoral care either in the monastery itself or whilst travelling.⁹⁷ On one occasion Bede stated that the less ‘perfect’, i.e. those represented by the altar of bronze, must provide preachers since the gold altar represents those who find it almost

⁹² *Sam.*, p. 97 ‘coniugatorum...continentium et doctorum’; *Luc.*, p. 321 ‘praedicatores continentis atque coniugati’. Bede followed tradition in making Noah, Daniel and Job represent the different ranks. Georges Folliet, ‘Les trois catégories de chrétiens: Survie d’un thème augustinien’, *L’Année Théologique Augustinienne*, 49-50 (1954), pp. 81-96, missed Bede’s engagement with this tradition.

⁹³ *Tab.*, p. 32 ‘sublimius est meritum praedicantium quam eorum qui solummodo continentiae et non etiam operi doctrinae student’; trans. Holder, p. 34.

⁹⁴ *Tab.*, p. 31 ‘et ante et post incarnationem dominicam terni fuere gradus eorum qui fideliter in ecclesia domino seruirent coniugatorum uidelicet continentium et rectorum’; *ibid.*, pp. 34-5 ‘tribus fidelium gradibus de quibus saepius diximus coniugatorum uidelicet continentium et uirginum’.

⁹⁵ *Temp.*, p. 163 (linked with the twofold distinction between perfect and carnal).

⁹⁶ Both writers shared an interest in those who have abandoned the married life, a practice not uncommon in Anglo-Saxon monasticism at the time: Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979), pp. 53-6. Cf. Augustine, *DCD*, XV.26 p. 494.

⁹⁷ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 285-321.

impossible to express their contemplative experiences.⁹⁸ However, often elsewhere he indicated that the *perfecti* must supply *doctores* and *praedicatores*.⁹⁹ This seems consistent with the divergence noted between Bede and Gregory the Great's attitudes to contemplation;¹⁰⁰ for Bede, while the possibility of limited contemplation existed, one could never escape the active life of ministering to others.¹⁰¹ However, some *perfecti* can enjoy the delights of contemplation in this world and for Bede, as for Gregory, the preacher must turn inwards on occasion, recharging their spiritual batteries with meditation.¹⁰²

References that seem to suggest that preachers both must and cannot come from amongst the perfect, that Old Testament priests can refer to either all Christians or just to the clergy, remind us that Bede did not seek to create a systematic vision of the Church through his exegesis. A methodological risk exists in taking the thematic approach which underlies the present study as it can impose upon Bede's works a coherent system and harmony never intended when he wrote those works. Constant references to *doctores* and *perfecti* across many different works (the effort of many years) may create an illusion of consistency of thought behind the mere consistency of vocabulary. I feel then that we should not see inconsistencies within the commentaries as fatal blows to a Bedan 'system' since Bede never consciously intended to create such a system. Getting a sense for the overall tenor of Bede's work or the general worldview which emerges from it will probably prove more fruitful than searching for any system. The exact boundaries between the preaching of the laity and that of ordained ministers remain rather fuzzy for us, because they probably were unclear for Bede also.

⁹⁸ *Tab.*, p. 125.

⁹⁹ *Temp.*, p. 196; *Ezra.*, pp. 248, 272, 380; *Tab.*, pp. 5, 9-10, 52.

¹⁰⁰ Scott DeGregorio, 'The Venerable Bede on Prayer and Contemplation', *Traditio*, 54 (1999), pp. 1-39, at 26-32.

¹⁰¹ *Hom.*, I.9 pp. 64-5; *Act.*, p. 52; *Temp.*, pp. 219-20; *Tab.*, p. 22.

¹⁰² *Temp.*, pp. 152, 162, 220; *Tab.*, p. 10; *Luc.*, pp. 310-1. Gregory, *RP*, IV col. 125-8, II.5 col. 32-4.

Thus when he stated that one ought only to choose those who teach (equated with priests) from amongst the ‘servants of God’ should we take this as clear proof that Bede conceived of preachers as being monks?¹⁰³ While the title *famulus Dei* could apply to others also (such as the saintly king Oswald), usually *famulus* and *famula* refer to an individual in the monastic life.¹⁰⁴ Clearly then Bede saw a link between monastic perfection and the life of the preacher, but the monastic state and the office of preacher do not simply and straightforwardly overlap. The fact that Bede seems to have seen the monastic state as a model way of life which ought to influence how all Christians lived their lives might complicate the situation.¹⁰⁵ Importantly, Bede had a highly monastic conception of the duties of the ordained clergy.

Bede believed that all priests should make the essential choices that made one perfect (effectively the rejection of property and sex). His attitudes to sexuality highly conditioned by his monastic state, Bede considered sexual activity inappropriate for priests. Just as for Jewish priests, sexual activity polluted the cleric and rendered the sacraments invalid – but while the Jewish hierarchy worked in shifts, the Christian priest required the unmarried freedom to sacrifice at all times.¹⁰⁶ Bede sat upon the extreme (albeit better recorded) edge of opinion for his time.¹⁰⁷ The *Letter to Ecgberht* envisages a plan of extending regular communion to the laity – so long as they maintain sexual purity of course.¹⁰⁸ If ever put into action such a plan would have marginalised the married, although they could receive the sacrament if they restrained their conjugal activity within

¹⁰³ *Tab.*, p. 29 ‘de coetu spiritalium Dei famulorum eligi atque ordinari debent qui gradum sacerdotii uel doctrinae subeunt’. Cf. Thacker, ‘Monks’, p. 153: ‘his ideal pastors were first and foremost monks in the classic sense.’

¹⁰⁴ Jones, *Concordance*, p. 202.

¹⁰⁵ Tugène, *L'idée de nation*, pp. 244-5; Thacker, ‘Monks’, p. 159.

¹⁰⁶ *Tab.*, pp. 116, 121; *Luc.*, pp. 27-8; *Sam.*, p. 30 ‘peccauit uir in dominum cum idem sacerdos fornicatione contaminatus ad altaris...accessit’.

¹⁰⁷ Thacker, ‘Priests and Pastoral Care’, pp. 190-1. For the development of clerical celibacy: Charles A. Frazee, ‘The Origins of Clerical Celibacy in the Western Church’, *Church History*, 41 (1972), pp. 149-67.

¹⁰⁸ *EpEcg.*, p. 419.

exceptionally narrow limits.¹⁰⁹ In his commentary on 1 Peter Bede let slip his ideal for married couples – total abstinence.¹¹⁰

Many, if not most, clergy in Bede's Northumbria probably had wives and active sex lives.¹¹¹ Bede probably disapproved of 'false monasteries' in part because their leaders generally were married and thus, in his eyes, could not provide the priestly pastoral care which mattered so much.¹¹² Hence the link between preachers and virginity in the commentaries, and the demands for sacerdotal purity; these form not separate interests but a linked vision of a reformed clergy, carrying out their active ministry while following a rigorously monastic way of life. Monastic communities at the time probably did engage in pastoral care primarily through their ordained brethren.¹¹³ A community of 'perfect' contained ordained priests who could provide the laity with the sacramental care Bede demanded, while also giving a home to those other *perfecti* whose contemplative way of life lay above communicating with the wider world. Bede's great respect for the clerical life depended on it having blurred with the monastic, reflecting the circumstances of religious communities in his own age, and seen in his own sense of pride at being both *presbiter* and *famulus Christi*.¹¹⁴

This essential mixture of the clerical and the monastic lifestyles probably explains the mixing of humility and authority within Bede's reform agenda. Bede, on occasion,

¹⁰⁹ Thacker, 'Monks', pp. 154-5.

¹¹⁰ *EpCath.*, pp. 243-4. Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 241-2, interprets this text as only referring to priests since Bede elsewhere supported marriage – thus engaging in the kind of harmonising approach which irons out contradictions. Bede spoke in the first person here but that is best seen as a rhetorical ploy. His defence of marriage at *Gen.*, pp. 28-9, fast becomes a celebration of the superiority of virginity.

¹¹¹ Catherine Cubitt, 'Images of St Peter: The Clergy and the Religious Life in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. Paul Cavill (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 41-54; *eadem*, 'The Clergy in early Anglo-Saxon England', *Historical Research*, 78 (2005), pp. 273-87.

¹¹² *EpEcg.*, p. 416; Thacker, 'Priests and Pastoral Care', p. 202.

¹¹³ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 332-3.

¹¹⁴ Mayr-Harting, *The Rule of St. Benedict, and Social Class*, pp. 14-5, 17; Thacker, 'Priests and Pastoral Care', pp. 203-7; Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 239-40. Contemporaries described different types of religious community using the same language: Foot, *Monastic Life*, p. 4.

identified himself with preachers and those who have to teach others; but he also identified himself with those lesser, imperfect individuals, who require guidance.¹¹⁵ The willingness to humble oneself and learn proved the necessary preparation to exercising authority and teaching others. Christ had asked questions of the elders in the temple in order to set an example for teachers who themselves need to be taught first.¹¹⁶ I think it important to remember that for Bede, as for Gregory, the issue of preaching essentially consisted of moral authority.¹¹⁷ *Doctores* did not merely perform the necessary function of evangelising or instructing others; they led the Church and did so wielding great spiritual power. Their moral purity partly presents a necessary limitation on abuse of that power, but also a justification for its use. To simply claim possession of such authority without humility, would in essence undermine that claim. Notice the painstaking protestations of humility beside strident demands in the *Letter to Ecgberht*: perhaps the clearest expression of Bede's claim to authority.

The reformed Church which Bede called for in the *Letter to Ecgberht* thus drew upon ideas which he had long worked upon in his other writings. Broadly speaking Bede had a vision of an ideal Church, which imbued all people with Christian charity, but especially a clerical élite of preachers and teachers who, while ordained to the higher orders, continued to lead the regular life.¹¹⁸ The Aaronic priesthood of the Old Testament may well have provided an opportunity for the Wearmouth-Jarrow community to discuss and develop the nature of this ideal of priestly *doctores*. Bede's preachers had a missionary role of course, but they also had to defend the Church from its opponents: they acted as

¹¹⁵ *Ezra.*, pp. 264, 303 'Non ergo nostros auditores nostra propria... mandata docere debemus'; *Temp.*, pp. 153, 155. Association with less perfect: *Ezra.*, p. 375; *Tab.*, p. 7 'si doctores nostros...sequi non possumus', 80; *Temp.*, p. 232.

¹¹⁶ *Hom.*, I.19 pp. 135-6.

¹¹⁷ This paragraph is greatly influenced by Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*.

¹¹⁸ Probably the intention behind Bede's suggestion that monastic communities would get to elect the new bishops: *EpEcg.*, p. 413. For contemporary practice: Catherine Cubitt, 'Wilfrid's "Usurping Bishops": Episcopal Elections in Anglo-Saxon England, c.600-c.800', *Northern History*, 25 (1989), pp. 18-38.

doors bringing in new souls or walls excluding all sorts of undesirables.¹¹⁹ Just like Wearmouth-Jarrow, the temple-Church faced threats and Bede's writings display a real sense of the Church as locked in constant struggle with external forces. *On Ezra and Nehemiah* contains a lot condemning episcopal greed, but has almost as much to say about the importance of defending against heresy – a topic barely mentioned in the *Letter to Ecgberht*. But Bede's assault on heresy may still prove relevant to the letter as we shall go on to see.

The Temple versus the Tower

Towards the end of his interpretation of the tower of Babel in *On Genesis*, Bede deployed an elaborate contrast between the tower and its city, Babylon, and the temple and its city, Jerusalem.¹²⁰ The contrast extended to the materials from which both buildings were constructed and made use of the kind of architectural allegory so common in his interpretation of the temple. Bede, deriving the popular basic contrast between Jerusalem and Babylon from tradition, seems to have had no predecessors for the comparison of the architectural details of the tower and temple.¹²¹ The Bible gives details concerning the construction of both buildings and, in stating that the builders of the tower 'had bricks instead of stones and pitch instead of mortar', suggests some significant contrast.¹²² So Bede applied the manner of interpretation he used in his temple-commentaries to the tower. The comparison highlighted points of both similarity and difference. The temple represented the Church and the tower represented those religious groups ranged against it,

¹¹⁹ *Cant.*, p. 350.

¹²⁰ *Gen.*, pp. 157-62.

¹²¹ *Reg.*, XXX pp. 320-1; *Ezra.*, p. 253. Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study of Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), pp. 118-23. Jerome, *In Esaiam*, p. 771, contrasted inhabitants of the temple with the builders of the tower, but made no comparison of the structures.

¹²² Genesis 11.3, as per trans. Kendall, p. 228 – Douay-Rheims translates *bitumen* as 'slime'.

the Jews, pagans, heretics and false Catholics, whom we might think of as ‘pseudo-churches’.¹²³

The contrast between the tower and temple allows us to examine how Bede created an image of the Church in distinction to these pseudo-churches. This distinction primarily highlighted the clash between two societies – the one good and the other evil. The unified society of good, the Church, focused upon the divine, whereas the discordant society of evil had purely earthly interests.¹²⁴ Despite this dualism Bede considered that there existed many points of similarity between the appearance of the Church and the pseudo-churches. This sense of the similarity between rival institutions, and Bede’s fierce emphasis on the essential difference, seems to relate, I argue, to the Northumbrian context as presented in the *Letter to Ecgberht*. The close proximity of varying responses to the same religious ethos primed Bede’s imagination to understand that the pseudo-churches sought to fulfil a similar purpose to that of the Church.

Bede recognised that the pseudo-churches ‘are attempting to build the whiteness of innocence, the strength of faith, and the harmony of brotherhood’, just like the Church.¹²⁵ But, however much heretics or schismatics may seem to rise up they inevitably fall because acting outside the Church.¹²⁶ While the tower sought to rise up to heaven though built on an earthly plain, the temple rested atop the heavenly mountain which is Christ; the bricks of the tower represented souls hardened in pride against God and the stones of the temple those broken in humility so as to be turned into unifying mortar.¹²⁷ Elsewhere Bede acknowledged that non-Christians may superficially seem to lead good lives. Greek

¹²³ *Gen.*, p. 161. Bede here seems to have thought of organized paganism in terms of classical philosophy.

¹²⁴ Davidse, ‘Sense of History’, pp. 678-9.

¹²⁵ *Gen.*, pp. 160-1 ‘candorem innocentiae, robur fidei, concordiam fraternitatis...munire conantur’; trans. Kendall, p. 237. Cf. Augustine’s argument that all humans (both good and bad) desire and work towards peace: *DCD*, XIX.12 pp. 675-8.

¹²⁶ *Temp.*, p. 164.

¹²⁷ *Gen.*, pp. 158-60.

philosophers like Diogenes mastered the ascetic lifestyle, but that helped them not in the least since they did not follow the Lord.¹²⁸ Heretics occasionally performed good works or miracles, they believed they offered sacrifices of prayer and work, but their incorrect beliefs corrupted everything.¹²⁹ False Catholics also contaminate their sacrifices with alien fire because they do good works only for the wrong reasons.¹³⁰ For Bede no single part of the good life proved sufficient, salvation required the possession of it all. The builders of the tower may have had the same aims as those of the temple, but they would never achieve them.

Bede understood the world through a Tyconian and Augustinian lens: the City of God had its shadow-double, the City of the Devil.¹³¹ As all Christians formed one temple, the pseudo-churches formed the tower, the house the devil built up throughout the world, the body of which Satan was head.¹³² This tendency to group all types of non-Catholics together appears throughout Bede's work:¹³³ pagan philosophers taught the heretics,¹³⁴ false Catholics and heretics seem to attack the Church together;¹³⁵ while calling themselves Christians such people remain heathen in nature.¹³⁶ Augustine understood this basic two-city dichotomy as arising from two different loves, the love of God versus the

¹²⁸ *Ezra.*, p. 265; *Hom.*, I.13 p. 88. For Bede's attitude to philosophers: Arthur G. Holder, 'Using Philosophers to Think With: The Venerable Bede on Christian Life and Practice', in *The Subjective Eye: Essays in Culture, Religion, and Gender in Honor of Margaret R. Miles*, ed. Richard Valantasis (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006), pp. 48-58.

¹²⁹ *Tab.*, p. 105; *Ezra.*, p. 295; Bede, *In Proverbia*, pp. 58, 87.

¹³⁰ *Tab.*, p. 78. Also *Hom.*, II.1 pp. 186-7; *EpCath.*, pp. 185, 310-1. For a neat summation of the difference between heretics and false Catholics: Augustine, *Quaestiones XVI in Matthaem*, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, CCSL 44B, XI p. 125.

¹³¹ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, LXIV.1-4 pp. 822-7; *idem*, *DCD*, XV.1 pp. 453-4. Tyconius' 'two-cities' analysis forms a major theme in Bede's commentary on the Apocalypse: *Apoc.*, pp. 379, 475, 487. See Bonner, *Apocalyptic Commentary*.

¹³² *Ezra.*, p. 251 'consortio...reproborum qui sunt templum et ciuitas diaboli'; *Luc.*, p. 151; *Sam.*, p. 169; the tower as the devil's city: *Ret.*, p. 127, *Gen.*, pp. 158-9.

¹³³ *Sam.*, p. 270; *Marc.*, p. 623; *Apoc.*, p. 461 lists the same four types of non-Catholics as *On Genesis* but in three groups following Primasius, *Apocalypsin*, IV.16 p. 235; also *Act.*, p. 78; *EpCath.*, p. 297.

¹³⁴ *Ezra.*, pp. 285-6, 391; *Sam.*, p. 267. Holder, 'Philosophers', pp. 54-5.

¹³⁵ *Ezra.*, p. 282; *Tab.*, p. 51; *Hom.*, II.25 p. 373.

¹³⁶ *Ezra.*, p. 356. For the narrow boundary between bad Christians and heathens: R.A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Pagans' in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, ed. Richard Gameson and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 23-34.

love of the world, and constructed an elaborate theory to support it.¹³⁷ Bede followed this analysis, albeit on somewhat simpler lines: their inherently earthly nature united the pseudo-churches.

Hence the tower built of bricks made from clay and bound together by pitch drawn up from the pits of the earth highlighted, through allegory, the earthly focus of the builders.¹³⁸ The Jews who rejected Christ failed to understand that the Messiah came as God and not simply an earthly king.¹³⁹ Heretics and false Catholics followed their own earthly ideas and desires, in a manner akin to the idolatry to which the true temple of the Lord had historically been opposed.¹⁴⁰ O'Reilly has pointed out that Bede always represented Anglo-Saxon paganism as biblical idolatry - the worship of earthly creations rather than the divine Creator.¹⁴¹ Bede used the model of idolatry, prioritising earth over the divine, to define any form of behaviour of which he disapproved. He framed the 'false Catholics' attacked in the *Letter to Ecgberht* as idolaters who had set up their charters as a form of diabolic scripture, just as pagans worshipped things made by human hands and the Pharisees preferred their own traditions to the Law of God.¹⁴² Contemporary Northumbrians in less strict monasteries than Wearmouth-Jarrow belonged to the Devil's city, explicitly guilty of the very sin which led to the angelic fall, became builders of the tower and not of the temple.¹⁴³

¹³⁷ For a detailed, though critical, description of Augustine's theory of love: Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson (London: SPCK, 1953), pp. 452-558. Also Augustine, *Doctrina*, Book I.

¹³⁸ *Gen.*, pp. 159-60.

¹³⁹ *Ezra.*, p. 262; *Hom.*, II.24 p. 359.

¹⁴⁰ *Ezra.*, pp. 313, 356. Cf. *Tab.*, p. 94, on the preacher's duty to preach God's and not their own, word. *Act.*, p. 36; *Reg.*, XXVIV p. 319; *Temp.*, p. 160 – the word *simulacra* for idols emphasises their artificial and constructed nature. For the worship of images: *Temp.*, p. 213.

¹⁴¹ O'Reilly, 'Islands and Idols', pp. 135-8; *HE*, III.22 pp. 280-3; *Ezra.*, p. 356. Cf. Augustine, *DCD*, XIV.28 p. 452.

¹⁴² *EpEcg.*, p. 421 'quod ipsi...scripserunt, quasi sanctum ac diuinitus cautum eradere atque emendare formidant, in morem, ni fallor, ethnicorum...Phariseos, cum suas deuterose legi Dei praeponerent'.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

Bede believed, therefore, that the earthly and self-interested aims of the pseudo-churches undermined their religious ideals. The sellers in the temple had sold things necessary for the temple cult but Christ still drove them out – Bede understood them as individuals who provided ecclesiastical services for earthly profit.¹⁴⁴ Since the Hebrews had given their goods freely to build the tabernacle, so too one ought to build the Church without consideration of material reward.¹⁴⁵ A long tradition existed associating the traders in the temple with corrupt greed amongst the Christian clergy;¹⁴⁶ but this may have had resonances in Anglo-Saxon England which Bede connected to the behaviour condemned in the *Letter to Ecgberht*. A contemporary charter marking the foundation of a monastery actually speaks of ‘buying’ eternal goods with material wealth.¹⁴⁷ Bede did not just condemn the search for monetary riches, but also the desire for earthly favour rather than a heavenly reward.¹⁴⁸ He drew, once again, on patristic tradition here, but in the early eighth century Northumbrian monastic leaders knew how important it was to maintain good relations with lay élites, and thus could easily get sucked into aristocratic gift-giving and wealth exchange.¹⁴⁹ Ceolfrith’s desire to avoid receiving any gifts from local grandees implies that such issues affected Wearmouth-Jarrow as much as elsewhere.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ *Hom.*, II.1 pp. 186-7; *Marc.*, p. 579; *Luc.*, p. 349.

¹⁴⁵ *EpCath.*, pp. 256-7.

¹⁴⁶ Jerome, *In Matheum*, p. 188; Gregory, *In Evangelia*, XVII.13 p. 127; Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, X.6 p. 104.

¹⁴⁷ Richard Abels, ‘What has Weland to do with Christ? The Franks Casket and the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England’, *Speculum*, 84 (2009), pp. 549-81, at 569.

¹⁴⁸ *Ezra.*, p. 347; *Temp.*, p. 151; *Gen.*, p. 159; *Tab.*, pp. 78, 100; *Hom.*, II.1 p. 187 ‘Vendunt columbas qui acceptam spiritus gratiam non gratis ut praeceptum est sed ad praemium dant qui manus impositionem qua spiritus accipitur etsi non ad quaestum pecuniae ad uulgi tamen fauorum tribuunt qui sacros ordines non ad uitae meritum sed ad gratiam largiuntur’. Cf. Gregory, *In Hiezechihalem*, II.IX.16 p. 370.

¹⁴⁹ VW, LXIII pp. 136-7; Abels, ‘Franks Casket’, pp. 564, 570-1. For Bede’s opposition to aristocratic culture penetrating monastic life: Wormald, ‘Bede, *Beowulf*’.

¹⁵⁰ *VCeol.*, 22 p. 395; Wood, ‘Gifts of Wearmouth and Jarrow’; Coates, ‘Ceolfrid’.

Following Gregory the Great, Bede read the corruption of the temple as the secularisation of the religious way of life.¹⁵¹ And he never forgot that throughout Northumbria there lived many earthly individuals, wrong-headedly seeking to follow the monastic life and in the process (as he saw it) debasing it.¹⁵² Perhaps this explains why he understood that the tower of Babel sought similar religious ends to the temple. It might provide a way of commenting upon the misguided aims of those founding ‘false’ monasteries. The ‘lofty buildings’ of Coldingham, the monastery where worldly misdemeanours led to destruction, may hint at the disastrously high tower of Babel.¹⁵³ In real terms a pure Church unsullied by any earthly contacts and holding to a communistic purity proved a fantasy in eighth-century Northumbria and certainly did not even match Bede’s own lifestyle.¹⁵⁴ The temple-commentaries, consequently, do not present the Church as something which could have no contact with the realities of the world – Bede happily admitted the helpful role of royal power and wealth in establishing the Church.¹⁵⁵ But by a careful sleight of hand he shifted the emphasis from the Church’s need for material resources and wealth to the duty of others to provide such things.¹⁵⁶ Bede understood

¹⁵¹ *Luc.*, p. 349 ‘Sicut templum Dei in ciuitate est ita in plebe fideli uita religiosorum. Et saepe non nulli religionis habitum sumunt sed dum sacrorum ordinum locum percipiunt sanctae religionis officium in commercium terrenae negotiationis tribuunt...dum non numquam peruersi homines locum religionis tenent ibi malitiae suae gladiis occidunt ubi uiuificare proximos orationis suae intercessione debuerunt’, quoting Gregory, *In Evangelia*, XXXIX.6 p. 386. Gregory probably had clerical corruption in mind but some of his words may have taken on a monastic flavour for Bede. Hurst (*Gregory the Great: Forty Gospel Homilies*, trans. David Hurst (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), pp. 362-3) translates ‘religionis habitum’ as ‘the appearance of religion’ but Bede’s use of the phrase at *Ezra.*, p. 353, is a clear reference to monastic clothing as a distinguishing mark between the secular and religious ways-of-life; see Jones, *Concordance*, pp. 236-7.

¹⁵² Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 105-7.

¹⁵³ *HE*, IV.25 pp. 424-5 ‘aedificia...sublimiter erecta’; DeGregorio, ‘Monasticism and Reform’, pp. 685-6.

¹⁵⁴ Bede owned private property, suggesting that Acts 4.32 (see pp. 132-3 below) was not the rule at Wearmouth-Jarrow; Cuthbert, *Epistola de Obitu Bedae*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, in *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 579-87, at 584-5.

¹⁵⁵ *Temp.*, pp. 148-9; *Ezra.*, pp. 294-5 – and also the citations in the next footnote. For the interaction between secular politics and Christian virtue: Davidse, ‘Sense of History’, pp. 685-90.

¹⁵⁶ *Ezra.*, pp. 248, 250; *Temp.*, p. 195. He also seems to have hinted that religious should not be taxed: *Ezra.*, p. 318 ‘hi qui in diuino seruitio semper occupati erant a suo essent famulatu liberi’.

enough of Augustine's theory of utility to understand that one could 'use' the world, so long as the emphasis remained on celestial minds and the pilgrimage toward heaven.¹⁵⁷

Thus while its heavenly focus distinguished the Church, their earthly interests united the pseudo-churches. Having grouped all the pseudo-churches together as different aspects of the one satanic and earthly city, Bede went on also, in *On Genesis*, to insist on their division and separateness.¹⁵⁸ Just as the builders of the tower of Babel descended into a chaos of different tongues, so too internal divisions racked the body of Satan. This served as a providential safety-valve ensuring that the pseudo-churches could never gain the upper hand over the Church: 'For there is no heresy which may not be attacked by other heretics, no school of worldly philosophy which may not be refuted by other equally foolish schools of the philosophy of falsehood.'¹⁵⁹ The rhetorical power of this emphasis on division arises of course from the previous emphasis on connection; the point is that the Body of Satan is divided within itself. This marked the limit of Bede's ability to imaginatively sympathise with the goals, while condemning the means, of the pseudo-churches. This diversity of institutions does not serve to harm the Church which never appears as one group amongst many.

Rather the division highlights what Bede believed to be the defining mark of the Church: the unity of its members. Christians are cemented together in the building of the temple-Church as a direct result of their humility; on the other hand the earthly tried to build a tower out of pride and so fell into confusion.¹⁶⁰ The Apostles who had 'but one heart and

¹⁵⁷ *EpCath.*, pp. 293-4.

¹⁵⁸ He was not here without precedent; Isidore similarly saw the discord of languages at Babel as the discord of heresies: *Quaestiones*, Gen.IX.3 col. 237-8.

¹⁵⁹ *Gen.*, pp. 161-2 'Nulla est enim haeresis quae non ab aliis haereticis impugnetur, nulla philosophiae secularis secta quae ab aliis aequae stultae philosophiae sectis mendacii redarguatur'; trans. Kendall, p. 238. Also *EpCath.*, p. 329; *Act.*, p. 89; *Sam.*, pp. 96-7, 117-8.

¹⁶⁰ *Gen.*, p. 160; *Temp.*, pp. 170, 185. The condemnation of pride was almost always seen as the main message of the tower: Augustine, *DCD*, XVI.4 pp. 504-5; *idem*, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, VI.10 pp. 58-9.

one soul', owning all things in common, epitomised the unity of Christians, and this provided the model for monastic communities.¹⁶¹ Hence Bede frequently contrasted the building of the tower with Pentecost, where the humility of the Church created unity out of diversity, reversing the alienating influence of the tower and providing a glimpse of the unity of the heavenly temple.¹⁶² Scholars have analysed the use of the stories of Pentecost and Babel for what they can tell us about positive attitudes to linguistic diversity and the vernacular in the Anglo-Saxon Church.¹⁶³ However, we should note that Bede considered the miracle of Pentecost to have been that the speakers of many tongues *understood* the apostles, rather than that they themselves *spoke* different languages.¹⁶⁴ While an emphasis on linguistic diversity no doubt helps us to understand how Bede felt these issues directly related to his people's place in the universal Church, it may on occasion miss his major point: Christians built a single structure which would end in heaven where 'there is no discord of minds, no disharmony of speech'.¹⁶⁵

This reminds us of the unity which formed such an important part of Wearmouth-Jarrow's self-definition: 'one monastery in two different places'.¹⁶⁶ Bede's fervent celebrations of Christian unity based on charity may be reflective of the message which his community's leadership felt it necessary to repeat frequently.¹⁶⁷ For Bede, Christians formed the varied materials, diverse in terms of race, gender, background or talents, built

¹⁶¹ Acts 4.32; *Temp.*, pp. 163, 173-4; *Ezra.*, pp. 256-7, 304; *Tab.*, p. 74. For the interpretation of this verse as referring to monasticism: Glenn Olsen, 'Bede as Historian: The Evidence from his Observations on the Life of the First Christian Community at Jerusalem', *JEH*, 33 (1982), pp. 519-31, at 520-2.

¹⁶² *Ret.*, pp. 126-7; *Act.*, p. 16; *Temp.*, p. 167; *Luc.*, p. 185 (= *Marc.*, p. 493).

¹⁶³ Tugène, *L'idée de nation*, pp. 306-29; Kees Dekker, 'Pentecost and Linguistic Self-Consciousness in Anglo-Saxon England: Bede and Ælfric', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 104 (2005), pp. 344-72; Robert Stanton, 'Linguistic Fragmentation and Redemption before King Alfred', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 36 (2006), pp. 12-26.

¹⁶⁴ *Act.*, p. 17; *Ret.*, pp. 110-1. Bede quoted Rufinus' translation of Gregory Nazianzen, *Orationes*, ed. A. Engelbrecht, CSEL 46, IV.15 pp. 160-1; McCreedy, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede*, p. 60.

¹⁶⁵ *Hom.*, II.16 p. 295 'in qua nulla diuersitas mentium nulla est dissonantia linguarum'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 155.

¹⁶⁶ *HA*, 15 p. 379 'in duobus locis posito uni monasterio'; trans. Farmer, p. 202.

¹⁶⁷ E.g. *HA*, 13 p. 377; *VCeol.*, 16 p. 393.

into the one temple because all believed in one God and hoped for the one heaven.¹⁶⁸ Charity transformed the diversity of the Church community into unity – the reprobate lacked this love which acted as a glue holding the faithful together.¹⁶⁹ In the last chapter we saw how the unity of Jews and gentiles in the Church was essential to Bede's vision.¹⁷⁰ For him the love which Jews and gentiles in the Church felt for each other, the love that the angels and saints in heaven felt for mortals on earth, the love which all members of Christ felt for their neighbour, this overcame the cosmic distances of time and space.¹⁷¹ The worship of the one God and the communal love of all his worshippers for each other formed two sides of the one coin, resulting in the steadfast unity of the Church.¹⁷² The use of the temple as a single structure whose diverse materials represent the many different types of faithful provided a key image in Bede's presentation of the unified Church.

The unity and charity of the Church does have its limits, however. The unclean have no place in the temple, and while heretics and schismatics wish to offer sacrifices alongside the righteous and build the temple with them, the faithful must utterly reject them.¹⁷³ When Bede stated that heretics claim the right to preach alongside the orthodox one cannot help but think of the long struggle to impose Catholic unity on the missionary diversity of the Insular churches.¹⁷⁴ In such light we might note that Bede read the struggles of Ezra and Nehemiah to purify Israel racially as the Church's struggle to

¹⁶⁸ *Temp.*, pp. 175-6, 233-4; *Tab.*, pp. 44-5, 89-90; *Sam.*, pp. 59-60. Holder, 'Mysteries of the Our Salvation', pp. 145-50; note the similarities between Bede's thought on this matter and that of Gregory the Great on occasion: Paul Meyvaert, 'Diversity within Unity, a Gregorian Theme', *The Heythrop Journal*, 4 (1963), pp. 141-62.

¹⁶⁹ *EpCath.*, p. 341.

¹⁷⁰ See pp. 78-80 above.

¹⁷¹ *Tab.*, p. 62; *Temp.*, pp. 179-81.

¹⁷² *Hom.*, II.25 p. 375; *Tab.*, p. 11, 46; *Temp.*, p. 190; Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 219-20.

¹⁷³ *Ezra.*, pp. 281-2, 388; 2 Corinthians 6.15-7. Heretics want the orthodox to join them on the 'plain' where they live, also the home of the tower's builders: *Ezra.*, p. 362; *Gen.*, p. 158.

¹⁷⁴ *Ezra.*, p. 281. Cf. Bede, *In Proverbia*, p. 132. One should avoid a facile analysis which contrasts the 'ideological totalitarianism' of the Romans with a native 'ethos of pluralistic religious tolerance': Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, pp. 240-1.

separate itself from the unorthodox; the fear of miscegenation found itself transposed unto the corrupting power of contact with heretics. Such contact would result in the confusion of Babel again, i.e. the diversity of languages spoken by the mixed-race children contrasted with ecclesiastical unity.¹⁷⁵ Bede had to balance protecting the Church's unity with not restricting its openness; he seems to have had great confidence in the power of penance to bring people back into the Church, providing that they return to ecclesiastical unity.¹⁷⁶ Baptism by heretics and schismatics became effective for those who, having received it, later entered the Church.¹⁷⁷ Once again Bede's Northumbria, whose contemporary orthodoxy rested upon diverse ecclesiastical traditions, lies in the background here.

While this desire to differentiate the Church from alternative religious institutions may not surprise us, the degree to which Bede seems to have used the Church to understand these alternatives still remains striking. Just as he interpreted the tower in the light of how he understood the temple, he understood the pseudo-churches by turning on their head ideas familiar from his ideal of the Church. As the Church has its teachers, the *doctores* and *magistri* so vital to it, so do these alternative structures have wicked teachers and preachers of error.¹⁷⁸ The builders of the tower, like those of the temple, represent *doctores*, though *mali doctores*;¹⁷⁹ the teachers of the Jews (*sinagogae magistri*) were

¹⁷⁵ *Ezra.*, pp. 327, 391. Alan Thacker, 'Bede, the Britons and the Book of Samuel', in *Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Baxter et al., pp. 129-47, at 129, argues that language was the key identifier of ethnic identity in Bede's Britain. In this light it is perhaps unsurprising that Bede saw multilingualism in a threatening manner. But this should not be taken too far: the negative interpretation of the children's multilingualism is in the biblical text itself and Bede clearly did not always see Anglo-Saxons speaking languages other than English negatively: *HE*, III.3 pp. 220-1.

¹⁷⁶ *Ezra.*, pp. 255-6; *Hom.*, I.20 p. 146; *Luc.*, p. 249 'quisquis unitati ecclesiae corde impaenitenti resistit...potest utique remissionem habere peccatorum in spiritu sancto, si ad unitatem ecclesiae corde paenitenti refugerit': the more striking, as Bede here disagreed with Augustine: Dolbeau, 'Lecteur des Sermons d'Augustin', pp. 121-2.

¹⁷⁷ *Tab.*, p. 69; *Gen.*, pp. 111, 124. Cf. Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, XII.20 pp. 348-9.

¹⁷⁸ *Gen.*, p. 157 'magistri errorum...contrarium ueritati cultum diuinitatis introducunt'; *EpCath.*, p. 265; *Apoc.*, p. 351.

¹⁷⁹ *Gen.*, p. 162. Bede even referred to pagan *doctores*: Higham, 'Bede's Agenda', p. 482.

those misguided builders of the temple who rejected the cornerstone.¹⁸⁰ The Body of Satan precisely mirrors the Body of Christ – as God dwells within the heart of the faithful, so too does the devil inhabit the heart of the wicked.¹⁸¹ We have seen how Bede almost acknowledged certain philosophers as the monks of the pagans.¹⁸² This tendency seems to recall Bede’s sense of the outward similarities of ‘true’ and ‘false’ monasteries. His *Letter to Ecgberht* suggested that those outside the City of God constantly tried to create establishments modelled on those of the true Church but their results proved purely noxious: ‘wasps can indeed make honeycomb, but they store in it not honey, but poison.’¹⁸³

This application of the image of the temple-Church to understand rival structures also, however, ties into strategies Bede used in his history. While traditionally scholars read the little information given in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* about Anglo-Saxon polytheism as essentially accurate, recent work has led to an increasing awareness of the misleading features in Bede’s account, framed by his biblical and patristic knowledge of paganism.¹⁸⁴ Aspects of the conversion account such as temples containing altars and idols and a structured priestly hierarchy marked off from normal warrior society may have arisen from reading the contemporary Church structures or biblical descriptions of idolatry back into the Anglo-Saxon past.¹⁸⁵ For example, Bede described the high priest

¹⁸⁰ *Luc.*, p. 355 (= *Marc.*, p. 586).

¹⁸¹ *Sam.*, p. 147; see pp. 164-5 below.

¹⁸² See pp. 127-8 above.

¹⁸³ *EpEcg.*, p. 416 ‘uespae fauos quidem facere cum possint, non tamen in his mella, sed potius uenena thesaurizent’; trans. Whitelock, p. 806.

¹⁸⁴ Gregory’s conversion strategy was probably similarly influenced: Spiegel, ‘The *tabernacula* of Gregory the Great’.

¹⁸⁵ S.D. Church, ‘Paganism in Conversion-Age Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History* Reconsidered’, *History*, 93 (2008), pp. 162-80; R.I. Page, ‘Anglo-Saxon Paganism: The Evidence of Bede’, in *Pagans and Christians: The Interplay between Christian Latin and Traditional Germanic Cultures in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. T. Hofstra et al. (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995), pp. 99-129. But for actual Anglo-Saxon pagan temples and priests: John Blair, ‘Anglo-Saxon Pagan Shrines and their Prototypes’, *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 8 (1995), pp. 1-28; James

Coifi as a *pontifex*, a word which carries associations of the Jewish and Christian hierarchies; he did not use the word *magus*, with its connotations of magic and strangeness, to refer to pagan priests as other Insular authors did.¹⁸⁶ The royal-focused structures of idol-worshipping which Bede presented do not match the information we have on the lingering remains of ‘paganism’ in his own time. This suggests a more diffuse culture of charms and rituals which individuals could perform for themselves.¹⁸⁷ Such a realisation raises questions also about Bede’s discussion of heresy, paganism and Judaism in the commentaries. Does the tower simply act as an abstract anti-temple used by the exegete to throw light on what the Church should and should not be? Or does it suggest genuine concerns about these alternative belief systems or unorthodox versions of Christianity in the contemporary world?

Historians have long recognised that Bede displayed a constant interest in heresy throughout his work.¹⁸⁸ As an ecclesiastical historian and teacher, the monk may simply have considered it his duty to point out and disprove the heresies which had proven troublesome to the Church.¹⁸⁹ Bede’s earliest computistical writings had occasioned an accusation of heresy: by adopting a chronology from the Hebrew Bible, which located the incarnation much earlier than the traditional Septuagint chronology, he had, the argument

Campbell, ‘Some Considerations on Religion in Early England’, in *Collectanea Antiqua: Essays in Memory of Sonia Chadwick Hawkes*, ed. Martin Henig and Tyler Jo Smith (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), pp. 67-73.

¹⁸⁶ *HE*, II.13 pp. 182-7; *VW*, XII pp. 28-9; Adomnán, *Vita S. Columbae*, ed. and trans. Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson, *Adomnan’s Life of Columba* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), I.37 pp. 70-1, II.33 pp. 140-3.

¹⁸⁷ Paul Willem Finsterwalder (ed.), *Die Canones Theodori Cantuariensis und ihre Überlieferungsformen* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus, 1929), I.XV pp. 310-1. On Theodore’s penitential: Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘The Penitential of Theodore and the *Iudicia Theodori*’, in *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 141-74.

¹⁸⁸ Plummer, *Opera Historica*, I, p. lxii n. 3; Arthur G. Holder, ‘Hunting Snakes in the Grass: Bede as Heresiologist’, in *Listen, O Isles, unto me: Studies in Medieval Word and Image in Honour of Jennifer O’Reilly*, ed. Elizabeth Mullins and Diarmuid Scully (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), pp. 105-14. I discuss the possible importance of Christological heresies in Bede’s work at pp. 155-8 below.

¹⁸⁹ Paul Antony Hayward, ‘Before the Coming of Popular Heresy: The Rhetoric of Heresy in English Historiography, c.700-1154’ in *Heresy in Transition: Transforming Ideas of Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Ian Hunter et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 9-27, at 11; Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, p. 96.

ran, put Christ's coming in the wrong age of the world.¹⁹⁰ The criticism, which does not seem to have presented a very dangerous threat, elicited a sharp response.¹⁹¹ Older studies tended to emphasise the traumatic nature of this episode and located Bede's passion for orthodoxy therein; certainly, it may partly explain his later scientific writings but we should not exaggerate the importance of the episode.¹⁹² The debate centred on very specific issues of biblical chronology; this hardly explains Bede's continuing wide interest in varied heresies.

There has long existed a tradition of scholarship suggesting that the Pelagian heresy remained particularly active in the British Isles and may have posed a major problem in the early Insular Church.¹⁹³ The suggestion does not convince, but supporters of the Roman/Dionysian Easter certainly did interpret certain anomalous Easter calculations as implicitly Pelagian.¹⁹⁴ Bede in turn argued this and his frequent attacks on Pelagianism may actually have been aimed at Easter calculations with which he disagreed.¹⁹⁵ It would seem unlikely that we should understand every defence of grace in Bede's work entirely

¹⁹⁰ Darby, *End of Time*, pp. 35-64.

¹⁹¹ Bede, *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, ed. C.W. Jones, CCSL 123C, pp. 613-26.

¹⁹² Jones, *Opera de Temporibus*, pp. 132-5; Wallis, *Bede: On the Reckoning of Time*, pp. xxx-xxxi.

¹⁹³ The argument that Pelagianism should be understood in a British political context was made in the 1960s (e.g. J.N.L. Myres, 'Pelagius and the End of Roman Rule in Britain', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 50 (1960), pp. 21-36), but failed to gather support: Peter Brown, 'Pelagius and His Supporters: Aims and Environment', *JTS*, 19 (1968), pp. 93-114. Michael W. Herren and Shirley Ann Brown, *Christ in Celtic Christianity: Britain and Ireland from the Fifth to the Tenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), makes the largest case for Pelagianism's major role in the Insular Church. The arguments against such an interpretation are by far the more convincing: R.A. Markus, 'Pelagianism: Britain and the Continent', *JEH*, 37 (1986), pp. 191-204; Gerald Bonner, 'The Pelagian Controversy in Britain and Ireland', *Peritia*, 16 (2002), pp. 144-55; Gilbert Márkus, 'Pelagianism and the "Common Celtic Church"', *Innes Review*, 56 (2005), pp. 165-213.

¹⁹⁴ Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "'New Heresy for Old": Pelagianism in Ireland and the Papal Letter of 640', *Speculum*, 60 (1985), pp. 505-16.

¹⁹⁵ *HE*, V.21 pp. 544-5; *DTR*, VI p. 292. Arthur G. Holder, 'The Anti-Pelagian Character of Bede's Commentary on the Song of Songs', in *Biblical Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Claudio Leonardi and Giovanni Orlandi (Florence: SISMEL, 2005), pp. 91-103, at 100-2.

as a reference to Easter.¹⁹⁶ But such an issue in the background may have added sharpness to Bede's engagement with Pelagianism.

We can similarly acknowledge that no Donatists existed in the Insular Church, while still recognising that the issues of centre and periphery which Donatism raised were ones relevant to the world in which Bede lived.¹⁹⁷ There were certainly no Jews in Anglo-Saxon England, but Bede believed that some Christians maintained a 'Jewish', that is earthly, understanding of religion – not in that they wished to follow the Law according to the letter, but in their sole interest being receiving earthly benefits.¹⁹⁸ Most importantly, the history of the Jews could help one to understand the history of Britain, to condemn the Britons and to defend the Anglo-Saxon invasion.¹⁹⁹ It has recently been argued that around 716, in a time of dynastic upheaval, the threats posed to Northumbria by those willing to engage with 'heretical' (i.e. British) threats from without proved of particular concern to Bede.²⁰⁰ If the formulation of Bede's ideas on Ezra took place around this time (in close proximity to the Codex Amiatinus' departure) then it may go some way to explain why the theme of protecting the 'chosen people' from corrupting influences appeared so important when Bede finally published the commentary probably many years later.

Continued fear of the threat posed by the Britons, who by refusing the Roman Easter remained outside the unity of the Catholic Church, may have further added to Bede's

¹⁹⁶ Outbursts against Pelagianism feature regularly in the temple-commentaries: *Ezra.*, pp. 281-2, 302; *Tab.*, pp. 10, 82. The last citation speaks of the Pelagians hardening their hearts against God, similarly to how *On Genesis* speaks of the builders of the tower: *Gen.*, p. 159.

¹⁹⁷ See pp. 83-4 above.

¹⁹⁸ *Gen.*, p. 242.

¹⁹⁹ Foley and Higham, 'Bede on the Britons'; Thacker, 'Ordering of Understanding', pp. 55-7. Bede's use of the Old Testament in *HE* Book I drew on Gildas, *De Excidio Britanniae* – the classic work here is Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (London: Columbia University Press, 1966).

²⁰⁰ Thacker, 'Britons and the Book of Samuel'.

attack upon the ‘false Catholics’ of his own time in the *Letter to Ecgberht*.²⁰¹ But we do not have to turn to politics alone in order to explain Bede’s attitudes; he attacked ‘false’ monasteries and lazy clergy because their forms of Christianity did not match his vision of right religion. He strove to present the people he disagreed with as earthly idolaters because this tied into an idea he had used throughout his own work whereby all alternatives to perfect and orthodox Christianity formed no more than the limbs of the Body of Satan. Such an idea possessed great rhetorical power as the conclusion of the letter shows, where Bede linked the clerics and monks he condemned with a continuous tradition of wicked greed from the Fall to Judas and beyond.²⁰² It also provided a heuristic which helped him understand and deal with those who disagreed with his vision of Christian life in Northumbria. Issues in eighth-century economic and ecclesiastical life could be seen as part of an eternal struggle between righteousness and evil. By contending that the issues facing Ecgberht had afflicted the Church from its beginning, Bede tried to create an argument which transcended the local context.²⁰³

The importance of the contrast between the tower of Babel and the temple of Jerusalem for our understanding of Bede’s overall vision of the Church lies in the fact that it indicates just how central the image of the temple had become to that vision. The image of the temple may have become so connected to Bede’s ecclesiastical vision that he sought to use it to help understand all those alternative demonic groups which he saw ranged against the Church. The relevant section of *On Genesis* probably dates from the 720s, the period in which the issues which led to the *Letter to Ecgberht* seem to have

²⁰¹ Clare Stancliffe, *Bede and the Britons*, Whithorn Lecture 2005 (Whithorn: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 2007), pp. 19-22, 39-40, argues that the *Letter to Ecgberht* was driven by a fear that moral decline (and the economic consequences of ‘false monasteries’) would leave Northumbria exposed to the threat of British attack.

²⁰² *EpEcg.*, p. 422.

²⁰³ Note the importance of the early Church and Acts to the letter: *EpEcg.*, pp. 407-8, 420, 422.

especially exercised Bede;²⁰⁴ we could, therefore, understand the excursus on the tower and the temple as part of Bede's use of the temple-image to promote his reform agenda – in particular in the way it attacked those outside the one, true Church.

The Temple as which Church?

In these last two chapters I have dealt with rather different images of the Church. How does the universal, cosmic Church which connects heaven and earth relate to the Church involved in preaching and struggling with heretics which I have here outlined? This issue relates to a confusion which scholars have suggested early medieval theology in general inherited from Augustine. The Church exists both as the sacramental institution operating on earth and as the community of all the elect, transcending time and space.²⁰⁵ Augustine saw the institutional Church as a 'secular' institution, a mixed body of elect and reprobate who would only be separated at the end of time – but the Church also equated to the intrinsically holy City of God.²⁰⁶ Augustine had adapted this viewpoint from Tyconius' theory of the twofold Body of Christ, and Bede thus knew of it from his very first foray into exegesis.²⁰⁷

The mixed Church, therefore, appears frequently in the *Explanation of the Apocalypse* and on occasion elsewhere in Bede's writings; but from the start it troubled the Anglo-Saxon who felt the need to undercut Tyconian passages in his sources by stating that the unclean and false did not really belong in the Church.²⁰⁸ The general tenor of his use of the temple-image matches such statements: while Tyconius declared that the temple was

²⁰⁴ DeGregorio, 'Reforming Impulse', pp. 113-21.

²⁰⁵ Congar, *L'Écclésiologie*, pp. 90-2; Olsen, 'From Bede', pp. 345-8.

²⁰⁶ Augustine, *DCD*, XVIII.49 p. 647. R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 58-9, 116-24.

²⁰⁷ Faith Wallis, *Bede: Commentary on Revelation* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 69-70.

²⁰⁸ *Apoc.*, p. 249 draws on Primasius, *Apocalypsin*, I.2 p. 23 and Tyconius, p. 563 draws on Primasius, *Apocalypsin*, V.21 p. 299, but Bede added 'Sed et nunc omnis inmundus et mendax non est in ecclesia'.

bipartite, Bede clearly stated (at least on occasion) that it represented the Church of the predestined elect.²⁰⁹ The snowy white walls of Solomon's temple symbolise the elect's purity of thought and action.²¹⁰ The wicked may seem to worship at the tabernacle but in reality in their minds they sacrifice at the temple of Moloch.²¹¹ Pagan ascetics may offer a holocaust, but they do not do so on the altar of the God of Israel.²¹² Isidore's suggestion that the mixture of materials in the tabernacle symbolises the mixture of saints and sinners in the Church, echoed in the Irish 'Reference Bible', finds no parallel in Bede.²¹³ Constructing an entirely consistent ecclesiology from every comment within the Bedan corpus proves difficult, but I would argue that focusing on the temple-image we see Bede primarily thinking of the Church as the universal community of the elect.²¹⁴

Bede expressed a definite sense of the mixture of carnal and perfect within the temple-Church which may conjure up the image of the Augustinian mixed Church.²¹⁵ Certainly the courtyards of the temple, which separate the carnal members of the Church from those perfect who have managed to leave all desires of the flesh behind and made the transition from earth to heaven in their minds, may seem to recall the contrast between the heavenly temple and earthly tower.²¹⁶ Bede even pointed out that the separation existed on the vertical (like that between the temple and tower) as well as horizontal plane, with the inner temple standing above the outer courtyards.²¹⁷ But on closer examination a fundamental difference appears: the mixed Church includes both the elect

²⁰⁹ Tyconius, *Liber Regularum*, ed. F.C. Burkitt, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1894), I p. 7 'templum enim bipertitum est'; *Gen.*, p. 86; *Tab.*, p. 42; *Ezra.*, pp. 241, 300.

²¹⁰ *Gen.*, p. 160; *Temp.*, p. 156 'domus domini constructa est mundam electorum actionem simul et conscientiam'; *Hom.*, II.1 p. 190.

²¹¹ *Act.*, p. 36.

²¹² *Ezra.*, p. 265.

²¹³ Isidore, *Quaestiones*, Exodus.L.2 col. 313; *Pauca Problematata de Enigmatibus ex Tomis Canonicis: Praefatio et Libri de Pentateucho Moysi*, ed. G. MacGinty, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 173, 407.XXVII p. 180.

²¹⁴ For Bede's ecclesiology in general: Beumer, 'Das Kirchenbild'.

²¹⁵ Thacker, *Bede and Augustine*, pp. 25, 28.

²¹⁶ *Temp.*, pp. 194-6.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 193; *Reg.*, XVIII p. 312.

and the reprobate, but Bede's carnal and perfect both end up in heaven, i.e. they are all from the elect.²¹⁸ The carnal in the Church simply consists of those who have not utterly lost the desires of the flesh but rather still battle against them. But for Bede even such people possessed 'purity of conduct'.²¹⁹

A reference to the mixture of elect and reprobate occurs in relation to the threefold hierarchy of married, continent and preachers which I have previously discussed.²²⁰ The candelabrum of the tabernacle inspired Bede to speak of these three orders of faithful, connecting them to Noah, Daniel and Job;²²¹ he went on to link them with those in the bed, the mill and the field described in Luke 17.34-5 of whom 'one shall be taken and the other shall be left': 'because in all of these states some will be chosen, some reprobated'.²²² The connection with the passage from Luke comes from Augustine himself who used it to speak of the mixture of the two cities, while Noah, Daniel and Job exclusively referred to the elect from each of the three categories of Christian.²²³ In *On the Tabernacle* the relationship between these two different uses of the hierarchy seems rather vague. It does, however, seem clear from the overall passage that the candelabrum itself refers to the elect in their many different forms.²²⁴ Hence the image explored seems primarily one of the Church of the saved though it does inspire a brief reference to an idea inherited from Augustine concerning the *permixta ecclesia*.

²¹⁸ *Temp.*, p. 194 'quia carnales quique atque infirmi adhuc in ecclesia, etsi ob meritum castae fidei ac pietatis Deo deuotae ad electorum sortem pertinent, longe tamen abest ut illis aequentur qui cum fiducia probantur.'

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196 'operum...munditiam'; trans. Connolly, p. 71.

²²⁰ See pp. 120-1 above; Holder, 'Mysteries of Our Salvation', p. 148.

²²¹ *Tab.*, pp. 31-2.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 32 'quia in omnibus his gradibus quidam eligendi quidam reprobandi sunt'; trans. Holder, p. 34.

²²³ Georges Folliet, 'Les trois categories de chrétiens: à partir de Luc (17, 34-36), Matthieu (24, 40-41) et Ézéchiel (14, 14)', in *Augustinus Magister*, vol. 2 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), pp. 631-44. Bede's exegesis of Luke 17.34-5 at *Luc.*, pp. 320-1 draws on Augustine, *Quaestiones Evangeliorum*, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, CCSL 44B, II.44 pp. 104-6.

²²⁴ *Tab.*, p. 32 'electi, etsi meritorum sunt gradibus discreti, una sunt fide ueritatis imbuti ad unam in caelis lucem ueritatis aeternae peruenturi...'

We should not say that members of the temple-Church do not sin – for Bede none of the saints could avoid all sin. Note *Homily II.24* where he deals with the temple's history:

That the temple was rebuilt by the mercy of God after it had been burned by [Israel's] enemies, and that it was cleansed again with the help of benevolence from on high after it had been polluted with idols suggests the various events which happen to holy Church: at one time she is overwhelmed by the persecutions of unbelievers; at another she is freed from persecutions and serves her Lord peacefully; at another she is endangered in certain of her members by the snares of the ancient enemy; at another because of the meticulous concern of her faithful teachers, she recovers those whom for a while she seemed to have lost, chastised by repentance.²²⁵

At first this seems like a clear statement that some members of the Church could be followers of Satan. Rather Bede recounted a recurring tale of danger and recovery, sin and pardon. The Church suffers persecution externally, and then is freed from persecution; the devil ensnares members of the Church, but teachers then win them back. These individuals remained elect, they only 'seemed...lost'. The return from Babylon and rebuilding of the temple symbolised that God builds his house out of repentant sinners as well as the newly baptised; indeed Bede deemed it heresy to believe that penance could fail to build 'burnt stones' back into the wall of the Church.²²⁶

While sinning did not form an irremovable bar to entry into the Lord's house, sin itself had no place there. Bede's temple-commentaries show perfect awareness of corruption within the Church and one could understand this as Bede acknowledging the Church's mixed nature on earth.²²⁷ But I think we ought to highlight that when Bede spoke of false Catholics, the emphasis fell on *false*. The Lord in the Apocalypse instructed John not to

²²⁵ *Hom.*, II.24 p. 365 'Quod templum ab hostibus incensum rursum domino miserante construitur quod ab idolatriis coinquinatum denuo supernae pietatis auxilio mundatur uarios sanctae ecclesiae insinuat euentus quae nunc infidelium persecutione premitur nunc a persecutionibus reddita liberior tranquilla domino seruitute famulatur nunc in quibusdam suis membris hostis antiqui periclitatur insidiis nunc instante solertia doctorum fidelium quos ad horam perdere uidebatur per paenitentiam iam castigatos recipit'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 250.

²²⁶ *Hom.*, I.14 p. 101; *Ezra.*, pp. 242, 356 'Aedificantur namque lapides combusti...cum hi qui...uitorum delectationibus subacti munditiam operis perdiderunt miserante domino respiscunt ut...ornamenta uirtutum moribus emendati consequantur'; trans. DeGregorio, p. 179.

²²⁷ E.g. *Tab.*, p. 78; Davidse, 'Sense of History', p. 682.

measure the atrium of the temple because those who adhered to the Church in name only would not be counted as part of God's house.²²⁸ Insofar as the Church is eschatologically pure, such a statement is perfectly Tyconian but Bede seems constantly to have wanted to map out the divisions between elect and reprobate in the here and now also. As I have discussed above, the use of the tower-image surely aimed at showing that while heretics, pagans or even false Catholics may look superficially like the temple-Church, they were in fact fundamentally different.²²⁹ Bede's temple always strained towards purity, impatient for the Lord to separate the wheat from the tares at Judgement; if sinners or heretics would not reform, proving dead rather than living stones, the authorities removed them from the temple.²³⁰

In the previous chapter I argued that Bede partly collapsed the difference between the pilgrim Church on earth and the triumphant Church in heaven, making both parts of a universal and transcendent Church. He may have interpreted the temple and the tabernacle as separate aspects of the Church, but in practice the separate structures blurred into one image combining heavenly and earthly Church.²³¹ The above discussion, highlighting the importance of the institutional hierarchy and the sacraments, suggests that the institutional Church plays a real role in this cosmic Church. Since Bede stressed that devout Jews from before the incarnation belonged to the temple-Church that body cannot simply equate to the institution of his own time. But his interest in Old Testament Judaism ascribes a lot of importance to cultic rituals and institutional hierarchies. Bede did not just see the pre-incarnation elect as a scattered few pious souls. Rather he thought

²²⁸ *Apoc.*, p. 369; *DTR*, LXVIV p. 538. Apocalypse 11.2.

²²⁹ Though gentiles may confuse all Christians, heretics and orthodox, with each other: *Ezra.*, p. 292; *EpCath.*, p. 269.

²³⁰ *Ezra.*, pp. 364, 388-9; *EpCath.*, p. 235.

²³¹ *Temp.*, p. 148; *Tab.*, p. 43.

particularly of the Jewish nation at prayer;²³² indeed he seems to have believed in the existence of a ‘Jewish Church’ operating through sacramental acts just as the New Testament Church did.²³³ In other words, he considered a sacramental institution almost always central to salvation. The community of the elect gathered in some such institution, even though at different times different earthly structures proved appropriate.

Bede constantly identified membership of the temple-Church and becoming a temple of God oneself with the sacrament of baptism. In particular he drew attention to the renunciation of Satan which formed part of the baptismal liturgy.²³⁴ This links into the two-cities rhetoric we have seen above: in baptism one receives membership of the Body of Christ rather than the Body of Satan. Not just a sacrament performed within the earthly Church, it also constituted a change of cosmic allegiance.²³⁵ As almost always in Bede’s vast corpus, one can find exceptions – Simon Magus accepted baptism in order to do the devil’s work.²³⁶ But the overall emphasis reminds us that Bede did not consider the Body of Satan as just a rhetorical image; the institutional Church combatted a real diabolic threat in the here and now.²³⁷

This Bedan unity between the cosmic and institutional Churches seems to mirror his distinctive celebration of action and contemplation personified in Cuthbert. Bede probably distorted the realities of Cuthbert’s own drive to sanctity to downplay the extent

²³² Tugène, ‘Le thème’, pp. 75-6.

²³³ O’Brien, ‘Jewish Church’, pp. 64-8.

²³⁴ *Reg.*, XVI p. 309; *Temp.*, p. 155; *Ezra.*, pp. 267-8, 275-6, 305; *DTR*, LXIII p. 455; *Sam.*, p. 161. *Liber Sacramentorum*, LXXII.602 p. 94. For the baptismal rite in Anglo-Saxon England: Sarah Foot, ‘“By water in the Spirit”: the Administration of Baptism in early Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Pastoral Care*, ed. Blair and Sharpe, pp. 171-92. For the renunciation of Satan: Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 94-105.

²³⁵ Davidse, ‘Sense of History’, p. 679: ‘to Bede, converting to Christianity is the same as leaving the community of the devil and entering the community of God.’

²³⁶ *Ezra.*, p. 282.

²³⁷ For the problems with Bede’s use of such imagery: Beumer, ‘Das Kirchenbild’, pp. 54-5.

to which the otherworldly saint sought to flee the activities of the institutional Church.²³⁸ Cuthbert's hermitage had walls so high that he could not see anything other than the sky above – a reification of the heavenly mind enjoyed by the perfect in the temple-commentaries.²³⁹ And like those *perfecti*, Cuthbert did not remain cut off from people but served as an exemplary *doctor*, mediating between heaven and earth, the carnal and the divine.²⁴⁰ In individuals like Cuthbert, Bede revealed how the pure Church which his temple represented did not stay separate from the institution that taught the rustic laity and rejected all contact with heretics.²⁴¹

The issue of communion with unorthodox Christians seems to have remained a live one in the Insular Church for at least the earlier half of Bede's life and local attitudes may help to explain the vision of a pure Church in the temple-commentaries. British clergy would happily ostracise totally any ecclesiastic whose practice they did not consider correct.²⁴² The details regarding the consecrations of Wilfrid and Chad seem related to similar concerns for institutional purity amongst Roman-leaning Anglo-Saxon clergy;²⁴³ Stancliffe has shown that Wilfrid and Theodore believed that those willing to co-operate with 'heretics' were themselves contaminated by the contact.²⁴⁴ Bede's emphasis on

²³⁸ Stancliffe, 'Pastor and Solitary', esp. pp. 28, 32-3.

²³⁹ *HE*, IV.28 pp. 436-7: 'tanta autem erat altitudo aggeris, quo mansio eius erat uallata, ut caelum tantum ex ea, cuius introitum sitiebat, aspicere posset'; cf. *VCP*, XVII pp. 216-7.

²⁴⁰ *Temp.*, p. 195; *VCP*, XVIII pp. 218-21. For Bede's emphasis on Cuthbert as interacting with and teaching people: Carole E. Newlands, 'Bede and Images of Saint Cuthbert', *Traditio*, 52 (1997), pp. 73-109, at 95-9, 101.

²⁴¹ Bede's Cuthbert urged his brethren to monastic charity on his death bed – but forbade them communion 'with those who depart from the unity of the catholic peace, either in not celebrating Easter at the proper time or in evil living': *VCP*, XXXIX pp. 282-5 'Cum illis autem qui ab unitate catholicae pacis uel pascha non suo tempore celebrando, uel peruerse uiuendo aberrant, uobis sit nulla communio.'

²⁴² Aldhelm, *Epistulae*, ed. R. Ehwald, *MGH Auctores Antiquissimi* 15, IV p. 484; Herren and Brown, *Celtic Christianity*, pp. 130-3.

²⁴³ *VW*, XII, pp. 24-5 (Wilfrid's words on why he could not be consecrated by heretical British clergy) 'ab illis [ref: quattordecimanni] sunt ordinati, quos nec apostolica sedes in communionem recipit neque eos qui scismaticis consentiunt'; *HE*, III.28 pp. 314-7. Cf. Finsterwalder (ed.), *Canones Theodori*, I.V pp. 205-7.

²⁴⁴ Clare Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 2003), pp. 5-11.

charity and Church unity may imply a less intolerant attitude.²⁴⁵ However, the evidence of the previous section and the dying speech Bede gave to Cuthbert suggests, in theory at least, a viewpoint not dissimilar to Wilfrid's.²⁴⁶

Not an awareness of the secular and mixed nature of the earthly Church, but rather a refusal to accept that earthly individuals could have any part in the Church drove Bede to write to Ecgberht. The *Letter to Ecgberht* shares with the commentaries a concern over those who are Catholic in name only: many places while 'allowed the name of monasteries by a most foolish manner of speaking' did not really count as monasteries.²⁴⁷ Christ's incarnation has forced the wicked and the righteous to reveal themselves,²⁴⁸ hence in Bede's story of the reprobate Bernician monk, the brethren had no doubts concerning his way of life, only tolerating him for purely earthly reasons. The Lord has already divided the light and darkness and, for Bede, in tales like those of Coldingham and the wicked monk that division could already be partly seen in history.²⁴⁹

Such stories aimed at inspiring repentance, and Bede certainly worried about the temple as the individual soul or Christian, if not as the Church; for the individual, damnation always remained a possibility lying disturbingly just out of sight, held off by grace.²⁵⁰ The elect and the reprobate are mixed insofar as one cannot be sure of any individual's final destination until the end.²⁵¹ But this sense of doubt, this tension between election and damnation, seems evident only in the Christian soul and not in the Church itself.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-8.

²⁴⁶ The speech does not appear in the earlier anonymous life of Cuthbert.

²⁴⁷ *EpEcg.*, p. 413 'stilo stultissimo in monasteriorum ascripta uocabulum'; trans. Whitelock, p. 804.

²⁴⁸ *Hom.*, I.18 p. 132.

²⁴⁹ *HE*, V.14 pp. 502-5, esp. 503 'O quam grandi distantia diuisit Deus inter lucem et tenebras!'

²⁵⁰ *Temp.*, p. 168; *Ezra.*, pp. 336, 347, 359. *Tab.*, p. 110. The preacher needs to devote twice as much time to their own soul as they do to others: *Temp.*, p. 151.

²⁵¹ R.A. Markus, *Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow: St Paul's Church, 1975), pp. 14-5, argues that Bede's caution in making judgements on recent events (*HE*, V.23 pp. 560-1) arises from an Augustinian understanding that one cannot differentiate the two cities in this life.

Ironically, in distancing himself from an Augustinian ‘secular’ Church, Bede still followed in the Bishop of Hippo’s footsteps – both emphasised that the Church remained pure in itself, even if not in individual members.²⁵² But Bede did overwhelmingly emphasise the unity of the transcendental and sacramental Church.²⁵³ Paradoxically that unity utterly excluded the unorthodox and impure.

The previous chapter showed how Bede used the image of the temple to represent the Church as a universal and transcendent institution. This chapter has detailed how the temple-image also presented a model as to how the Church should operate in the world, in particular through its duty to preach and protect Christians from unorthodox dangers. Throughout this discussion the importance of the individual has been obvious. A reformed and pure institutional Church for Bede had to possess teachers of exemplary morality. Bede’s belief in the importance of hierarchy existed alongside his conviction that all Christians shared in Christ’s priesthood, because the faithful individual had become one with Christ. The Church, institutional and transcendent at the same time as I have argued, provided a bridge between eternity and the individual Christian soul. We must, therefore, narrow our focus yet again and study the temple as a symbol of the individual.

²⁵² Hence the Church could simply be equated with the City of God: e.g. Augustine, *DCD*, XIII.16 p. 396. Markus, *Saeculum*, pp. 118-9; Olsen, ‘From Bede’, p. 376. Augustine was troubled by Tyconius saying that the reprobate existed in Christ’s body and chose *permixta ecclesia* as a description which made the falsity of such Christians clear: *Doctrina*, III.100 p. 176 ‘non solum in aeternum verum etiam nunc hypocritae non cum illo [ref: domini corpus] esse dicendi sunt, quamvis in eius esse videantur ecclesia. Unde poterat ista regula et sic appellari ut diceretur “De permixta ecclesia”’; Bede approved of such changes: *Apoc.*, p. 225.

²⁵³ Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, p. 69, sees the two aspects of the Church as ‘complementary, rather than antagonistic’.

Chapter 5

Bede's Temple as Individual

Bede did not limit his interests to institutions – to be meaningful in a Christian context any reform must change people on an individual basis. The central mystery of Christian faith, that human and divine united in Jesus Christ, renders the Christian focus on the individual particularly intense. In this chapter I explore how Bede used the image of the temple to address both his understanding of Christ and of the individual Christian. I begin by looking at the Christological interpretations of the temple, showing how they supported Bede's concept of the orthodox importance of the incarnation. I go on to examine the moralising elements in Bede's interpretation of the temple which aimed to form the Christian into a pure temple of the Lord, in imitation of model exemplars. Throughout the chapter, we will see how crucial the union of God and human in Christ was to Bede's outlook.

I do not intend the word *individual* to suggest that Bede had an awareness of the individual or self in the modern sense. The appropriateness of talking about a pre-modern sense of the self has stimulated much debate, and scholars of the Middle Ages have struggled with the issue of whether the twelfth century in particular saw the growth of a consciousness of the individual which had not previously existed.¹ As we shall see below, for Bede the individual Christian was not utterly distinct and independent from other

¹ Dominique Iogna-Prat, 'La question de l'individu à l'épreuve du Moyen Âge', in *L'Individu au Moyen Âge*, ed. Brigitte Bedos-Rezak and Dominique Iogna-Prat (Paris: Aubier, 2005), pp. 7-29; Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Arnold Davidson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 206-13; Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?', *JEH*, 31 (1980), pp. 1-17; Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (London: SPCK, 1972).

Christians. The temple-image referred to ‘each one of the elect’, as well as ‘all the Church together’, and it is in that context that I speak of the individual.²

The Temple as Christ

One of the most common of all Christian interpretations of the temple derives from the Gospel of John. There, when Jesus declares ‘Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up’, the assembled Jews scoff that it took forty-six years to build the temple. ‘But’, says the evangelist in an explanatory aside, ‘he spoke of the temple of his body’.³ This gave Bede a clear mandate to argue that Christ ‘became the temple of God by assuming human nature’, and to call Christ’s physical, as well as spiritual, body the temple.⁴ He interpreted the temple as Christ the individual using a number of diverse interpretations, none dominant in itself. However, when we examine these interpretations throughout Bede’s writings together, we can begin to see the importance of the incarnation in his thought.

Grounding himself in the text of John 2.19-21, Bede interpreted the forty-six years of the temple’s construction as referring to the number of days which it took for the embryonic Jesus to grow. Forty-six was, Bede claimed, ‘the number of days the human body grows in the womb from the time of conception into the developed features of its members’.⁵

This embryological reading of the temple comes from Augustine who seems to have

² *Ezra.*, p. 241 ‘liquet...templum Dei in scripturis sanctis et unumquemque electorum et omnem simul ecclesiam...solere appellari’; trans. DeGregorio, p. 6.

³ John 2.19-21.

⁴ *Temp.*, p. 147 ‘ille templum Dei per assumptam humanitatem factus est’; trans. Connolly, p. 5. Also *Gen.*, p. 107.

⁵ *Ezra.*, p. 300 ‘dierum numero corpus humanum in utero a tempore conceptionis usque ad perfecta membrorum liniamenta crescendo perueniat’; trans. DeGregorio, p. 97. Also *Hom.*, II.1 p. 189, II.24 p. 365 ‘eo annorum numero templum aedificaretur quo dierum numero corpus dominicum quod per templum figurabatur in utero uirginali perfici oportebat’.

developed it.⁶ The idea that Christ's humanity provided a dwelling place built for him also appears in Bede's interpretation of Proverbs 9.1.⁷ The embryological interpretation seems clearly intended to highlight the physical humanity of Christ. The 'Lord's most sacred body, which he took from the Virgin' became the temple of God, a real human body which went through the normal process of development in the mother's womb.⁸

Leading on from this link between the temple building and Christ's physical body, Bede associated a door on the right-hand side of the temple (3 Kings 6.8) with the wound in Christ's side: 'For the door to the middle section was on the right of the house because when the Lord died on the cross one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear.'⁹ While this interpretation derived from Augustine's ideas about the wound and its connection with the door in Noah's Ark, the link with the temple seems original to Bede.¹⁰ The door of the temple led up initially to the second storey, and then eventually to the third (and highest) storey. Similarly, Bede stated, through the 'door' in Christ's side 'after the very blessed rest of our souls, we arrive at the recovery of our spiritual bodies, climbing as it

⁶ Augustine, *De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus*, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, CCSL 44A, LVI pp. 95-6. Theodore of Tarsus may have taught this interpretation at the school of Canterbury, if the *Laterculus Malalianus* reflects his work: Jane Stevenson, 'Laterculus Malalianus', pp. 136-9. Siemens, *Christology of Theodore of Tarsus*, p. 181, unconvincingly argues that the *Laterculus* provided 'a principal textual source' for Bede's use of this interpretation. Bede quoted Augustine verbatim at *Hom.*, II.1 p. 189 (much more closely than the *Laterculus* did); unlike Augustine, Bede and the *Laterculus* agreed in identifying the forty-six years with the building of Ezra's temple but *Ezra.*, p. 300, shows verbal dependence on Jerome, *In Daniele*, ed. F. Glorie, CCSL 75A, p. 871, for this point.

⁷ *Sam.*, p. 83 'Christus ex diuinitatis suae potentia condidit hominis substantiam quam ex uirgine nasciturus susciperet iuxta quod alibi legitur: *Sapientia aedificauit sibi domum*'; Bede, *In Proverbia*, p. 62. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, XXXIII.XVI.32 p. 1701.

⁸ *Hom.*, II.1 p. 189 'templum illud manu factum sacrosanctam domini carnem quam ex uirgine sumpsit...figurabat'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 8-9.

⁹ *Temp.*, p. 166 'Ostium namque lateris medii in parte erat domus dextrae quia defuncto in cruce domino unus militum lancea latus aperuit'; trans. Connolly, p. 29 – citing John 19.34 also. Also *Reg.*, XII p. 304; *Hom.*, II.1 pp. 190-1; *Ezra.*, pp. 300-1.

¹⁰ Augustine, *DCCD*, XV.26 p. 494; see George Hardin Brown, 'From the Wound in Christ's Side to the Wound in His Heart: Progression from Male Exegesis to Female Mysticism', in *Poetry, Place, and Gender: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Helen Damico*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), pp. 252-74.

were from the middle storey up to the third'.¹¹ He followed Augustine in pointing out that the sacraments which made this possible (the blood of the eucharist and the water of baptism) flowed from Christ's side during the passion.¹² Hence Bede here represented salvation as coming about through the physical body of the incarnation. The sacramental life of the Church, and thus the salvation and resurrection of the individual Christian, had their origin in the reality of Christ's human body.¹³

Another interpretation of Bede's which associated the image of the temple with Christ's incarnation saw the womb of the Virgin Mary as 'the most sacred temple of God'.¹⁴ A comparatively rare interpretation in the West, this plays a minor role in Bede, who only used it in his homilies, possibly drawing on Ambrose who had championed the idea as part of his celebration of virginity and the need for bodily purity.¹⁵ Some evidence exists, however, for this interpretation's particular popularity in the Insular world: Aldhelm seems to have known it;¹⁶ a (probably Irish) gospel commentary links Zacharias entering the temple with Christ entering Mary;¹⁷ most strikingly, the ivory Franks Casket, probably produced in early eighth-century Northumbria, juxtaposes the empty temple on

¹¹ *Gen.*, pp. 109-10 'post animarum beatissimam requiem ad receptionem corporum spiritalium, quasi de medio cenaculo ad tertium usque scandentes'; trans. Kendall, p. 180.

¹² Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, CXX.2 p. 661.

¹³ Among the reasons Bede gave as to why Christ retained his wounds in his resurrected body were: in order to prove that it was an actual, physical body; and in order to intercede with the Father, displaying his membership in human suffering: *Hom.*, II.9 p. 242 'in humanitate patrem interpellat pro nobis ostensis uulnerum suorum cicatricibus'; Brown, 'From the Wound', p. 256.

¹⁴ *Hom.*, I.5 p. 35 'nullatenus... templum Dei sacrosanctum suae semine corruptionis attaminare potuerint'; trans. Martin & Hurst, I, 48. Also *Hom.*, I.4 p. 23 'dedit [dominus] benignitatem quia eius ingressui uirginalis uteri templum spiritus sancti gratia consecrauit'.

¹⁵ Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii*, II.6 p. 33; *idem*, *De Spiritu Sancto*, III.XI.80 p. 183. See Jennifer Harris, 'The Body as Temple in the High Middle Ages', in *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, ed. Albert I. Baumgarten (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 233-56, at 243-5. The interpretation of the shut temple gate of Ezekiel 44.1-2 as referring to Mary's womb may also connect with this: *Luc.*, pp. 62-3; cf. Jerome, *In Hiezechielem*, pp. 646-7. See Natacha Piano, 'De la porte close du temple de Salomon à la porte ouverte du Paradis', *Studi Medievali*, 50 (2009), pp. 133-57, at 134-9.

¹⁶ Aldhelm, *Carmen de Virginitate*, ed. R. Ehwald, MGH Auctores Antiquissimi 15, p. 423 – Aldhelm used *delubrum*, rather than *templum*, but he may have still considered this a reference to the Jewish temple judging on his use of the word at *Prosa de Virginitate* [in the same volume], XV p. 244.

¹⁷ *Expositio Quatuor Evangeliorum*, PL 30, col. 567 'Ingressus Zacharias in templum, id est, Christus in Mariam'.

one side with the Christ-child in Mary's womb on the other – implying an understanding of the incarnation as superseding the temple.¹⁸ These Insular uses may represent more than a simple celebration of Mary's virginity. Seeing Mary as the temple makes clear her status as 'Mother of God' (*theotokos* – a term Bede knew) and served a doctrinal, anti-Nestorian point in the Eastern Church.¹⁹ In that regard it stood in opposition to the idea of the temple as Christ's humanity assumed or inhabited by his divinity – imagery common to the so-called Antiochene Christology which underlay Nestorius' thought.²⁰

Such imagery tended to stress the separation, rather than the unity, between Christ's two natures and thus became theologically suspect in the case of Nestorius. Bede's clear preference for speaking of Christ's, rather than Mary's, body as the temple suggests an interest in emphasising the two aspects of Christ's identity. Of course, Bede may not have been sufficiently aware of the details of the Nestorian controversy to have had many concerns about his own use of the temple-image.²¹ In general he consistently celebrated the orthodox unity of human and divine natures in Christ's person: 'our Redeemer, who from his conception and birth existed as perfect God and perfect man'.²² One modern commentator has called his Christology, 'a rudimentary Chalcedonianism, emphasizing

¹⁸ James Lang, 'The Imagery of the Franks Casket', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), pp. 247-55, at 253-4; Kessler, 'Temple Veil', p. 71. Ian Wood, 'Ripon, Francia and the Franks Casket in the Early Middle Ages', *Northern History*, 26 (1990), pp. 1-19, suggests a Wilfridian origin for the casket; Abels, 'Franks Casket', p. 563, argues for Wearmouth-Jarrow as a possible place of manufacture.

¹⁹ C. Clarke Carlton, "'The Temple that Held God": Byzantine Marian Hymnography and the Christ of Nestorius', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 50 (2006), pp. 99-125. *Luc.*, p. 34.

²⁰ See p. 51 above.

²¹ Bede probably knew Cassian's *De Incarnatione contra Nestorium* which attacks the Nestorian use of the Christ-as-temple image; however, Cassian did not so much condemn the image as the implication that Christ only became the temple at his baptism or that God dwelt within him in the same way as within the saints: ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 17, V.3 p. 304, VII.21 pp. 378-9. For Bede's knowledge of *De Incarnatione*: Stephen Lake, 'Knowledge of the Writings of John Cassian in early Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE*, 32 (2003), pp. 27-41, at 39-40.

²² *Tab.*, p. 36 'redemptor noster qui ex conceptione et natiuitate perfectus Deus et homo extitit'; trans. Holder, p. 38. Also *Temp.*, p. 211; *Cant.*, pp. 242, 292; *Hom.*, I.6 p. 44, I.19 p. 136.

one thing and one thing alone: Christ's dual nature as fully human and fully divine'.²³ Nonetheless, the above Bedan variations on the theme of the temple as Christ's body reveal a specific emphasis on his humanity, I would argue. This may have come about if Bede had cause to feel that Christ's humanity needed to be defended against those who, in a desire to stress the unity of the Saviour, ran the risk of denigrating his human nature. In the seventh century the authorities in Constantinople promulgated the Monothelete doctrine (that Christ had two natures, but only one (divine) will or energy) in an attempt to bridge the gap between Chalcedonians and Monophysites (who denied that Christ's flesh formed a second nature).²⁴ The compromise failed to win over adherents in the West. The Lateran Council of 649 condemned the doctrine, an action seen as treasonous in Constantinople, and the emperor's response led to the arrest, torture and death in exile of Pope Martin I in 655.²⁵ During these events and their aftermath the first Northumbrian pilgrims (Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop) reached Rome, a Rome where anti-Byzantine and anti-Monothelete feeling no doubt ran high.²⁶ Both men formed a close attachment to Roman orthodoxy in such circumstances and returned to England intent on fostering loyalty to Rome at home.

The Greek monk Theodore of Tarsus, appointed archbishop of Canterbury in 668, may well have helped draw up the initial acts of the 649 Lateran Council; certainly by 680 the papacy considered him the leading expert on Monotheletism in the West.²⁷ In 679

²³ W. Trent Foley, 'Bede's Exegesis of Passages Unique to the Gospel of Mark', in *Biblical Studies*, ed. Leonardi and Orlandi, pp. 105-24, at 115.

²⁴ Scholars now prefer 'miaphysite' to 'monophysite' – a term coined by Chalcedonians: Uwe Michael Lang, *John Philoponus and the Controversies over Chalcedon in the Sixth Century* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), p. 8 n. 11.

²⁵ See Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (London: Fontana, 1989), pp. 250-9.

²⁶ For Wilfrid: W. Trent Foley, *Images of Sanctity in Eddius Stephanus' Life of Bishop Wilfrid, An Early English Saint's Life* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 80-4. For Biscop: Chazelle, 'Vision of God', pp. 98-100. Also Ó Carragáin, *City of Rome*, p. 16.

²⁷ Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, pp. 70-81.

Theodore presided over a synod of Anglo-Saxon bishops at *Hæthfeld* which condemned Monotheletism as part of a strategy of gathering support for the papacy in its attempts to achieve a rapprochement with Constantinople in the years ahead.²⁸ John, the precentor of St Peter's in Rome, attended in order to monitor the proceedings. Both Theodore and John had come to Britain with Benedict Biscop as a guide; John stayed at Wearmouth during his time in Britain and Biscop took the opportunity to add a copy of the acts of the Lateran Council of 649 to his library.²⁹ Wearmouth thus constituted the 'Northumbrian outpost of Rome's offensive against Monothelete doctrine'.³⁰ Scholars in recent years have emphasised the importance of the Monothelete crisis as the backdrop to the foundation of Biscop's monastery and its Roman ideology.³¹

These events, of course, took place decades before Bede wrote his temple-commentaries; we should not overemphasise the power of institutional memory or Bede's knowledge of all these factors. Nonetheless, claims that Bede failed to understand the questions at stake at the Synod of *Hæthfeld* overstate the issue.³² Recently Marilyn Dunn has suggested that the problem of native polytheism, rather than distant theological disputes, may explain some of the synod's Christology.³³ Considering how little we genuinely know about Anglo-Saxon polytheism, we can hardly verify this argument either way. Whatever the likelihood that a Church council in the 670s shaped its Christology in response to

²⁸ Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, pp. 139-46; Henry Chadwick, 'Theodore, the English Church and the Monothelete Controversy', in *Archbishop Theodore*, ed. Lapidge, pp. 88-95; Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c.650-c.850* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), pp. 252-8.

²⁹ *HE*, IV.18 pp. 388-91; *HA*, 3 pp. 366-7.

³⁰ Celia Chazelle, 'Art and Reverence in Bede's Churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow', in *Intellektualisierung und Mystifizierung mittelalterlicher Kunst*, ed. Martin Büchsel and Rebecca Müller (Berlin: Mann, 2010), pp. 79-98, at 89.

³¹ Chazelle, 'Vision of God'; *eadem*, 'Art and Reverence'; O'Reilly, 'Romanitas of the *Codex Amiatinus*', pp. 391-4; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'The Wearmouth Icon of the Virgin (A.D. 679): Christological, Liturgical, and Iconographic Contexts' in *Poetry, Place, and Gender*, ed. Karkov, pp. 13-37.

³² Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, p. 141. *HE*, IV.17 pp. 384-5 states that *Hæthfeld* was a response to the heresy of Eutyches – technically Monophysitism, but Bede clearly used the term to describe Monotheletism also (below n. 34).

³³ Dunn, *Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 144-6.

polytheism, I see little cause for believing that Bede did so fifty years later. Bede rarely meaningfully mentioned paganism when defending orthodox Christology, while in his commentary on Mark, broadly contemporaneous with his major temple-commentaries, he clearly refuted Monotheletism.³⁴

Monotheletism revived briefly in Constantinople in the early eighth century, as Bede knew.³⁵ He seems to have made use of the copy of the acts of the Lateran Council available to him at Wearmouth-Jarrow.³⁶ And while he certainly had little expertise on the intricacies of Eastern theology, there can be little doubt concerning his conviction that heresies from the East posed a significant attack upon Christ's human nature and that orthodox loyalty to Rome required the rejection of such beliefs. Bede's defence of Christian images which appears in *On the Temple* seems like a response to the contemporary iconoclast movement in the empire of the late 720s.³⁷ The community at Wearmouth-Jarrow clearly remained informed of developments in Eastern Christianity, though the information which reached Northumbria came no doubt heavily filtered through a Roman lens. If Bede's interpretation of the temple received its intellectual impetus from the making of the Codex Amiatinus, which celebrates Pope Hilarus who had condemned Eutyches and defended Chalcedonian orthodoxy, then this 'pro-Roman' emphasis on Christ's humanity makes even more sense.³⁸ The orthodox position on Christ may have seemed in constant need of reiteration when 'Bede and his

³⁴ *Marc.*, p. 617 'Eutichianos qui dicunt unam in...domino et saluatore nostro operationem unam fuisse uoluntatem'.

³⁵ Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, p. 312; *DTR*, LXVI pp. 531-2.

³⁶ Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (London: British Library, 2005), p. 268, notes verbal parallels between Bede's work and the acts: compare *HE*, IV.18 pp. 390-1 with *Concilium Lateranense a. 649 celebratum*, ed. R. Riedinger (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), p. 29 and *Marc.*, pp. 517-8 with *Concilium Lateranense*, p. 129.

³⁷ *Temp.*, pp. 212-3; Paul Meyvaert, 'Bede and the Church Paintings at Wearmouth-Jarrow', *ASE*, 8 (1979), pp. 63-77, at 68-9; but also Chazelle, 'Art and Reverence', pp. 91-2.

³⁸ Chazelle, 'Vision of God', p. 103.

contemporaries could never rule out the possibility that in the future the heresy might again find an emperor to support it'.³⁹

Another image associated with Christ's humanity plays a large role in Bede's temple-commentaries: the Ark of the Covenant, which Bede interpreted as 'the humanity assumed by Christ'.⁴⁰ In *On the Tabernacle* he interpreted the incorruptible wood of the ark covered with gold inside and out as the spotless humanity of Christ entirely filled with his divinity.⁴¹ Most importantly, the ark rests inside the holy of holies 'because after his passion and resurrection from the dead' Christ's human body 'has ascended above the highest heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father'.⁴² In carrying his own humanity into heaven, Christ opened the path for all mortals to enter eternal life: 'We see heaven opened, because after the God-man gained entrance into heaven, we recognize that in his name an entry into our heavenly home was opened up for us believers too.'⁴³ The presence of the ark in the holy of holies seems to be a guarantee that mankind can gain entrance to God's presence – for it has already done so in the person of Christ himself. The ark reminds us that, for Bede, the incarnation, the process of joining God and man, led in some way to the deification of humanity.⁴⁴

³⁹ Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, p. 229.

⁴⁰ *Reg.*, XIV p. 306 'designat... in sancta sanctorum arca assumptam Christi humanitatem'; trans. Foley, p. 111. Also *Apoc.*, p. 385; *Tab.*, p. 13; *Hom.*, II.25 p. 376. For more on this common interpretation: p. 73 above.

⁴¹ *Tab.*, p. 15.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 72 'Intra hoc autem uelum templi posita est archa testamenti quia mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus qui solus paternorum est conscius archanorum post passionem suam resurrectionemque a mortuis super caelos caelorum ascendens sedet ad dexteram patris'; trans. Holder, p. 81. Also *Sam.*, p. 67; *Tab.*, p. 133; *Temp.*, p. 176 'post resurrectionem suam ascendens in caelum carnem quam assumpserat ex uirgine in patris dextra collocavit'. Colossians 3.1.

⁴³ *Hom.*, I.17 p. 125 'Videmus etenim caelum apertum quia postquam caelum Deus homo penetrauit etiam nobis in nomine eius credentibus supernae patriae patefactum cognoscimus ingressum'; trans. Martin & Hurst, I, 174.

⁴⁴ See pp. 72-3 above.

The Codex Amiatinus opens its New Testament with an image of Christ in Majesty, a *maiestas domini* possibly meant to represent the Lord in Judgment.⁴⁵ Set against a heavenly background, Christ appears between two winged angels in what is probably a reference to the ark with its overhanging cherubim.⁴⁶ The image thus shows Christ, whose incarnation the New Testament revealed, as the true ark of God present in heaven. The four evangelists and their beasts surround the sphere in which Christ appears; Bede interpreted the beasts as signifying how the gospels displayed Christ's sacrificial humanity (the man and the ox) and his divine victory over death (the lion and the eagle).⁴⁷ Interestingly, the discussion of the ark in *On the Tabernacle* inspired Bede to talk about the evangelists' beasts, suggesting that he may have had the codex's image of Christ as ark in mind; the 'two rings on one side and two on the other' made Bede think of the beasts, and indeed in the Codex Amiatinus the beasts appear two on either side of Christ.⁴⁸ Once again it appears that the themes of Bede's interpretation arose not from solely private interest, but from the shared spirituality of Wearmouth-Jarrow.

Bede often linked Christ's presence as ark in the heavenly holy of holies with one of his favourite titles for Christ, which appears with striking frequency in his work: the 'mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus'.⁴⁹ It focuses upon Christ's humanity of course, but sees that humanity as an act of mediation, linking the divine and the human through itself. Hence the significance of the image of the ark in Bede's writings: the God-

⁴⁵ Codex Amiatinus, fol. 796v.

⁴⁶ O'Reilly, 'Library of Scripture', p. 13. The two angels probably also represent the two testaments between which (literally in the case of the image's position in the codex) Christ appears: *Tab.*, p. 20 'de medio duorum cherubim loquitur dominus quia per uerba utriusque testamenti consona nos uoce ad fidem ueritatis erudit'.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 'Duo autem circuli in latere uno et duo sunt in altero'; trans. Holder, p. 14. Exodus 25.12. Gregory, *In Hiezechihalem*, I.IV.3 pp. 48-9, while in part no doubt Bede's source here, differs on this point.

⁴⁹ 1 Timothy 2.5. E.g. *Temp.*, p. 178; *Tab.*, p. 72. A search for the phrase 'mediator Dei et hominum' (with *mediator* in all singular inflections) in the CETEDOC Library of Latin Texts (17/05/2013) found 82 matches in the works of Bede; this compares with 52 for the works of Gregory, 8 for Ambrose, 6 for Jerome and 134 for Augustine.

man stands continually in the presence of God the Father, interceding for man.⁵⁰ We have already seen the importance of Christ's mediation to Bede's use of the temple-image: Christ as cornerstone, for example, links the Jewish and the gentile peoples through his own person;⁵¹ Christ 'as a benevolent mediator and reconciler has made one house of God of angels and men'.⁵² The unity symbolised by Bede's temple rests upon the incarnate God-man.

Christ intercedes for humanity before the Father, not just as ark, but as priest also and Bede saw Christ's priestly function as an important part of his status as mediator.⁵³ In the Old Testament only the high priest could enter into the presence of God and he performed intercessory sacrifices on behalf of all the people. Bede closely linked the assumption of humanity in the incarnation to Christ's priesthood – he interpreted Samuel performing his priestly duties in a linen ephod as Christ humbly ministering to Christians in his sinless humanity.⁵⁴ An important role of the old Jewish priesthood had been sacrifice as part of the mediation between God and humans. Bede followed the Letter to the Hebrews, and the Church Fathers, in declaring Christ 'the true high priest' because he 'offered his very self for us as a sweet-smelling oblation and sacrifice to God'.⁵⁵ Bede recognised Christ as both king and priest – but whereas the first title related to the eschatological kingdom,

⁵⁰ E.g. *Tab.*, p. 132.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76 '[redemptor noster] qui quasi ab angulo usque ad angulum peruenit quia a plebe Iudaica quam prius elegit sese ad saluandam etiam gentium multitudinem propitiatus extendit'; *Act.*, p. 26; *EpCath.*, p. 236; *Sam.*, p. 167. Ephesians 2.20.

⁵² *Hom.*, I.6 p. 37 'qui de angelis et hominibus unam Dei domum pius mediator et reconciliator instituit'; trans. Martin & Hurst, I, 53. Also *EpCath.*, p. 235; *Temp.*, p. 147; *Ezra.*, pp. 371, 384. See pp. 182-4 below.

⁵³ *Luc.*, p. 402; *Tab.*, p. 132; *Apoc.*, p. 559; *DTR*, VIII p. 303.

⁵⁴ *Sam.*, p. 27; cf. Bede, *VIII Quaestiones*, VIII p. 73.

⁵⁵ *Tab.*, p. 96 'ueri pontificis Iesu Christi qui semet ipsum obtulit oblationem et hostiam Deo pro nobis in odorem suauitatis'; trans. Holder, p. 110; *Luc.*, p. 24. Ephesians 5.2; Hebrews 9.11-14. For patristic uses of this imagery: pp. 50, 53, 54-5 above. Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei Fedeli*, pp. 195-203.

Christ's priesthood arose from his passion and constant heavenly intercession for humanity.⁵⁶

Christ's passion, therefore, provided a cleansing sacrifice for human sins, and the Lord's risen body constantly performed a priestly intercession with the Father. Bede repeatedly spoke of Christ as a victim or a sacrifice and linked him with the animal victims sacrificed on the altars of the tabernacle and the temple.⁵⁷ The Lord offered himself 'on the altar of the cross' as the 'true sacrifice of the Father'.⁵⁸ In Bede's exegesis, therefore, the image of the temple inspired a constant remembrance of the priesthood of the incarnate Christ and the sacrifice of his passion. Solomon built the temple on the mountain where Abraham had offered Isaac as a prefiguration of Christ's sacrifice;⁵⁹ in *On Luke* Bede linked the place of the altar of the holocaust outside the tabernacle with the crucifixion outside Jerusalem.⁶⁰ He argued that Luke's gospel began and ended in the temple precincts because it focused especially upon Christ as priest and victim.⁶¹ The one true sacrifice of the passion underlay all history;⁶² the Jews had celebrated it through animal sacrifices but Christ transferred his priesthood to the Church which offered up the sacrifice of the eucharist.⁶³

⁵⁶ *Ret.*, p. 117; *Ezra.*, p. 264; *Hom.*, I.3 pp. 19-20, II.10 p. 249 'sacerdos...ut nos a peccatis hostia suae passionis emundet rex ut regnum nobis perenne tribuat...eum in secreto patris etiam pro nobis quasi pontificem interpellare demonstrent'.

⁵⁷ *Ret.*, p. 112; *Tab.*, p. 71; *Ezra.*, pp. 306, 329; *Luc.*, pp. 350, 378 (= *Marc.*, p. 611).

⁵⁸ *Tab.*, p. 16 'in altari crucis', p. 138; *Apoc.*, p. 245; *Luc.*, p. 404 (= *Marc.*, p. 632); *Sam.*, p. 62. *Luc.*, p. 354 'uera patris hostia Christus'. Bede was exceptionally fond of the phrase 'altar of the cross', which seems comparatively rare before him. See Origen/Rufinus, *In Genesim*, VIII.9 pp. 84-5 'Ideo ipse et hostia est et pontifex. Secundum spiritum namque offert hostiam patri, secundum carnem ipse in altari crucis offertur...?'

⁵⁹ *Temp.*, p. 159; *Ezra.*, p. 271.

⁶⁰ *Luc.*, p. 354.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 402, 424-5.

⁶² *Gen.*, pp. 127-8; *Ezra.*, pp. 271-2.

⁶³ *Tab.*, p. 48; *Ezra.*, p. 329; *Hom.*, I.15 p. 106; *Sam.*, p. 31; *Reg.*, I pp. 296-7. On Jewish sacrifice and the eucharist: Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 124-5.

Scholars have recognised the importance of the view of salvation as sacrifice in the medieval Western Church, eventually feeding into the twelfth-century consolidation of a doctrine of redemption by Anselm.⁶⁴ In that light, Bede's whole-hearted support for the image becomes potentially significant. One must question the assumption that in the early Middle Ages the image of Christ as a divine king dominated, especially in 'Germanic' works like the poem *The Dream of the Rood*.⁶⁵ Even when Bede thought of the passion as a victory, sacrificial imagery remained central to his understanding of redemption.⁶⁶ As king, Christ will bring the elect into the kingdom of heaven, but as priest and sacrifice he has cleansed humanity of its sins and continuously works for their salvation; even the title 'King of the Jews' upon the cross caused Bede to discuss Christ's priestly sacrifice upon the altar of the cross – a focus upon the Lord's divinity never eclipsing an appreciation of his humanity.⁶⁷

Herren and Brown have noted many of the issues here highlighted as common in 'Celtic', rather than 'Germanic', Christianity. They see the emphasis on Christ's humanity as a common Pelagian feature in Insular texts, and they also note a focus on the passion rather

⁶⁴ H.E.W. Turner, *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption: A Study of the Development of Doctrine during the First Five Centuries* (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1952), pp. 96-111; Rowan A. Greer, 'Christ the Victor and the Victim', *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 59 (1995), pp. 1-30. For a convincing case for the image's importance in the East: Frances M. Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (Cambridge, MS.: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979). Jean Rivière, *Le Dogme de la Rédemption au début du Moyen Âge* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1934), pp. 5-52, argues that early medieval theologians (including Bede, to whom he ascribes some spurious works) held the basic conception of redemption which Anselm developed.

⁶⁵ Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 157-8; Herren and Brown, *Celtic Christianity*, p. 160; *The Dream of the Rood*, ed. and trans. Richard Hamer, *A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 159-71. See Rosemary Woolf, 'Doctrinal Influences on *The Dream of the Rood*', *Medium Aevum*, 27 (1958), pp. 137-53.

⁶⁶ For Bede, the victory Christ won on the cross came about through his sacrifice: *Sam.*, p. 13 'suae uictimae singularis ubertate regnum mortis destruens', p. 106 'ad debellandas aerias potestas se ipsum pro mundo offeret hostiam patri'. The classic study of redemption as Christ's victory is Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor*, trans. A.G. Herbert (London: SPCK, 1931).

⁶⁷ *Luc.*, p. 404 (= *Marc.*, p. 632). Cf. Leonardi, 'Il Venerabile Beda', p. 630.

than the resurrection.⁶⁸ Some of their points, such as the importance of Christ's humanity for a monastic ideology of imitation, prove relevant to Bede's situation as we shall see below. But we ought to underline that Bede always highlighted the perfection of the humanity of the incarnate Christ, superior to that of mortal men and linked with a divinity which had pre-existed it.⁶⁹ The resurrection also remained central to Bede's soteriology – by raising his own human body Christ guaranteed the resurrection of mortal human bodies. The resurrection brought the body of the incarnation into heaven after all and thus 'revealed the pathway of ascent to his faithful ones who humbly follow him'.⁷⁰

The temple provided a way for Bede to talk and think about Christ; its imagery of priesthood and sacrifice proved fundamental to his understanding of the saving work of the incarnate God. Bede constantly emphasised through his use of the temple-image that God had saved humanity through a real, physical human body. As a result, Christ's sacrificial and priestly actions had the potential to turn every Christian into a priest and sacrifice following his model. No surprise then that Bede also interpreted the temple as the individual Christian, alongside the individual who was Christ – since God deigned to dwell in human flesh, divine inhabitation become possible for all humans. The temple-Church united God and man; but the temple also provided the model according to which Christians attempted to form themselves so as to be one with God.

⁶⁸ Herren and Brown, *Celtic Christianity*, pp. 64-5, 138-9, 281. The utility of terms like 'Germanic' or 'Celtic' seems to me limited: they run the risk of being misinterpreted (especially when, like 'Celtic', carrying historiographical baggage) and encourage explanations based, not on the specifics of time and place, but on generalisations.

⁶⁹ *Temp.*, pp. 158, 211; *Ezra.*, p. 311; *Tab.*, p. 13.

⁷⁰ *Ezra.*, p. 311 'fidelibus suis se humiliter sequentibus ascensionis iter ostendit'; trans. DeGregorio, p. 116. The resurrection continued to be important to Anglo-Saxon views on Christ's saving work: Barbara Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography and the Art of the Monastic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 162-6.

The Temple as Christian

Morality

On a number of occasions the New Testament Pauline letters describe the faithful as the temple of God. Frequently the letters focus on the collective aspects of this temple; Bede certainly knew that when Paul declared ‘the temple of God is holy, which you are’, he spoke to the society of believers.⁷¹ But he equally knew that Paul had described the Christian’s physical body itself as the temple and thus one could deem all Pauline uses of the temple to refer to the individual.⁷² For Paul, the believer became a temple because God dwelt within them and this image had definite moral implications. A temple, as a sacred space, must be kept unsullied and Paul used the image to demand purity of Christians, both bodily (union with a prostitute pollutes the temple) and as a community (the Christian should not defile their temple by associating with unbelievers).⁷³ In this section I examine the theme of moral purity in Bede’s interpretation of the temple, which will in turn bring us back to the importance of Christ’s incarnation.

Bede represented the individual as the temple in a similar fashion to Paul. The idea of God dwelling in the Christian person remained central.⁷⁴ But while Paul’s originality lay in thinking of this inhabitation as bodily in nature, many of the Fathers had preferred to think of it as being interior or spiritual. Bede preserved such interpretations of the temple as ‘the mind and conscience of the faithful’.⁷⁵ Hence, the interior temple of the individual, and especially the heart as the dwelling place of God, appears regularly in his

⁷¹ Paul addressed ‘you’ plural: 1 Corinthians 3.17 ‘templum enim Dei sanctum est quod estis vos’ (also 2 Corinthians 6.16); *DST*, II.12 pp. 168-9.

⁷² 1 Corinthians 6.19; *DST*, II.12 p. 169. See *Temp.*, p. 147; *Tab.*, p. 43.

⁷³ 1 Corinthians 6.13-20; 2 Corinthians 6.14-18.

⁷⁴ *Tab.*, p. 11; *Temp.*, p. 147; *Ezra.*, pp. 241, 300; *Sam.*, p. 58.

⁷⁵ *Luc.*, p. 349 (= *Marc.*, p. 580) quotes Gregory, *In Evangelia*, II.XXXIX.7 p. 386 ‘Templum quoque et domus Dei est ipsa mens atque conscientia fidelium’; *Luc.*, p. 207 (= *Marc.*, p. 545) quotes Jerome, *In Matheum*, p. 149 ‘debent...in penetralibus cordis sui domino tabernaculum praeeparare’.

work.⁷⁶ The common New Testament trope of the body as a *tabernaculum* (probably here meaning tent, rather than referring to Moses' tabernacle), often appears in Insular hagiography to emphasise the transitory nature of the body.⁷⁷ But Bede still chose to emphasise the temple-image's application to both bodily and mental purity. Christians could expect condemnation if they did 'not keep the temples of their own hearts and bodies worthy for God to inhabit'.⁷⁸ Body and mind ought always to remain in harmony according to Bede, and he often spoke of the two in one breath.⁷⁹

1 Corinthians 6.19 used the image of the body-as-temple to argue for sexual purity, and such an interpretation seems to have been popular amongst some Anglo-Saxons.⁸⁰ While Bede did use this verse to condemn dancing, he more usually went beyond any narrowly physical interpretation – maintaining his interest in both heart and body.⁸¹ He did once in *On the Tabernacle* directly link the temple of the individual to *castitas*, but the word clearly signified something more extensive than avoiding intercourse with prostitutes. It concerned restraining 'both the flesh from lascivious impulses and the heart from enticing thoughts'.⁸² The mixture of Pauline and patristic elements in Bede's moral use of the temple-image thus seems clear, and neither bodily nor spiritual purity alone dominates. This distinctive mixture of the physical and the internal appears throughout this section.

When considering the moral application of the temple-image, Bede's homilies may prove more fruitful ground for study than his commentaries. While questions still exist over the

⁷⁶ *Cant.*, p. 279; *Sam.*, pp. 11, 109; *Luc.*, p. 311. He also read the ark as faith which should be kept within the pure heart or conscience: *Sam.*, pp. 45, 54.

⁷⁷ Adomnán, *Vita S. Columbae*, III.23 pp. 226-7; *HE*, IV.29 pp. 440-1; *VCP*, XXVIII pp. 250-1. 2 Peter 1.14.

⁷⁸ *Ezra.*, p. 336 'ne templa cordium uel corporum suorum Deo inhabitatore digna seruarent'; trans. DeGregorio, p. 150. Also *Ezra.*, p. 305.

⁷⁹ *Hom.*, II.1 p. 189; *Temp.*, p. 231; *Tab.*, pp. 43, 113. See DeGregorio, 'Prayer and Contemplation', pp. 9, 16, for the link between ideal and action in Bede's writings.

⁸⁰ Tangl (ed.), *Die Briefe*, 73 pp. 148-9; Aldhelm, *Carmen*, p. 359; *idem*, *Prosa*, XLV p. 299.

⁸¹ *Ezra.*, p. 272; *Hom.*, I.23 p. 165, II.23 p. 352.

⁸² *Tab.*, p. 45 'et carnem a lasciuis motibus et cor ab illecebrosis refrenemus cogitationibus'; trans. Holder, p. 49.

intended audience and register of the homilies, scholarly consensus recognises that they differ from the commentaries in their more explicitly moralising tone, their more personal focus and in addressing the audience directly.⁸³ In them, Bede attempted to make the biblical text immediate and relevant to his audience.⁸⁴ We might expect the moral focus on the individual as temple to play a major role in such texts, and indeed Bede frequently reminded his readers/hearers that they ought to become a temple of the Lord.⁸⁵ However, this individual focus never appears at the expense of the social: if one wishes to see God in the heavenly temple then one must work untiringly to build up his house.⁸⁶ This may indicate Bede's bias toward the collective interpretation of the temple-image, even in the homilies.⁸⁷ But it primarily reminds us that individual morality had to make sense in a social context and had to express itself in practical works.

In the homilies Bede warned Christians to purify themselves and to abandon the kind of sinfulness that would lead God to reject them as a temple in which to dwell: 'Let us then cleanse the temples of our bodies and hearts, so that the Spirit of God may deign to dwell

⁸³ Walt, 'Homiliary', pp. 52-8, 73-5, 208-11, 217-8; Eric Jay Del Giacco, 'Exegesis and Sermon: A Comparison of Bede's Commentary and Homilies on Luke', *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 50 (2006), pp. 9-29. Walt argues for a primarily monastic audience (with occasional lay participation) while Del Giacco argues for a mix including uneducated clergy and laity. Both agree that the homilies differ from the commentaries. Studies of Anglo-Saxon and early medieval preaching having tended to focus on the later, vernacular, works: Milton Mc. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); Mary Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching in Anglo-Saxon England', *Peritia*, 4 (1985), pp. 207-42

⁸⁴ Lawrence T. Martin, 'The Two Worlds in Bede's Homilies: The Biblical Event and the Listeners' Experience', in *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas L. Amos et al. (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), pp. 27-40. Del Giacco, 'Exegesis and Sermon', p. 14, argues that the homilies were 'composed for actual oral delivery', but the complex prose suggests that they were at least revised with a view to a reading audience: Verity Allan, 'Theological Works of the Venerable Bede and their Literary and Manuscript Presentation, with special reference to the Gospel Homilies' (unpublished MLitt thesis, University of Oxford, 2006), pp. 61-86.

⁸⁵ *Hom.*, I.23 p. 165 'templum Dei sanctum in quo uenire et mansionem facere dignetur existere curemus', I.25 p. 183, II.15 pp. 284-5.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, II.24 p. 367.

⁸⁷ *EpCath.*, p. 235 follows the Codex Amiatinus' text of 1 Peter 2.5 referring to 'spiritual houses' (*domus spiritalis* rather than *domus spiritualis*), but Bede still saw this as a reference to the singular Catholic Church.

in us'.⁸⁸ Alongside this Bede also suggested that God's indwelling in the heart allowed him to examine it in greater detail; therefore, the individual ought to make sure their heart stayed pure lest something worthy of reprobation be found.⁸⁹ He here presented God as judge, an *internus arbiter* examining the most personal aspects of the soul.⁹⁰ Sometimes a homily teaches quite practical moral lessons: the Christian ought to make sure not to do anything inappropriately worldly in a church.⁹¹ Other times Bede focused on the inner moral disposition of the believer: Christ builds his house with deep foundations on rock, as also he seeks to root out 'whatever base drives he found in the hearts of his faithful' so that he can build them into an 'unshakeable dwelling-place'.⁹² In the homilies, as in his work more generally, Bede never turned the image of temple to an explicit exhortation to avoid sexual and bodily sin in the way Augustine did when addressing a lay audience.⁹³ Talk of purity and the in-dwelling of God calls to mind the cleansing waters of baptism through which the Spirit descended upon the individual Christian. Bede certainly on occasion stated that 'we have become the temple of God by our baptism'.⁹⁴ Generally however, he followed discussions of baptism with explanation of how this unique act requires the individual to follow it with constant acts of moral purification, through the

⁸⁸ *Hom.*, II.1 p. 192 'mundemus templa corporum cordiumque nostrorum ut spiritus Dei habitare dignetur in nobis'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 12. Also *Hom.*, II.12 p. 265, II.24 p. 359.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, II.1 p. 186 'ne ueniens in prouisus peruersum quid in nobis unde merito flagellari ac de ecclesia eici debeamus inueniat', II.24 p. 359. Also *Marc.*, p. 576.

⁹⁰ *Hom.*, II.25 p. 371. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, VII.X.10 p. 341.

⁹¹ *Hom.*, II.1 p. 185.

⁹² *Ibid.*, II.25 p. 372 'in corde suorum fidelium quicquid terrenae intentionis inuenit funditus extirpare studuit... inconcussam mansionem possit habere'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 260.

⁹³ E.g. Augustine, *Sermones*, CCLXXVIII.7 col. 1271, which Bede knew: *Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine on the Letters of the Blessed Apostle Paul*, trans. David Hurst (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999), p. 131.

⁹⁴ *Hom.*, II.1 p. 186 'sumus in baptismo templum Dei facti'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 4. Also *Ezra.*, p. 359; *Hom.*, II.17 p. 306; *Sam.*, p. 66 states that those who receive the faith become a temple of the Creator. For baptism in early medieval Christianity: Peter Cramer, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages, c.200-c.1150* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); J.D.C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West* (London: SPCK, 1965). See p. 146 above.

tears of compunction or good works.⁹⁵ One cannot repeat baptism and so the purity gained through it must be constantly guarded and if lost only a difficult process of penance can restore it.⁹⁶ The Christian journey through the desert of life began with baptism – from its cleansing waters one went on to burn as a holocaust with the fire of the Spirit at confirmation, or to consecrate oneself by sacrifice at the eucharistic altar.⁹⁷ One becomes a temple, therefore, partially through participation in the sacramental life of the Church, but moral purity requires effort beyond that. People needed access to the sacraments of initiation, but in addition Bede believed strongly in a constant process of growth continuing throughout life – he repeated the Gregorian idea that nobody suddenly becomes perfect throughout the temple-trilogy.⁹⁸

When the individual becomes a temple the heart becomes an altar, aflame with the love of God. Bede used this image a number of times: when connected with the altar of incense the image usually refers to the sacrifice of prayers; when connected with the altar of holocausts to the sacrifice of good works.⁹⁹ Bede made use of a contrast here – between the contemplative and active lives – but did not stick to it consistently. When speaking of the altar of holocausts, the fire of which God ordered to be perpetual, Bede declared: ‘But the fire of love by which the elect are kindled to offer God sacrifices of *prayers or good deeds* will never go out from the altar, that is, from their hearts’.¹⁰⁰ All moral forms of behaviour, from the tears of compunction to chastity to alms-giving, count

⁹⁵ *Tab.*, pp. 53, 136; *Temp.*, pp. 207-14. O’Reilly, ‘Exegesis and the Book of Kells’, pp. 389-90.

⁹⁶ *Ezra.*, pp. 305, 321. For penance and penitentials: Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

⁹⁷ *Temp.*, p. 214; *Cant.*, p. 322; *Hom.*, I.14 pp. 101-2, I.18 p. 130; *Gen.*, p. 128.

⁹⁸ ‘Nemo repente fit summus’: *Ezra.*, p. 390; *Tab.*, p. 137; *Temp.*, p. 225. Cf. Gregory, *In Hiezechelem*, II.III.3 p. 238. O’Reilly, ‘Seeing the God of Gods’; Holder, ‘Mysteries of Our Salvation’, pp. 150-4.

⁹⁹ *Tab.*, pp. 76, 132; *Temp.*, pp. 224-5; *Ezra.*, p. 266; *Hom.*, II.19 p. 324, II.25 p. 376; *Marc.*, p. 556. Psalms 140.2 provides the link between incense and prayers. Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei Fedeli*, pp. 252-8.

DeGregorio, ‘Exegetical Connections’, p. 58, contrasts Bede and Gregory’s interpretation of holocausts.

¹⁰⁰ *Gen.*, p. 180 ‘Sed ignis dilectionis quo electi accenduntur ad offerenda Deo sacrificia *orationum siue actionum bonarum* numquam deficiet de altari, id est de cordibus eorum, quae illo mosaico altari designabantur’; adapted from trans. Kendall, pp. 257-8. My emphasis.

as offerings.¹⁰¹ And even though Bede usually saw the altar in terms of the heart, on occasion it can refer to both the hearts and bodies of the elect, through both of which the Christian offers the ‘libations of the virtues’.¹⁰²

Bede made important contributions to the history of the concept of the four ‘cardinal’ virtues and this quartet joins the many other fours which appear in his temple-commentaries.¹⁰³ Prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice were the four principal virtues ‘in which each believer, if he is not to be a believer in vain, must be formed’, Bede stated.¹⁰⁴ The numerous rectangular altars and tables of these texts gave him a way to bring in mention of the four virtues, alongside the four corners of the world and the four gospels.¹⁰⁵ Most interestingly, he conceived these virtues as being the foundations on which ‘every edifice of good action rests’.¹⁰⁶ Virtues for Bede were not merely states of mind; they provided the basis of virtuous action in the world.¹⁰⁷ Because of this Bede followed Gregory in seeing the relationship of the numbers three (faith in the Trinity) and four (the cardinal virtues) as indicative of the necessity of both faith and action in the individual Christian. Hence the Jews completed the rebuilding of the temple, discussed in *On Ezra and Nehemiah*, in the twelfth month (12=3x4) because the grace of the Holy Spirit enters into the mind of the elect so that they might achieve both faith and works.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ *Apoc.*, p. 425; *Tab.*, p. 71; *Temp.*, p. 172; *Hom.*, I.18 p. 133.

¹⁰² *Tab.*, pp. 76, 126 ‘uirtutum libamina’.

¹⁰³ Jasmijn Bovendeert, ‘Beda’s deugdenkwartet’, *Madoc: Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen*, 19 (2005), pp. 36-46 [My thanks to Paul Doolan for help with reading the Dutch]; István P. Bejczy, *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages: A Study in Moral Thought from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 47-8. The classic work is Sybill Mähl, *Quadriga Virtutum: Die Kardinaltugenden in der Geistesgeschichte der Karolingerzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1969) – see pp. 30-4 for Bede.

¹⁰⁴ *Temp.*, p. 221 ‘quattuor cardinales uirtutes quibus quisque fidelis, si non frustra fidelis est, debet institui’; trans. Connolly, p. 101.

¹⁰⁵ Bovendeert, ‘Beda’s deugdenkwartet’, pp. 43-5; e.g. *Tab.*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁶ *Temp.*, p. 189 ‘omnis bonorum actuum structura innititur’; trans. Connolly, p. 60. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, II.XLIX.76 p. 105.

¹⁰⁷ Also *Tab.*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁸ *Ezra.*, p. 299. Also *Tab.*, pp. 104, 112; Bejczy, *Cardinal Virtues*, p. 32. This interpretation of twelve seems almost entirely specific to Bede and Gregory: Meyer and Suntrup, *Lexikon*, p. 627.

The four colours of the priestly garments also appear frequently in Bede's temple-commentaries, providing another moral quartet.¹⁰⁹ Throughout *On the Tabernacle* Bede provided a consistent interpretation of these: blue refers to 'the mind that is desiring things above', purple to 'the flesh that is subject to afflictions', scarlet twice-dyed to the twofold love of God and neighbour, and white linen to 'the purified flesh that is shining with chastity'.¹¹⁰ *On the Temple* slightly differs from this interpretation by seemingly linking purple specifically with Christ's blood (and the need to imitate his passion) and white seems to expand to cover all 'the chastening of our flesh'.¹¹¹ The combination of internal and external virtues remains, however, as the mind and body both prove necessary to fulfil all these virtues. Not that Bede insisted that all Christians had to display them entirely in themselves. Within the overall Christian community they all appeared of course – the saints may excel in one specific virtue, together forming the rich diversity of the Church.¹¹² It proves hard not to note the ascetic leanings of Bede's interpretation of the colours: quoting a long section from Gregory on the four colours Bede could not let the interpretation of purple as kingly control over the vices stand alone, adding his preferred reading of purple as the blood spilt for Christ.¹¹³

For Bede, all Christians require the cardinal virtues, although they have an especial importance for preachers.¹¹⁴ All the virtues represented by the four colours must be displayed by the priest or *doctor* since they were all mixed together in the priestly

¹⁰⁹ *Sam.*, pp. 214-5, associates the colours with the virtues without going into details.

¹¹⁰ *Tab.*, pp. 45-6: p. 46 'in bysso retorta caro castitate renitens, in hyacintha mens superna desiderans, in purpura caro passionibus subiacens, in cocco bis tincto mens inter passiones Dei et proximi dilectione praeifulgens'; trans. Holder, p. 50. Also *Tab.*, pp. 11, 89.

¹¹¹ *Temp.*, p. 188 'castigationem nostrae carnis'; trans. Connolly, p. 59.

¹¹² *Tab.*, pp. 89-90.

¹¹³ *Tab.*, p. 99, quotes Gregory, *RP*, II.3 col. 29 'suggestiones uitiorum reprimat eisque uelut ex regia potestate contradicat', but Bede inserted 'Quamuis ut superius dictum est in purpureo colore possit ipsa effusio sanguinis pro Christo uel diuersarum tolerantia pressurarum intellegi...'. Gregory accepted this interpretation of purple elsewhere: *Moralia*, XXX.VI.24 p. 1507. For the colour purple in Anglo-Saxon England and Bede's writings: George Henderson, *Vision and Image in Early Christian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 122-35.

¹¹⁴ *Temp.*, pp. 215, 221; Bejczy, *Cardinal Virtues*, p. 34. But see Mähl, *Quadrigena Virtutum*, pp. 31-3.

robes.¹¹⁵ Such statements remind us of Bede's utter loyalty to the Church's institutional hierarchy – but while some Christians rank higher than the rest, Bede had no doubt that God inhabited all the elect.¹¹⁶ Not 'only ministers of the altar', but 'all the faithful', share in the participation in Christ's priesthood opened up through the Spirit in baptism.¹¹⁷ Thus, while priests ought to take care to maintain purity in their body and mind when they celebrate the sacraments of the Lord, so too ought the laity when receiving those same sacraments.¹¹⁸ Bede extended the moral significance of becoming a temple worthy of God to all Christians; the laity as well as the clergy had to work to so consecrate themselves. Obviously the standard of life to which Christ called the latter lay far above that expected of the former.¹¹⁹ Priests who sin can re-enter the Church through penance just like anybody else, but some sins are so heinous that the sinner 'cannot recover' the grade of priest.¹²⁰

Bede would not have seen this hierarchy as denying the bonds of charity between clerics and laity, nor as creating superhuman saints removed from the common people.¹²¹ As we will go on to see, the need to shape an élite into sufficiently exalted examples clearly underlay Bede's rigorous demands for dignity from preachers and priests. This élite could only remain pure by remaining humble and Bede repeatedly emphasised the importance

¹¹⁵ *Tab.*, pp. 100-1.

¹¹⁶ *Ezra.*, p. 381. For Bede's inclusivity towards the laity: Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei Fedeli*, pp. 276-7.

¹¹⁷ *Tab.*, p. 138 'Non...soli altaris ministri...Ammonemus omnes fideles mystico sacerdotum nomine censerì'; trans. Holder, p. 161. Also *Temp.*, pp. 207, 211.

¹¹⁸ *Tab.*, pp. 138-9: p. 139 'Quod aequè praeceptum reor his qui eorundem sacramentorum perceptione mundandi sunt ut cautiore cura prius actus suos cogitatusque discutiant euentilent purgent ac sic ad participanda fidei sacramenta procedant'.

¹¹⁹ E.g. *ibid.*, p. 96 'praesules ac doctores sanctae ecclesiae communem uitam electorum singulari mentis culmine transcendere'.

¹²⁰ *Ezra.*, p. 256 'gradus sui quem repetere nequeunt'; trans. DeGregorio, p. 30.

¹²¹ Cf. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, pp. 120-9, who contrasts Bede with the Whitby *Vita Gregorii*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great, By an Anonymous Monk of Whitby* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

of humility for the holiest of Christians.¹²² As a reader of Gregory, Bede knew that humility required the saint to return to the active world rather than to exalt themselves above it.¹²³ Christ entered the temple to perform acts of mercy because he valued these higher than ritual sacrifices.¹²⁴ The incarnation became the supreme act of mercy because it involved an acceptance of human suffering and thus, for Bede, the saint embraced suffering.

Ascetic zeal has sometimes been considered a ‘Celtic’ contribution to Insular culture, but if so Roman-leaning Anglo-Saxons did not reject it.¹²⁵ While Carroll has tried to separate the ascetic behaviour recounted in Bede’s writings from the spirituality of the man himself, it seems best to acknowledge that his work viewed worldly suffering as a way of replicating in the Christian the engagement with humanity which the incarnation brought about in the body of Christ.¹²⁶ On occasion he described the process by which individuals became part of the heavenly temple, using such imagery to describe the beneficial way suffering shaped people. The hammering of the materials of the temple reminded Bede of how suffering prepared the Christian ‘hammered by adversities’ for heaven.¹²⁷ For all who wish to live godly lives in Christ ‘it is through the blows of suffering that they make progress toward the grace of immortality, just as metal is stretched out by being

¹²² Humility necessary for the chaste: *Tab.*, p. 120; humility necessary for the learned: *Hom.*, I.19 p. 138; Eosterwine provided a model of monastic humility: *HA*, 8 pp. 371-2. Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 223-7.

¹²³ Straw, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 20, 188-91.

¹²⁴ *Hom.*, I.21 pp. 152-3.

¹²⁵ Sarah Downey, ‘Too Much of Too Little: Guthlac and the Temptation of Excessive Fasting’, *Traditio*, 63 (2008), pp. 89-127, at 125-6. VW, XXI pp. 44-5; for suffering and persecution in Stephen’s *Life of Wilfrid*: Foley, *Images of Sanctity*, pp. 42-6.

¹²⁶ Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, p. 231. The idea that the Christian’s sufferings replicated and imitated those of Christ has a long history, especially in relation to martyrdom: Candida R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹²⁷ *Temp.*, p. 165 ‘tundimur aduersitatibus’; trans. Connolly, p. 28. Also *Tab.*, p. 42. Cf. Gregory, *RP*, III.12 col. 68.

smitten.¹²⁸ The flames of tribulations humble, and thereby strengthen, those who are materials for the heavenly temple.¹²⁹

Here Bede understood the physical building of the temple as the worldly sufferings of Christians; these sufferings prepared them for entry into eternal life. This interest in pain and suffering achieves its purest expression in Bede's *Martyrology* – a highly original text and the first narrative martyrology. Bede's own comments on the *Martyrology* show his interest in providing details about how the saints 'overcame the world' in suffering and death rather than in telling their wider life story.¹³⁰ And indeed the detail of the descriptions of torture and death of which the work mainly consists remains its most striking feature.¹³¹ In its terse and direct account, the *Martyrology* epitomises an aspect of Bede's view of sanctity which runs throughout his hagiographical work. Bede's *Life of Cuthbert* highlights the importance of suffering to the making of a saint, especially in its focus on illnesses which by visiting agony upon the body purify the soul.¹³² This trope also features in Bede's historical writings where he saw physical illnesses as blessings so

¹²⁸ *Tab.*, p. 36 'ipsi quasi metallum feriendo dilatatum per passionis contumelias ad immortalitatis gratiam proficient'; trans. Holder, p. 38. Cf. Gregory, *In Hiezechihelam*, I.VI.8 p. 71.

¹²⁹ *Gen.*, p. 160 'Qui quo magis tribulationum flamma humilitati mollescunt, eo fortiores... existant'; *Temp.*, p. 223 'salubriter humiliati et flamma... humanae aduersitatis emolliti'. Cf. Gregory, *RP*, III.13 col. 71.

¹³⁰ *HE*, V.24 pp. 570-1 'non solum qua die uerum etiam quo genere certaminis uel sub quo iudice mundum uicerint, diligenter adnotare studui'. Elaborate descriptions of torture form a standard part of martyr accounts: Lucy Grig, 'Torture and Truth in Late Antique Martyrology', *EME*, 11 (2002), pp. 321-36.

¹³¹ No critical edition of Bede's *Martyrology* currently exists. One can find a good, though rather unhelpfully structured, Latin text in Henri Quentin, *Les Martyrologes Historiques du Moyen Age* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1908), ch. 2. Based on Quentin's text, and checked against the earliest manuscripts, is the English translation by Felice Lifshitz in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 169-97. The *Martyrology* does not possess a large body of secondary literature, though recent years have seen some important work: Alan Thacker, 'Bede and His Martyrology', in *Listen, O Isles*, ed. Mullins and Scully, pp. 126-41; Michael Lapidge, 'Acca of Hexham and the Origin of the Old English Martyrology', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 123 (2005), pp. 29-78. On suffering in the *Martyrology*: Peter Dendle, 'Pain and Saint-Making in *Andreas*, Bede, and the Old English Lives of St. Margaret', in *Varieties of Devotion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 39-52, at 44-8.

¹³² *Esp. VCP*, XXXVII pp. 274-5 'Ut enim omnipotens Deus famulum suum ab omni labe mundanae fragilitatis ad purum castigaret...'; W. Trent Foley, 'Suffering and Sanctity in Bede's *Prose Life of St. Cuthbert*', *JTS*, 50 (1999), pp. 102-16.

that a saint's 'virtue might be made perfect in weakness'.¹³³ The great plague which killed many religious in seventh-century England actually contributed to building the temple, transferring 'the living stones of the church from their earthly sites to the heavenly building'.¹³⁴

Bede certainly reflected here the importance of suffering in the thought of Gregory the Great.¹³⁵ The preface to *On the Temple* shows that he did not thoughtlessly copy this theme, but engaged with it. The preface focuses on the suffering and exile of this life – the image of the temple will help the Christian understand the nature of earthly suffering and thus help them accept 'the present worries of temporal affairs' and appreciate their salutary effects.¹³⁶ Bishop Acca, the probable dedicatee of the work, may have been in political exile at the time, making the commentary a consolation for real earthly tribulations.¹³⁷ Bede invited Acca to see his suffering in the context of that of the saints who had come before him: patience comes from studying their examples, at the pinnacle of which rests Christ himself. The sufferings of the just, and of Acca himself, make sense because 'even he who lived his life here below without fault, did not depart from this life without chastisement, and he who appeared in the world to heal the sick and raise the

¹³³ *HE*, II.1 pp. 128-9 on Gregory's illness. Bede cited 2 Corinthians 12.9 ('virtus in infirmitate perficitur') in the cases of the illnesses of Æthelburh (*HE*, IV.9 pp. 360-1), Hild (*HE*, IV.23 pp. 410-3) and Benedict Biscop (*HA*, 13 p. 376). Douay-Rheims translates *virtus* as power, but it also means virtue. Also Cuthbert, *De Obitu*, pp. 582-3 'ille multum gauisus est et Deo gratias referebat quia sic meruisset infirmari'.

¹³⁴ *HE*, IV.3 pp. 338-9 'Superuenit namque clades diuinitus missa, quae per mortem carnis uiuos ecclesiae lapides de terrenis sedibus ad aedificium caeleste transferret'. On this plague: John Maddicott, 'Plague in Seventh-Century England', in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541-750*, ed. Lester K. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 171-214.

¹³⁵ Foley, 'Suffering and Sanctity', pp. 107-9; Kevin L. Hester, *Eschatology and Pain in St. Gregory the Great: The Christological Synthesis of Gregory's Morals on the Book of Job* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), pp. 55-86.

¹³⁶ *Temp.*, pp. 143-5: p. 144 'praesentes rerum temporalium angores'; trans. Connolly, p. 2.

¹³⁷ The Moore Continuation of the *Ecclesiastical History* states that Acca 'was driven from his see' in 731 (see *HE*, pp. 572-3); an attempted coup against King Ceolwulf took place the same year. Traditionally the assumption was that while Ceolwulf's deposition proved temporary, Acca's was permanent – implying that Acca may have been opposed to the king. Questioning this interpretation: Lapidge, 'Acca of Hexham', pp. 68-9; Higham, *(Re-)reading Bede*, pp. 63-4.

dead, chose to return from the world in the weakness of death'.¹³⁸ Christ's suffering thus provided an example to be followed by humans.¹³⁹

On the Temple, therefore, frames the ascetic themes which appear throughout the text in the context of Christ's own suffering via the incarnation. Christ's undeserved suffering is a mark of his sympathy with humankind; working divine redemption through afflicted humanity, he added 'his consolation' to 'our toil'.¹⁴⁰ As members of Christ's body, Christians must offer their own bodies as living sacrifices and Bede consistently saw martyrdom in this light.¹⁴¹ Christian suffering depends upon the passion: having offered himself up, the high priest, Christ, exits from the holy of holies so that the apostles can enter and offer their own sacrifices.¹⁴² David sacrificing animals as the ark entered Jerusalem symbolises Christ who through the martyrs displays the example of his own incarnation and passion. In this he shows the 'truth of human flesh which is triumphant amidst scourgings'.¹⁴³ The true flesh of the incarnation, offered up in sacrifice, has here blurred into the bodies of other humans offered as victims by Christ in a manner which

¹³⁸ *Temp.*, p. 143 'neque ille hinc sine flagello exiit qui hic sine uitio uixit quique ad sanandos infirmos mortuosque suscitandos apparuit in mundo ipse ad praemonstrandum nobis exemplum patientiae per infirmitatem mortis uoluit redire de mundo'; trans. Connolly, pp. 1-2. The first part of Bede's statement bears similarities to a number of comments by Gregory but seems closest to *RP*, III.12 col. 69. Cf. Bede, *In Canticum Abacuc*, pp. 382-3.

¹³⁹ Carroll, *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 187-8.

¹⁴⁰ *Temp.*, p. 173 'Ieiunando etenim ostendebat nostrum in se laborem manducando autem et bibendo cum discipulis ostendebat in nobis suam consolationem'; trans. Connolly, p. 39.

¹⁴¹ *Hom.*, II.23 p. 352. For martyrdom as sacrifice: Quentin, *Les Martyrologes*, pp. 63, 73, 99; *Ret.*, p. 133; *Sam.*, pp. 53-4; *Hom.*, II.22 p. 347; *Gen.*, p. 128.

¹⁴² *Hom.*, II.19 p. 323 'Egrediebatur autem expleta expiatione pontifex ut aliis tabernaculum intrandi facultas daretur quia perfecto suae sacrificio passionis apparuit discipulis Christus et data spiritus sancti gratia ad offerendas Deo hostias non solum deuoti operis et orationis sed et proprii sanguinis eorum corda quoque roborauit.'

¹⁴³ Bede, *VIII Quaestiones*, VIII p. 73 '*Boves et arietes immolans*, hoc est, eos qui aream domini triturant et ouium eius ducatum gerunt martyrii sanguine coronans, et ipse quoque suae incarnationis et passionis exemplum... manifestans. Hoc enim significat quod et ipse *David accinctus erat ephod lineo*. Nam linum quod de terra procreatum multiplici labore ad candorem uestis peruenit, ueritatem humanae carnis inter flagella triumphantis ostendit'; trans. Arthur G. Holder in *Bede: A Biblical Miscellany* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. 164. Commenting on 2 Kings 6.13-4.

we also see in Irish exegesis.¹⁴⁴ Bede's saints do not suffer because superhuman, but rather because human – just as human as Christ was when he suffered, making hope of redemption part of earthly pain. The Christian as temple provides the mirror-image of Christ as temple – different but yet in the end similar: 'he became the temple of God by assuming human nature and we become the temple of God *through his Spirit dwelling in us.*'¹⁴⁵

We thus arrive at one of the most important of all the moral precepts which appear in Bede's temple-commentaries: the *imitatio Christi*. As high priest, of course, Christ did more than just provide an example. His sacrifice came to its fulfilment when the Spirit descended on the Church, the same Spirit which burns as fire upon the altar of each Christian.¹⁴⁶ In other words, Christians (members of the high priest) only offer their faith and works as purifying sacrifices because of Christ's action.¹⁴⁷ Christians cannot live morally pure lives without God's grace, but that grace allows them to follow appropriate exemplars. The saviour provides the foundation upon which all the living stones of the Church rest both collectively and as individuals.¹⁴⁸ No temple can be built of mismatched stones, of course, and a certain degree of uniformity proves necessary for individuals to participate in the life of the Church. That uniformity is imposed by means of imitation.

Imitation

Imitation and example play an important part in the Christian life as imagined by Bede.

For example, Bede's claim that in his commentaries he 'followed in the footsteps of the

¹⁴⁴ *Tractatus Hilarii*, p. 89 'Vt nos offerret Deo [1 Peter 3.18], id est nostrum corpus in cruce, a quo circumdatus summus sacerdos...'

¹⁴⁵ *Temp.*, p. 147 'ille templum Dei per assumptam humanitatem factus est et nos templum Dei *per inhabitantem spiritum eius in nobis efficitur*'; trans. Connolly, p. 5. Citing Romans 8.11.

¹⁴⁶ *Act.*, pp. 14-5; *Marc.*, p. 556; *Ezra.*, pp. 265, 270.

¹⁴⁷ *EpCath.*, pp. 235-6.

¹⁴⁸ *Temp.*, pp. 147, 154; *Hom.*, II.25 p. 374; *Apoc.*, p. 527. Bede, of course, cited 1 Corinthians 3.11 on Christ as the foundation of the temple-Church.

Fathers' has often been quoted: in the past to support the image of Bede as an unoriginal conduit of patristic knowledge; more recently to establish Bede's own self-conception as a Church Father.¹⁴⁹ We should note, however, that the phrase 'following in the footsteps' appears frequently in his work to express the idea of imitating an illustrious example such as Christ or the apostles.¹⁵⁰ This meaning had long been accepted by the Church Fathers, as Bede knew.¹⁵¹ Bede's claim to follow the Fathers' footsteps constitutes, therefore, a claim to be their imitator, following the example of previous Christians as any pious individual should.

The concept of imitation has a long history in the Christian tradition. The New Testament emphasised the imitation of Christ, and hagiography showed how saints both imitated previous models and were themselves examples to be followed. Medieval and Late Antique individuals saw nothing strange about seeking to imitate both living and textual models.¹⁵² Bede put forward a number of different figures as examples worthy of imitation by Christians. Christ obviously provided the most glorious such example, but before looking at the *imitatio Christi*, I look at Bede's use of other models for imitation, namely angels and other human beings. The faithful ought always to look upon the examples of those who are better than them, for by studying those greater they can themselves improve.¹⁵³ Imitation in fact plays a significant role in Bede's reform rhetoric – he urged *doctores* to make themselves examples and urged *auditores* to imitate them.

¹⁴⁹ See Ray, 'Who did Bede think he was?', pp. 11-9. The phrase appears repeatedly: *Temp.*, p. 191; *Cant.*, p. 180; *Act.*, p. 3; *Hom.*, II.11 p. 258.

¹⁵⁰ *Apoc.*, p. 527; *Hom.*, I.13 p. 94, II.2 p. 193; *Temp.*, pp. 205-6.

¹⁵¹ Augustine, *De Sancta Virginitate*, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 41, XXVII p. 264, quoted at *Apoc.*, p. 423; Gregory, *In Evangelia*, I.II.8 p. 17, quoted at *Luc.*, p. 332 (= *Marc.*, p. 570).

¹⁵² See 1 Corinthians 4.16, 2 Thessalonians 3.7-9, 1 Timothy 4.12, 1 Peter 5.3. M.-H. Vicaire, *L'Imitation des Apôtres: Moines, chanoines et mendiants IVe – XIIIe siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 1963); Henri Crouzel, 'L'imitation et la "suite" de Dieu et du Christ dans les premiers siècles chrétiens, ainsi que leurs sources gréco-romaines et hébraïques', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 21 (1978), pp. 7-41; Peter Brown, 'The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity', *Representations*, 2 (1983), pp. 1-25. Hagiography was aimed at inspiring imitation: e.g. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita S. Martini*, ed. J. Fontaine (Paris: Cerf, 1967), I.2 p. 250. For the influence of texts on individuals: DeGregorio, 'Explorations of Spirituality', pp. 106-8.

¹⁵³ E.g. *Tab.*, p. 80 'quatenus consideratis maiorum uirtutibus et ipsi magni fieri possint'.

He constantly reiterated the point that the leaders of the Church should always teach their disciples by ‘word and example’ – indeed this forms almost the only use of the theme of imitation in *On Ezra and Nehemiah*.¹⁵⁴

The vestments of the Jewish priesthood symbolised the performed virtue of the Church’s teachers. The rational/breastplate bore twelve gemstones, inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes; in like manner the Christian *rector* meditates upon the deeds of the saints in his heart and brings ‘them forth by putting them into action’.¹⁵⁵ He does not simply order Christians to do what is righteous, but acts it out so that the audience may see, understand and imitate it; in this way Ezra succeeded in bringing the Jewish people to repentance for their sins, not by telling them to grieve but by himself presenting an example of sorrow.¹⁵⁶ For Bede, one taught as much by displaying virtue as by explaining it. All the faithful should present their good deeds as an example to others since people ‘hasten to imitate the hearts of the neighbours when they see them burning with piety’.¹⁵⁷ This explains Bede’s insistence on the need for moral perfection amongst teachers. They live virtuously as much for their audience’s sake as for their own; ‘the examples of those who seem to be endowed with the garb of religion’ can actually block the good desires of common people, if those examples prove noxious.¹⁵⁸ Similarly heretics and false Christians, just like *doctores*, go about their work using both words and examples.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ *Ezra.*, pp. 264, 279, 321-2, 381 ‘Quantos enim nunc quisque uerbo uel exemplo suo erudit ad uitam pro tantis tunc in perceptione uitae gloriosior apparens honorificabitur’; *Temp.*, p. 199; *Gen.*, p. 160.

¹⁵⁵ *Tab.*, p. 103 ‘sanctorum uitam rector inspiciens quibus maxime uirtutum operibus floruerint sedula inquisitione scrutatur et haec cuncta in abditis sui pectoris meditando colligere atque operando proferre satagit’; trans. Holder, p. 119. Also *Apoc.*, p. 527.

¹⁵⁶ *Ezra.*, pp. 328-9.

¹⁵⁷ *Tab.*, p. 81 ‘omnes qui feruentia pietate corda proximorum uidentes imitari festinant’; trans. Holder, p. 91.

¹⁵⁸ *Ezra.*, p. 360 ‘ne possint implere quod cupiunt... exemplis retardantur eorum qui habitu religionis uidentur esse praediti...’; trans. DeGregorio, p. 184.

¹⁵⁹ *Ezra.*, p. 387; *Tab.*, p. 57.

Augustine, while aware of the power of example in preaching, thought that an immoral teacher could still theoretically provide useful teaching.¹⁶⁰ The importance of the living example of virtue came to Bede from Gregory rather, who believed it impossible to teach well without living well as an example to others.¹⁶¹ However, Bede probably knew of the centrality of example to teaching from more than just the patristic tradition. The imitation by students of the living exemplar of their teacher may have been particularly important in the kind of monastic education practised at Wearmouth-Jarrow. Monastic teaching did not depend simply on the study of texts; rather the personal relationship between pupil and pedagogue was essential, especially to the moral formation of the novice.¹⁶² Novices also learnt from participating in the communal life of the brethren, all of whom had a duty to provide an example to the young.¹⁶³ Catherine Cubitt has suggested that at Wearmouth-Jarrow the ‘rule’ did not consist of a written text, but rather of oral tradition based on memories of the lives of the early abbots. Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrith provided ‘models of the monastic life’, held up as examples to the brothers in the community who imitated these teachers.¹⁶⁴

This certainly matches the use of Biscop which Bede made in his homily on Wearmouth-Jarrow’s founder. He presented Biscop as someone in whose footsteps the whole

¹⁶⁰ Augustine, *Doctrina*, IV.151-63 pp. 276-83; Ray, ‘Who did Bede think he was?’, p. 23, argues that Bede did not have access to Book IV of *Doctrina*; but see Thacker, *Bede and Augustine*, p. 10.

¹⁶¹ Gregory, *RP*, I.2 col. 15-6, II.3 col. 28-30, III.4 col. 54 ‘Scire etenim praelati debent, quia si perversa unquam perpetrant, tot mortibus digni sunt, quot ad subditos suos perditionis exempla transmittunt.’ For more on teaching by word and example: Caroline Walker Bynum, *Docere Verbo et Exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality*, (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 15-6.

¹⁶² Catherine Cubitt, ‘Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 253-76, at 262-4; Wallis, *Bede: On the Reckoning of Time*, pp. xxviii-xxix.

¹⁶³ Jean Leclercq, ‘Pédagogie et formation spirituelle du VI^e au IX^e siècle’, *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo*, 19 (1972), pp. 255-90, at 262, 267-9.

¹⁶⁴ Cubitt, ‘Monastic Memory and Identity’, pp. 273-5 (quotation at p. 275). An abbot’s *regula* does not necessarily imply a written rule: Adalbert de Vogüé, *Les Règles Monastiques Anciennes (400-700)*, *Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental* 46 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), p. 12.

community should follow.¹⁶⁵ Bede outlined how Biscop had learnt the rules of all the religious houses he had travelled to and then passed these on to his own community; those brothers who had known Biscop in turn delighted in talking about him to the newer members of the monastery.¹⁶⁶ In this way ancient examples were fed down to the present through a chain of imitation and teaching. This seems quite similar to *On the Tabernacle*, where Bede declared that the *rector* of the Church must internalise the examples of the Fathers in his own heart and then display the same virtues for the edification of his audience: 'so that he may always be holding out heavenly models for his hearers to follow, whether his own or those of the fathers'.¹⁶⁷ Just as a community might come to follow a 'rule' from imitating the examples of their founder members, so too, Bede suggested, Christians form themselves according to the 'rule' of righteousness by following the examples of the elect of previous generations.¹⁶⁸

But teachers do not necessarily always derive the 'rule' of how to be a good Christian from living examples – they also learn it from studying scripture and the accounts of the saints. Texts do clearly play a role in passing down examples through the generations. Rhetorically-trained Christian authors had long before adapted the use of textual *exempla* for ethical instruction in classical education and literature to their needs.¹⁶⁹ The *exemplum* went on to become a popular later medieval genre, one which had its origins in Gregory the Great's fondness for exemplary anecdotes.¹⁷⁰ Bede had read Gregory's own *exempla*

¹⁶⁵ *Hom.*, I.13 p. 94.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-4.

¹⁶⁷ *Tab.*, p. 101 'auditoribus suis semper caelestia siue sua siue patrum exempla quae sequantur proponat'; trans. Holder, p. 116. Also *Temp.*, p. 155; *Tab.*, p. 57.

¹⁶⁸ *Temp.*, pp. 155, 203, 223 'nobis scriptura regulam iustitiae quam sequamur ostendit'.

¹⁶⁹ Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité*, 6th edn (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965), p. 347; Roger Blockley, 'Ammianus Marcellinus's Use of *Exempla*', *Florilegium*, 13 (1994), pp. 53-64; Lewis Ayres, 'Into the Poem: *Exempla*, Conversion, and Church in Augustine's *Confessions*', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal of Ancient Christianity*, 13 (2009), pp. 263-81.

¹⁷⁰ Claude Bremond et al., *L'“Exemplum”*, *Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental* 40, 2nd edn (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 48-50.

in the pope's homilies on the gospels and *Dialogues* (assuming, as Bede did, that this was a genuine Gregorian work¹⁷¹) with the accompanying defence of examples as a powerful tool for education.¹⁷² Interestingly then, Bede's own homilies, excluding *Homily I.13* on Biscop, lack non-biblical *exempla* of the kind Gregory used – suggesting that Bede intended his homilies for a more solidly monastic audience than Gregory.¹⁷³

In his temple-commentaries, Bede did speak of the moral benefits of 'contemplating the life, sufferings and teaching of the saints, or reading of them', which might seem suggestive of the kind of *exempla* one finds in the *Dialogues*.¹⁷⁴ But in general when he spoke of reading about the saints in this way Bede primarily thought about biblical accounts of the Old Testament elect and the apostles.¹⁷⁵ On the rare occasions when he explicitly stated that a biblical passage ought to be interpreted literally, it was because the text provided a model for imitation.¹⁷⁶ In *On the Temple* especially, Bede spoke of reading the Bible 'in the historical sense', the sense which displays 'for our imitation the actions of the righteous'.¹⁷⁷ The *Ecclesiastical History* begins with a defence of history as the source of examples for imitation: 'Should history tell of good men and their good

¹⁷¹ An extensive debate surrounds the *Dialogues*. For recent contributions on both sides: Francis Clark, *The "Gregorian" Dialogues and the Origins of Benedictine Monasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Dunn, *Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 157-86 (which argues for an Anglo-Saxon origin); Adalbert de Vogüé, 'Grégoire le Grand est-il l'auteur des *Dialogues*?', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 99 (2004), pp. 158-61; Paul Meyvaert, 'The Authentic *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great', *Sacris Erudiri*, 43 (2004), pp. 55-129.

¹⁷² Gregory, *In Evangelia*, II.XXXIX.10 p. 390; *idem*, *Dialogi*, ed. A. de Vogüé, 3 vols (Paris: Cerf, 1978-80), I.prol.9 II, 16 'Et sunt nonnulli quos ad amorem patriae caelestis plus exempla quam praedicamenta succendunt'.

¹⁷³ Joseph Albert Mosher, *The Exemplum in the Early Religious and Didactic Literature of England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), p. 25; cf. Walt, 'Homiliary', pp. 204-5.

¹⁷⁴ *Temp.*, p. 164 'cum uitam passiones doctrinam sanctorum cernentes siue in scripturis legentes ad bene faciendum exemplo excitamur eorum'; trans. Connolly, p. 28.

¹⁷⁵ *Tab.*, p. 97; *Temp.*, pp. 209, 223 'scriptura...sanctorumque nobis exempla...in omnibus sequenda praemonstrat', 231.

¹⁷⁶ *Ezra.*, pp. 360, 368; *Sam.*, pp. 130, 136.

¹⁷⁷ *Temp.*, p. 229 'diuinae litterae iuxta historicum sensum ianuam nobis et recte uiuendi et aeterna praemia a domino speranda aperiunt...iustorum nobis actus in exemplum proponunt'; trans. Connolly, p. 112.

estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good'.¹⁷⁸ Bede probably undertook the writing of *On the Temple* and the *History* at the same time, so the similarity of the idea of history in the two works seems unlikely to be a coincidence. Bede's understanding of historical interpretation as providing examples for imitation indicates, perhaps, the experience of writing his own exemplary historical account.¹⁷⁹

So far we have considered examples concerning how humans teach and are taught through pious imitation. Bede's temple-commentaries, however, devote a significant amount of time to a different type of imitation – that of the angels by humans. Luke 20.34-6 suggests that humanity will become like the angels in heaven, and Bede referred frequently to this link between the two orders of the faithful.¹⁸⁰ The gospel text suggests that humans will become similar to angels by abandoning sexuality and this led to the common Christian belief that virgins on earth already lived the 'angelic life'. The traditional view of monasticism as an imitation of the angels thus developed, though in practice the connection often proved a complicated one.¹⁸¹ Bede clearly took this association for granted and in his early work on the Apocalypse stated that the saints made themselves a sacrifice to God by angelic chastity.¹⁸² But elsewhere when Bede said that humans should imitate the angels' *castitas*, he clearly thought about something more than virginity since one achieved this 'by vigils and the divine praises, by sincere love of

¹⁷⁸ *HE*, praef. pp. 2-3 'Siue enim historia de bonis bona referat, ad imitandum bonum auditor sollicitus instigatur...'

¹⁷⁹ See Calvin B. Kendall, 'Imitation and the Venerable Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*', in *Saints, Scholars, and Heroes*, ed. King and Stevens, I, 161-90. For rebuttal of some of Kendall's suggestions: McCready, *Miracles*, pp. 47-50.

¹⁸⁰ *Ezra.*, p. 384; *Temp.*, p. 147; *Tab.*, p. 70.

¹⁸¹ Ellen Muehlberger, 'Ambivalence about the Angelic Life: The Promise and the Perils of an Early Christian Discourse of Asceticism', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 16 (2008), pp. 447-78; Conrad Leyser, 'Angels, Monks, and Demons in the Early Medieval West', in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Gameson and Leyser, pp. 9-22.

¹⁸² *Apoc.*, p. 421 'illi qui angelicae priuilegio castitatis totos se domino faciunt holocaustum'. Also *Hom.*, I.13 p. 94; *Tab.*, pp. 58-9; *Temp.*, p. 163; *Sam.*, p. 237. Aldhelm also declared virginity to be an imitation of the angels: *Prosa*, XVIII pp. 246-7.

the creator and the neighbour'.¹⁸³ When Bede had to interpret Luke 20.34-6 itself he, rather strikingly, made no reference at all to monasticism or dedicated virgins.¹⁸⁴

When God revealed the model of the tabernacle upon Mount Sinai, Moses saw, Bede declared, the life of the angels which all human life on earth ought to try and imitate.¹⁸⁵

Bede devoted an extensive amount of space to his passionate invocation to angelic imitation:

They love God and their neighbours; imitate this. They come to the aid of the unfortunate...; imitate this. They are humble, they are gentle, they are peaceable toward one another, they obey the divine commands; how well would you do to imitate this! They neither speak, nor do, nor think anything that is evil, or useless, or unjust, but assist at the divine praises with speech and thought that are unwearied; as far as you are able, imitate this.¹⁸⁶

Living a life perfectly loving God and neighbour clearly played a more important role in imitation of the angels than simply refraining from sex for Bede – the angels are the perfect tabernacle in which God never ceases to dwell.¹⁸⁷ This view seems closer to that of Gregory the Great, than to the usual monastic interpretation.¹⁸⁸ Gregory, like Bede, saw angels and humans as being fellow members of the universal Church: both shared the belief that angels visited human celebrations of the mass.¹⁸⁹ The house of God consisted of both angels and humans, the earthly and heavenly members balancing each other – in

¹⁸³ *Temp.*, p. 184 'uigiliis ac laudibus diuinis dilectione sincera conditoris et proximi'; trans. Connolly, p. 54.

¹⁸⁴ *Luc.*, pp. 358-9.

¹⁸⁵ *Tab.*, p. 69.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13 'diligunt Deum et proximos, hoc imitare; subueniunt miseris...hoc imitare; humiles sunt mites sunt inuicem pacati sunt diuinis parent iussis, hoc in quantum uales imitare; nihil mali nihil otiose nihil iniuste loquuntur agunt cogitant diuinis indefessi laudibus uerbo et mente assistunt, hoc quantum potes imitare'; trans. Holder, pp. 10-1.

¹⁸⁷ *Ezra.*, p. 382; *Tab.*, p. 12; *Temp.*, pp. 179-81.

¹⁸⁸ For other studies of Gregory's influence on Anglo-Saxon views of angels, differing sometimes from my interpretation: Jane Hawkes, 'Gregory the Great and Angelic Mediation: The Anglo-Saxon Crosses of the Derbyshire Peaks', in *Text, Image and Interpretation*, ed. Minnis and Roberts, pp. 431-48; Thomas Pickles, 'Angel Veneration on Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture from Dewesbury (West Yorkshire), Otely (West Yorkshire) and Halton (Lancashire): Contemplative Preachers and Pastoral Care', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 162 (2009), pp. 1-28.

¹⁸⁹ Gregory, *Dialogi*, IV.60.3 III, 202; *Hom.*, II.10 p. 249. Angels often interacted with saints, having an especially close relationship with Cuthbert: e.g. *VCP*, VII pp. 178-9, XVII pp. 216-7.

these circumstances Gregory felt that all humans needed to imitate angels.¹⁹⁰ Difference and diversity exists amongst both humans and angels but unity founded in love overrides any differences.¹⁹¹ Such an outlook provides the background, it seems to me, for Bede's understanding of angelic exemplarity. The angels themselves were Christians, a more perfect order of Christians than humans, however, and consequently worthy of imitation just like the saints.

In *On the Temple* Bede stated that the angels had 'preserved ever untarnished in themselves the image of their creator'; in heaven humans will become like angelic spirits as 'angels ever remain in their creator's likeness according to which they were made, and on the other hand, the human elect receive his image which they had lost by sinning'.¹⁹² This suggests that the primary difference between angels and human Christians lies in the fact that the former never fell. When humans imitate the angels, they in fact form themselves according to the image of God. I would be cautious about hanging too much on one quotation from a single work of Bede's. *On the Tabernacle*, however, also contains the claim that the angels 'being created free from sin they always preserve the undefiled purity of their creation'.¹⁹³ Although Bede did not explicitly mention the divine image here, he utilised the same idea of the angels preserving the Edenic purity which was associated with that image and which humans strive to regain.

This brings us to imitation of the divine and imitation as a way to draw close to the divine. The imitation of Christ as a theme reaches back to the very origins of Christian

¹⁹⁰ Gregory, *In Evangelia*, II.XXXIV.11 p. 309; *idem*, *In Hiezechihelam*, II.II.15 p. 236. Leyser, 'Angels, Monks, and Demons', p. 21.

¹⁹¹ Gregory, *In Evangelia*, II.XXXIV.14 pp. 313-4.

¹⁹² *Temp.*, p. 179 'habentes inuiolatam in se sui conditoris imaginem seruata in perpetuo sanctitate...angeli sancti in imagine sui conditoris ad quam facti sunt semper manent et electi homines imaginem eius quam peccando amiserant recipiunt'; trans. Connolly, p. 47.

¹⁹³ *Tab.*, p. 71 'spiritus angelici...absque peccato conditi intemeratam suae conditionis puritatem semper custodiunt'; trans Holder, p. 80.

thought and it went on to achieve its greatest flourishing centuries after Bede.¹⁹⁴

Nonetheless, Bede made quite explicit use of the theme on numerous occasions in his commentaries. Every Christian baptism is ‘celebrated on the model’ of the Lord’s baptism.¹⁹⁵ The saints ‘make an effort to consider carefully and to imitate as far as they can those works of the Lord and Saviour himself that he performed in the flesh’.¹⁹⁶

Indeed without imitating the passion of Christ one cannot become a preacher.¹⁹⁷ Much of this focus on imitating Christ emphasises specifically the example of his suffering and death, as previously suggested. Not only martyrs could imitate this: Bede reminded his brothers that they would earn the same reward as the martyrs if they made their bodies a living sacrifice.¹⁹⁸ Christians follow the example of the passion when they patiently endure the trials of this world or when they reject earthly matters for the higher reality, or even when they simply act virtuously.¹⁹⁹ Bede declared that ‘all those who enter the Holy Church are initiated in the faith and sacraments of the Lord’s passion in such a way that they understand that they must always live in imitation of it as well’.²⁰⁰ Such usage of the

¹⁹⁴ See Constable, *Three Studies*, Section 2: ‘The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ’. Traditionally historians saw the early Middle Ages as interested in Christ’s inimitable divinity, with a theology of imitation centring on his humanity developing from the tenth century with the perceived growth of ‘affective piety’: Phyllis G. Jestice, ‘A New Fashion in Imitating Christ: Changing Spiritual Perspectives around the Year 1000’, in *The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium*, ed. Michael Frassetto (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 165-85, at 166-7. For a critique of the traditional view of affective piety: Scott DeGregorio, ‘Affective Spirituality: Theory and Practice in Bede and Alfred the Great’, *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 22 (2005), pp. 129-39.

¹⁹⁵ *Temp.*, p. 222 ‘omne fidelium baptismum quo domino consecrantur in exemplum celebratur baptismatis illius quo ipse aquas sanctificavit’; trans. Connolly, p. 103.

¹⁹⁶ *Ezra.*, p. 280 ‘ipsius domini et saluatoris ea quae per carnem gessit opera diligenter considerare et in quantum sufficiunt imitari satagunt’; trans. DeGregorio, p. 66.

¹⁹⁷ *Ezra.*, p. 367.

¹⁹⁸ *Hom.*, II.21 p. 341. See Clare Stancliffe, ‘Red, White and Blue Martyrdom’, in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 21-46.

¹⁹⁹ *Temp.*, pp. 143, 174-5; *Tab.*, pp. 78-9; *Ezra.*, p. 305.

²⁰⁰ *Tab.*, p. 53 ‘omnes qui sanctam intrant ecclesiam ita fide et sacramentis dominicae passionis initiantur ut in huius quoque imitatione sibi semper esse uiuendum intellegant’; trans. Holder, pp. 58-9.

imitatio Christi probably reflects both Bede's reading of authors like Augustine and the influence of the ascetic environment of Insular monasticism.²⁰¹

Even the form of Bede's versions of the *Life of Cuthbert* displays how the saint's life mimicked that of God made flesh.²⁰² Both the verse and prose versions consist of forty-six chapters. Indeed when new material became available to him, Bede declined to add to his prose life since it was 'perfect'.²⁰³ Walter Berschin relates this to the numerological significance of forty-six: a reference to the incarnate Christ as the true temple.²⁰⁴ The Christian becomes a temple of God, by imitating Christ, the temple of God. Imitation provides the means by which one becomes a member of Christ – the human priest mediates the true high priest to Christians through his own virtues and faith, copying which makes one a participant in Christ's priesthood.²⁰⁵ The image of the altar of the heart situates the sacrificial role of the temple within the Christian – and even though the sacrifices of which Bede spoke were not always bloody the example of Christ always lay in the background. The perfect teacher builds faith in the Lord's passion as an altar in the human heart; following Christ's example, Christians mortify their own bodies.²⁰⁶ The idea that the Christian ought to make their body a 'living sacrifice' (Romans 12.1), especially in order to participate in Christ's priesthood, came easily to Bede's pen.²⁰⁷ Gregory provided a key inspiration to Bede here, as can be seen in his description of Cuthbert celebrating the mass, which repeats ideas frequently stated by Gregory: 'he

²⁰¹ Kelly, *Doctrines*, pp. 393-4; Herren and Brown, *Celtic Christianity*, pp. 140-50.

²⁰² The content of the life also makes clear Cuthbert's imitation of Christ: Richard Bailey, 'In Medio Duorum Animalium: Habbakuk, the Ruthwell Cross and Bede's Life of St Cuthbert', in *Listen, O Isles*, ed. Mullins and Scully, pp. 243-52, at 249-50. Newlands, 'Images of Saint Cuthbert', p. 102, emphasises how the life depicts Cuthbert himself as an example who can be imitated in turn.

²⁰³ *VCP*, prol. pp. 144-5 '...deliberato ac perfecto operi noua interserere, uel supradicere minus congruum atque indecorum esse constaret'. For the verse life: Bede, *Vita Cuthberti (Metrica)*, ed. W. Jaeger, *Bedas metrische Vita Sancti Cuthberti* (Leipzig: Mayer & Müller, 1935).

²⁰⁴ Berschin, 'Opus deliberatum'.

²⁰⁵ *Tab.*, p. 104.

²⁰⁶ *Sam.*, p. 123.

²⁰⁷ *Apoc.*, pp. 259, 425; *Tab.*, pp. 125, 138; *Temp.*, p. 194; *Ezra.*, pp. 242, 264.

would himself imitate the rite he was performing, that is to say, he would sacrifice himself to God in contrition of heart.²⁰⁸ Imitation of Christ goes beyond any individual act or sacrament, so that the Christian themselves becomes a sacrifice in every aspect of their being.

The individual offers themselves to God, and all Bede's interest in imitation has this end of reaching God as its goal. We have already seen that angelic imitation could be seen as nothing more than divine imitation at one remove, since angels never lost the divine image. Obviously all Christians desire the restoration of that image; their virtuous lives in the present aim at receiving it again. And when one has regained it: 'We do not conceal in secret the fact that we have received it, but we openly make it known to everyone by word and deed'.²⁰⁹ Christians follow the examples of the saints because they are the temple in whom the Lord dwells.²¹⁰ Teachers, Bede stated, ought to 'set before our hearers for imitation those whom we know to cling in a special way...to the Lord'.²¹¹ The examples preachers display in their words and deeds, therefore, do not necessarily belong to them – they themselves have imitated the apostles and prophets. But imitation of even the most illustrious human exemplar always aims at getting closer to the Lord, who supplies the only justification for imitation of humans at all.

This may explain another feature of Bede's use of the theme of imitation: the limitations of example. Sometimes he qualified the idea of angelic imitation by suggesting that

²⁰⁸ *VCP*, XVI pp. 212-3 'imitaretur ipse quod ageret, se ipsum uidelicet Deo in cordis contritione mactando'; also Bede, *In Proverbia*, p. 160. Gregory, *In Evangelia*, II.XXXVII.9 p. 355; Straw, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 158-60. For the Christian life as a living sacrifice more generally in Gregory: *In Hiezechihalem*, II.VIII.16 pp. 348-9, II.X.19 pp. 394-5; Straw, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 179-93.

²⁰⁹ *Tab.*, p. 114 'hanc nos recepisse non in secreto celamus sed cunctis palam factis et uoce promulgamus'; trans. Holder, p. 131. The classic work on patristic thought about the restoration of the image of God is Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

²¹⁰ *Luc.*, p. 66.

²¹¹ *Temp.*, pp. 155-6 'eos nostris auditoribus imitandos proponere quos...specialiter domino adhaerere nouerimus'; trans. Connolly, p. 16.

humans should imitate angels *insofar as they are able* – one can only achieve so much in this earthly life.²¹² This, however, does not indicate any perceived ontological gap between angels and humans since imitating other humans does not prove straightforward either. Anyone who desires to do so cannot simply copy the miracles and exceptional displays of virtue by the saints.²¹³ In Bede's hierarchical vision of the Church, the carnal cannot imitate all the virtues which the perfect display. But the imperfect should still gaze upon those examples, and the perfect should still display their goodness declaring, with Paul, 'Be imitators of us, as we also are of Christ'.²¹⁴ Bede accepted the imperfection of all imitation but did not seem to think that this undermined the importance of example. With God himself as the supreme example such an outlook seems only reasonable, for in this life Christ can only be imitated to a limited extent.²¹⁵

Does no possibility of perfect imitation exist then? We ought here to remember Bede's acute sense of the imperfection of the current world which we have previously seen in the gap between the earthly and heavenly churches in his use of the temple-image.²¹⁶ The exile's longing for the homeland, for the heavenly temple, but also for the temple which is Christ himself, seems ever present in these works. But such longing only makes sense if its fulfilment proves reasonable and possible. The completion of the temple marks the moment when the pilgrimage ends and Christian souls find themselves in the heavenly and eternal Church.²¹⁷ Christians then become like the angels because 'the flame of true

²¹² *Tab.*, pp. 69, 84; *Temp.*, pp. 163 'statum quantum mortalibus possibile est in praesenti contendant imitari', 184, 187.

²¹³ *Ezra.*, pp. 315-6.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 375; *Temp.*, pp. 195-6 'Dirigunt enim uisus a longe in templum Dei cum uitam sublimium discere et ammirari sedulo gaudent et quos uirtutis imitatione sequi nequeunt piae uenerationis amplectuntur affectu...perfecti...dicere suis auditoribus possint, *Imitatores nostri estote sicut et nos Christi*'; trans. Connolly, p. 71. 1 Corinthians 11.1.

²¹⁵ E.g. *Tab.*, p. 36 'dominus ipse specialiter immunis a peccato atque operibus iustitiae per omnia praeclarus in mundo apparuit et eandem innocentiam atque iustitiam membra eius in hac interim uita quantum ualent imitantur'.

²¹⁶ See pp. 71, 77 above.

²¹⁷ *Temp.*, pp. 232-3.

love with which the angelic powers now burn will engulf their minds also, as they behold the vision of their Redeemer'.²¹⁸ The vision of the Creator, seen at last face to face and not in pale imitations, hangs over all the work of Bede as the final end towards which the soul strives, and, like the Fathers before him, Bede described eternal bliss as seeing God himself.²¹⁹

Centuries before, Augustine had devoted substantial thought to understanding the vision of God, arguing that it should be understood in a moral, rather than material, fashion.²²⁰ God will be seen in eternity when he becomes 'all in all'.²²¹ The Christian person will look into themselves and see God there; they will look at their neighbours and see God within them.²²² Bede understood the final beatific vision in the very same fashion: in seeing God the individual in a way becomes one with God.²²³ Unsurprisingly for Bede, one cannot forget the communal context – all other elect souls become one with God too, and so in heaven the living stones become like glass, open to each other's gaze in a way impossible during earthly life.²²⁴ In the light of God's glory no difference of will or thought exists in heaven – the vision of God has achieved the end of imitation.²²⁵ The interpretative balancing act that sees the temple as the individual Christ, the individual

²¹⁸ *Hom.*, II.24 p. 366 'Completa ergo dedicationis templi ignis de caelo descendens oblatas domino hostias deuorauit quia...flagrantia ueri amoris quo nunc angelicae uirtutes inflammantur eorum quoque mentes uisa specie sui redemptoris absorbet'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 251.

²¹⁹ E.g. *Temp.*, p. 158; *Tab.*, p. 67; *Ezra.*, p. 306. O'Reilly, 'Seeing the God of Gods', pp. 21-9. Cf. Gregory, *In Hiezechihelam*, II.IV.6 p. 263, II.IV.18 p. 271.

²²⁰ Esp. Augustine, *Epistulae*, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 44, CXLVII (*De Videndo Deo*), pp. 274-331; quoted by Bede at *EpCath.*, pp. 314-5. For more on the vision of God: Bernard McGinn, 'Visio dei: Seeing God in Medieval Theology and Mysticism', in *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 15-33.

²²¹ 1 Corinthians 15.28.

²²² Augustine, *DCD*, XXII.29 pp. 861-2 'Deus nobis erit notus atque conspicuus, ut uideatur spiritu a singulis nobis in singulis nobis, uideatur ab altero in altero, uideatur in se ipso...'. Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, pp. 190-2.

²²³ *Temp.*, p. 179 (quoting 1 John 3.2); God shows himself by inhabiting the elect: *Tab.*, p. 73.

²²⁴ *Apoc.*, p. 531; *Temp.*, p. 227 'quique in hac uita et proximum quem uident et Deum quem non uident diligunt hi in futura uita et Deum regem in decore suo et proximum in Deo glorificatum ac decoratum uidebunt'; *Tab.*, p. 33; *Hom.*, II.24 p. 366.

²²⁵ *Temp.*, p. 180 'disparilitas uoluntatum siue cogitatum in superna patria nulla est ubi una eademque omnes Dei praesentis uisione et gloria illustrantur.'

Christian and also the collective of all such individuals, makes sense when seen against this background of the inevitable interpenetration of God and all elect souls.

When speaking of imitation Bede made constant recourse to visual language. The imperfect follow with their gaze the good examples of the perfect which are displayed for their benefit.²²⁶ Referring to the outward actions of the saints in *On the Temple*, Bede stated that ‘we find help for our salvation from those things which are externally visible whether in word or action or suffering’.²²⁷ The context of the statement makes it all the more significant; Bede moved on to discuss how worldly suffering builds one up for the heavenly temple.²²⁸ He then followed this with his exegesis of the door in the side of the temple, involving a discussion of how the sacraments derived from the incarnate Christ.²²⁹ Seeing these few pages as being thematically linked we can here read Bede’s explanation as to why external acts, physical suffering and visual examples amongst them, can have a real spiritual power. Like baptism and the eucharist, they derive grace from the reality of God’s human body. Relatedly, Bede probably knew well the theological justification of holy images which saw them as resembling the incarnation in making the divine present to human eyes.²³⁰

In his homilies Bede certainly displayed an interest in the link between the incarnation and vision. Blinded by the fall, humans could not see God spiritually; God thus had to make himself visible physically, by entering into human flesh, in order to draw humanity

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 195.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 165 ‘ex eis quae loquendo uel agendo uel patiendo foras ostendunt auxilium nostrae salutis inuenimus’; trans. Connolly, p. 28.

²²⁸ See p. 172 above.

²²⁹ *Temp.*, pp. 165-6. See pp. 152-3 above.

²³⁰ Barbara Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation in Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 55-64. Bede on the images at Wearmouth-Jarrow: *HA*, 6 pp. 369-70 ‘intrans aecclesiam omnes etiam litterarum ignari...dominicae incarnationis gratiam uigilantiore mente recolerent’.

back toward spiritual vision.²³¹ Thus the vision of God at the end of time only becomes possible for humanity, because humanity has already seen God through Christ's incarnation. But the incarnation also occurred so that humans would have a model to imitate, a model of perfect humility and of perfect living.²³² The *imitatio Christi*, therefore, becomes one of the consequences, indeed one of the aspects, of the vision of God made possible by the incarnation. And, of course, the incarnation also took place in order to restore the image of God in man²³³ – the image which could not be regained until displayed to humanity for imitation. We may here seem to have strayed from the image of the temple but we have in fact returned to the theme with which this chapter first began: the incarnate God. By taking on flesh in the material world, God allowed humanity in the flesh, through the material, to approach unity with the divine.

Christ's physical and human presence in the world served as the bridge between the otherwise eternally opposed realities of heaven and earth, God and humanity – opposites which Bede successfully brought together in the image of the temple. While he may have interpreted the temple as the Church above all else, that understanding rested on the fact that the Church was Christ's body and, therefore, both earthly and transcendent. The individual as the temple only gained meaning because God himself, by assuming a human nature, had become the temple. Cosmic unity, racial unity, doctrinal unity, the unity of person – they all interested Bede who used the Jewish temple as a means to

²³¹ *Hom.*, I.2 pp. 11-12, I.4 p. 28 'ut Deum uidere ualeant ipse Deus homo uisibilis inter homines apparuit', I.7 pp. 47-8, I.8 p. 55 'Ipsa lux inuisibilis ipsa Dei sapientia carne in qua uideri posset induta est'. Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation*, pp. 64-71; Chazelle, 'Vision of God', pp. 97-8. The theme appears in Gregory: *In Hiezechihelam*, II.IV.20 p. 272; Straw, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 170-2.

²³² *Hom.*, I.4 p. 31 'pro nobis incarnari atque inter homines uiuendi formam dare uoluit unigenitum suum Iesum Christum', I.6 p. 40, I.16 p. 112 'dispensationem incarnationis qua ad nos uenire ac nobis exempla uiuendi praeberere dignatus est', I.19 pp. 135-6. Joseph F. Kelly is unconvinced that Bede's emphasis on Christ's humility forms the basis for a call to moral imitation: 'Bede's Exegesis of Luke's Infancy Narrative', *Mediaevalia*, 15 (1993 for 1989), pp. 59-70, at 64.

²³³ *Hom.*, I.6 p. 39, I.15 p. 110 'per diuinitatem patri consubstantialiam ad imaginem nos Dei et similitudinem quam peccando amisimus posset digne recreare'. For this nexus of ideas surrounding the vision of God, the incarnation and restoration in Augustine: Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 192-238.

explore and celebrate them. Theologically at the heart of the temple-image stands the mystery of the incarnation, that Christ was an individual possessing two natures, as the basis of all such unity.

Chapter 6

Building Bede's Temple

This thesis has followed a self-consciously synthetic approach, reading all of Bede's works for the light which they can throw upon his use of the image of the Jewish temple. Such an approach carries obvious dangers. Reading Bede in such a fashion may impose an artificial coherence upon his thought, normalise the inconsistencies of his different works and efface the messiness usually attendant upon developing ideas over time.¹ 'Bede's thought' as a monolithic and univocal system of ideas is not an historical fact, but an abstraction derived from Bede's writings. I defend my chosen methodology on two, practical, grounds. Firstly, much more work remains to be done to establish a detailed chronology of Bede's writings. Secondly, the complexity of Bede's different uses of the temple-image makes a thematic approach most convenient – the alternative being a confusing and repetitious chronological investigation.

Nonetheless, we ought to leaven the artificial synchronicity of the previous chapters with a brief overview exploring how Bede built up his interpretation of the temple-image over time. The evidence of broad changes in his approach to and interpretation of the temple is important in establishing how Bede came to devote so much of his work to that image. This diachronic approach suggests that events at Wearmouth-Jarrow, centred on the preparation of the Codex Amiatinus, provided the stimulus for, and indeed some of the content of, Bede's own interpretation of the temple.

Bede wrote biblical commentaries throughout his intellectual career – beginning with a focus on the New Testament and increasingly moving to an interest in the Old Testament.

¹ See Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 67-72, 78-9.

The part of the Bible being commented upon determined, at least partially, the extent to which the temple-image appears in a commentary. The reasons why Bede did or did not comment upon a specific text vary; many of his commentaries seem aimed at filling a gap in patristic exegesis, addressing texts interpreted insufficiently or not at all. The temple-commentaries themselves provide the most important example of such an approach. Bede wrote certain works in response to requests, either to address specific questions (e.g. *Thirty Questions on Kings*) or to provide an authoritative summation of previous exegesis (e.g. *On Luke* and at least Book One of *On Genesis*). Finally, Bede sometimes addressed biblical books previously commented upon because they seemed to have a particular relevance for some contemporary need. For example, *On the Song of Songs* aimed to confute Pelagian texts circulating in England in the early eighth century.² The reasons Bede wrote a work may go some way towards explaining why the temple-image does, or does not, feature heavily within it.

Diachronic Overview

I offer here an overview of the relevant works, seeking at most to sketch some key uses of the temple-image in each, in particular focusing upon developments and new directions in Bede's approach. As pointed out above, no detailed chronology in which each text can be firmly placed exists. The broad chronology which I map out seems to be correct, but the place of many individual texts sometimes remains unclear. I have avoided discussion of works for which evidence of date does not exist (for example, the *Gospel Homilies*). Many commentators have argued that the homilies' sophistication means

² The prologue attacks the use of the Song of Songs in various Pelagian texts (e.g. Julian of Eclanum's *De Amore*): *Cant.*, pp. 167-80.

these must be late compositions – but such claims remain unsubstantiated.³ We can perhaps place individual homilies chronologically relative to other works (as demonstrated below), but the detailed scholarship required to do this on a large scale has not been undertaken. The exact dates associated with a few works provide the framework for this relative chronology.

To complicate matters, some of Bede's works have recently been radically re-dated – or undated. Most importantly, *On Schemes and Tropes*, once generally thought of as one of Bede's earliest works, now appears to date from Bede's maturity.⁴ Hence, the striking use of the temple-image to explain the four senses of scripture in *On Schemes and Tropes* probably came after many years of thought about the temple.⁵ The centrality of the Jewish temple for Bede's approach to scripture which it seems to imply cannot, therefore, be assumed to have always been the case. The apparent lack of concern or admiration for the temple in his (early) *On the Holy Places*, where Bede seems deliberately to have toned down his source text's admiration for the temple, supports such an assumption.⁶

Already, however, in Bede's earliest work of exegesis (the *Explanation of the Apocalypse*) we find an interest in the temple-image. Of course, the image does play a significant role in the final book of the Bible and had been dealt with by Bede's predecessors, Primasius and Tyconius, upon whom he drew extensively.⁷ But Bede made

³ Walt, 'Homiliary', p. 270; Lawrence T. Martin, 'Introduction', in *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels*, vol. 1 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), pp. xi-xxiii, at xi.

⁴ Arthur Holder, '(Un)Dating Bede's *De arte metrica*', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. Hawkes and Mills, pp. 390-5. Neil Wright, 'The Metrical Art(s) of Bede', in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andy Orchard, vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 150-70, makes a good case for not dismissing an early date but Carmela Viricillo Franklin, 'The Date of Composition of Bede's *De Schematibus et Tropis* and *De Arte Metrica*', *RB*, 110 (2000), pp. 199-203, provides evidence of composition after 709.

⁵ *DST*, II.11 pp. 168-9 (quoted at p. 37 above).

⁶ Bede, *De Locis Sanctis*, II.3 p. 257 'In inferiore uero parte urbis, ubi templum in uicinia muri ab oriente locatum...'; Adomnán, *De Locis Sanctis*, I.I.14 p. 186 'in illo famoso loco ubi quondam templum magnifice constructum fuerat in uicinia muri ab oriente locatum...'

⁷ Bonner, *Apocalyptic Commentary*; Gryson's comments in CCSL 121A, pp. 153-66.

a number of, brief and insubstantial it must be granted, comments on the temple-image which seem independent of his sources.⁸ In particular, Bede discussed Christ's sacrificial priesthood and the participation of all Christians in it on a number of occasions.⁹ This interest may explain why in three places Bede made references to the garments of the Jewish high-priest which do not seem to be borrowed from any previous exegesis of the Apocalypse or indeed to be demanded by the scriptural text.¹⁰ The vestments to which he would devote so much time in *On the Tabernacle* were already on Bede's mind, but he strikingly ignored the architectural links between the Heavenly Jerusalem and the desert tabernacle.¹¹ Bede probably chose to comment upon the Apocalypse because of its direct relevance to the eschatological debates which his contemporary scientific works addressed, but the significance of some aspects of the temple-image clearly already engaged him.¹²

His first commentary also displays a concern to contrast the limitations and narrowness of the Jewish temple with the global spread of the temple-Church which reveals the incarnate Christ.¹³ This implies a rather negative view of the physical temple in Jerusalem. Bede's verse *Life of Cuthbert*, probably first composed only a few years after the commentary on the Apocalypse, suggests such an attitude – making, as it does, a slighting comparison, between Solomon's temple and Cuthbert's hermitage on Farne. The temple may have glittered with gold and jewels, but it still was burnt to the ground,

⁸ *Apoc.*, pp. 367-9 seems to be an original interpretation of Bede's; *ibid.*, pp. 289, 337, reference the temple without obvious sources in the biblical text or previous commentary.

⁹ Christ: *Apoc.*, pp. 245, 335; Primasius, *Apocalypsin*, pp. 17, 135-6, but with the Bedan phrase, 'the altar of the cross' added in both cases. Priesthood of believers: *Apoc.*, pp. 239, 247-9, 509. The last example, following Primasius, *Apocalypsin*, p. 278, quotes Augustine, *DCD*, XX.10 pp. 719-20.

¹⁰ *Apoc.*, pp. 311, 527, 559.

¹¹ Wallis, *Bede: Commentary on Revelation*, p. 37.

¹² Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, p. 6; Wallis, *Bede: Commentary on Revelation*, pp. 43-51.

¹³ *Apoc.*, pp. 385, 443 'Vt enim dominus a cunctis posset gentibus adorari, templum illud secretorum dei, unius quondam urbis moenibus inclusum, toto iam spiritaliter coepit orbi reserari'.

whereas the humble materials of the hermitage survived to work miracles.¹⁴ Interestingly, when Bede wrote his prose life around fifteen years later he included this miracle-story, but dropped the comparison with Solomon's temple.¹⁵ In both the *Explanation of the Apocalypse* and the verse *Life of Cuthbert* Bede's concerns with the election of the Anglo-Saxons probably led him to denigrate the distant and exclusive temple.¹⁶

A number of similarly negative references to the golden finery of the temple appear in the commentary on Acts, the materials for which Bede may have worked on over the same years as these two works.¹⁷ This hardly surprises given that the rejection of man-made temples, both Jewish and pagan, recurs throughout the Acts of the Apostles. Bede did engage with this theme, but did not do so at any great length, while also managing to reverse completely Stephen's argument against the temple: although Stephen implied that the temple took a blasphemous step away from the divinely-ordained tabernacle, Bede argued for an evolutionary model where the temple replaced the tabernacle only to be itself replaced in turn.¹⁸ Despite this, there is little sense of Bede having been hugely interested in the temple-image in this commentary – the vast majority of his comments respond directly to the plain biblical text. In the only elaborate use of the image, Bede explained (seemingly originally) how Matthias became apostle by drawing lots, on the model of the Jewish priesthood, interpreting the fire descending at Pentecost as the

¹⁴ Bede, *Vita Metrica*, XLIV pp. 127-8: p. 127 'Altaque mirentur, proles Davitica, templi / Tecta tui, gemmis quoniam stellantibus aethram / Aequiperent fulvisque micent redimita figuris. / Plus sed ego vatis humili sub domate mirer / Pelliculam...'. For the dating: Michael Lapidge, 'Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*', in *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner et al., pp. 77-93, at 78-85.

¹⁵ *VCP*, XLVI pp. 300-7. Bede contented himself with stating (pp. 302-3) that Cuthbert 'coelestis aedificii magis quam terreni decorem quaerebat'.

¹⁶ See pp. 85-6 above.

¹⁷ *Act.*, pp. 23-4, 37, 41, quoting Jerome, *Epistulae*, CSEL 54, LIII.5 p. 452. For the argument that Bede composed the commentary on Acts from notes made over the previous decade or so: M.L.W. Laistner, *Beda's Venerabilis: Expositio Actuum Apostolorum et Retractatio* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1939), pp. xv-xvii.

¹⁸ *Act.*, p. 37; Houghton, 'Bede's exegetical theology', p. 109. For the rejection of man-made temples: *Act.*, p. 72.

consummation of Christ's paschal sacrifice.¹⁹ This book's uses of the image consign the temple-cult to the past: the temple became obsolete just like the tabernacle before, the Jewish custom of drawing lots was no longer necessary once the Spirit had descended upon the Church.

Around 710 Bede sent *On Acts* to Bishop Acca of Hexham along with his commentary on the first letter of John, his exegesis of which remains practically untouched by the temple-image; two brief references come from Augustine's earlier work on the letter.²⁰ Bede's writings on the remaining Catholic Epistles may not necessarily date from this time, but on the whole they consistently display little interest in the temple-image.²¹ The commentary on the first letter of Peter provides, unsurprisingly, the exception. 1 Peter 2.4-9 contains much temple-imagery and Bede interpreted these verses generally as referring to the transference of election from Old Testament Israel to the gentile Church; possibly for the first time he used the imagery of rows of stones placed upon each other to symbolise the mutually supporting generations of the faithful, being taught by those before them and teaching those after them in turn.²² But here, as in *On the Seven Catholic Epistles* more generally, scripture, rather than the exegete's interests, primarily determined the use of the temple-image.

Bede's writings in the first decade of the eighth century engaged with the temple-image, but as a fairly minor theme over all. Some aspects of the image were already important –

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 14-5 'hic Mathias sorte eligitur, ne apostoli electio mandato discrepare legis ueteris uideretur ubi summus sacerdos quaeri iubebatur... Qui idcirco... tunc sorte legebatur, ut in typo figuraretur uerum semper quaerendum fuisse sacerdotem... cuius hostia tempore paschae immolata sed die pentecostes spiritu sancto in igne apparente uere consummata est. Veteris enim erat consuetudinis acceptas deo uictimas caelesti igne consummari'.

²⁰ *EpCath.*, pp. 310, 313; Augustine, *In Iohannis Epistolam ad Parthos Tractatus*, PL 35, IX.1 col. 2045, VII.9 col. 2033.

²¹ There are insubstantial comments at *EpCath.*, pp. 190, 257, 341. For the date of this work: Darby, *End of Time*, pp. 67-8.

²² *EpCath.*, pp. 233-8: p. 234 'Et sicut ordines lapidum in pariete portantur alii ab aliis, ita portantur fideles quique a praecedentibus in ecclesia iustis, portant ipsi sequentes per doctrinam'.

especially ideas related to the priesthood of Christ;²³ on the other hand, Bede seems to have viewed the historical and material temple with some distaste. Most importantly, the temple-image did not actively interest Bede before 710 and little evidence suggests that he chose to comment on these parts of the New Testament because of any temple-imagery they contained. The early commentaries all share an interest in the post-incarnation development of the Church where there could be little place for the Jewish temple;²⁴ Bede clearly felt that Augustine had adequately dealt with the Pauline letters and so never directly commented upon the most important New Testament texts for the temple-image.²⁵ Acca's patronage opened up a new phase in Bede's career. It marked the monk of Wearmouth-Jarrow clearly as a Northumbrian author of some importance and his diocesan bishop rapidly demanded new and bigger commentaries.

The massive commentary on Luke's gospel written at Acca's request reveals an author increasingly fascinated with the temple-image. Of course, the temple features in that gospel and Bede followed patristic tradition in considering Christ's priesthood and temple-cult as Luke's distinctive theme;²⁶ nonetheless, the amount of time he devoted to the temple-image remains striking. Book Six of *On Luke* even begins with a miniature *On the Temple*, where Bede raced through the figurative meanings of some of its architectural features, while emphasising that the temple was merely a transitory symbol.²⁷ Many of his uses of the temple-image do not arise from the scriptural text

²³ Caputa, *Il Sacerdozio dei Fedeli*, pp. 61-6.

²⁴ Houghton, 'Bede's exegetical theology', pp. 45-6.

²⁵ Bede, *Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine*.

²⁶ *Luc.*, p. 9, 71, 88, 402-3, 424-5. Cf. Augustine, *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, ed. F. Wehrich, CSEL 43, I.6 pp. 9-10; Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii*, prol.7 p. 5.

²⁷ *Luc.*, pp. 363-4 'Incumbente tempore quo mare aeneum cuius unda uiuificatrice cuncti ecclesiam intraturi baptizentur quo columnae legis geminae quae lilia pro capite gestantes Christo deuotarum ianuam hinc inde firment ouium quo bis quini luterus operum nostrorum abluendis hostiis parati...hoc est imminente praeconio dominicae passionis per quam recondita dudum litterae uelamento ecclesiae sacramenta patescerent labat paulatim et destrui iam incipit illa caelestium occultatrix umbra secretorum'.

being commented upon.²⁸ For example, mention of Christ's age at the time of his baptism led Bede into probably the longest exegesis of the temple's bronze 'sea' which any Christian commentator had yet provided.²⁹ A discussion of the beatitudes ends with mention of the vestments of the Jewish priests and the declaration that explaining these garments 'awaits the industry of its own work'.³⁰ The comment makes clear that Bede had not yet written *On the Tabernacle* (which provides that work), but suggests that he had begun to consider the need for such a book.

Bede seems to have worked out many aspects of his interpretation of the temple-image as he wrote *On Luke* between 710 and 716, although he would not write his major temple-commentaries until many years later. He could have simply drawn the link between the thirty years of Christ's age and the thirty cubits of the bronze sea's circumference, but he preferred to take the opportunity to explore in detail how the latter related to baptism.³¹ This distinctively Bedan interpretation appears briefly also in his commentary on the Song of Songs.³² Bede seems to have brought an external interest in sacred architecture to his study of Luke's gospel; mentions of the temple-image dropped into his exegesis without prompting suggest that the topic already held a fascination for him. Since he wrote *On Luke* in the years immediately before the Codex Amiatinus left Wearmouth-Jarrow, the work on the codex's first quire provides a plausible explanation for this.

²⁸ E.g. *Luc.*, pp. 132, 157, 200, 311, 392. *Ibid.*, p. 137 does not use the temple-image per se, but interprets Exodus 24.13-4 just as Bede would at *Tab.*, p. 7.

²⁹ *Luc.*, pp. 85-6. *Temp.*, pp. 207-12 is in effect just an expansion of this earlier exegesis.

³⁰ *Luc.*, pp. 140-1: p. 141 'Quae per singula uel exponere uel solum proponere proprii industriam expectat operis'.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86 'Et quia maris aenei mentio incidit libet et in ceteris quomodo baptismi regulae congruat inquirere'.

³² *Cant.*, p. 322. Neither Gregory, *RP*, II.5 col. 33-4, nor an Irish text preserving earlier exegesis of the sea (*Quaestiones vel Glosae in Evangelio Nomine*, ed. R.E. McNally, CCSL 108B, p. 146), has the baptismal focus which Bede brought to its interpretation.

In this context it is surely significant that Bede's first attempt to grapple with the detail of the temple's measurements has been dated to around 715, as part of his *Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings*. In that work he discussed the question of the height of the temple, interpreted the door on its right-hand side as Christ's wound, and explained the layout of the temple-courts – all for the first time.³³ While Bede's interest in numbers long predated 715, he directed no real attention to architectural measurements before becoming fascinated by the temple-image.³⁴ *Thirty Questions* includes passing references to two issues clearly relevant to the Codex Amiatinus: Ezra's work in restoring scripture and the diagram of the temple in the Codex Grandior.³⁵ However, it also complicates the evidence for the influence of the manuscript's production on Bede. Bede's discussions in *Thirty Questions* followed not his own interests, but the specifics of Nothelm's enquiries – a series of, seemingly disconnected, queries about various details from the Book(s) of Kings.³⁶ This might imply that factors purely external to Wearmouth-Jarrow determined what Bede addressed. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that Nothelm asked about the four Books of Kings at the same time as Bede was writing a commentary on the first book purely by coincidence. We can perhaps deduce that he knew of Bede's commentary on Samuel and of Wearmouth-Jarrow's interest in the temple-image at this time, and was thus inspired to ask for elucidation on some related points.³⁷

³³ *Reg.*, XI-XIV pp. 303-7, XVIII pp. 311-3.

³⁴ For the mathematical ability revealed in Bede's early computational works: Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, pp. 31-3, 186-7. *De Locis Sanctis* contains some measurements, but surprisingly few over all.

³⁵ *Reg.*, VII pp. 301-2, XVIII p. 312. See pp. 96-7 above.

³⁶ Meyvaert, "Footsteps of the Fathers", p. 269; *Reg.*, prol. p. 293. Nothelm, for instance, may have drawn Bede's attention to the apparent disparity between 3 Kings 6.2 and 2 Paralipomenon 3.4 on the height of the temple – I have found no earlier source for Bede's interest in this issue: *Reg.*, XI pp. 303-4; *Temp.*, pp. 161, 166.

³⁷ Cf. Meyvaert, "Footsteps of the Fathers", pp. 276-7.

Bede followed Augustine in interpreting Samuel's story as signifying the replacement of the old Jewish priesthood with Christ's new priesthood in the Church.³⁸ This, combined with the important role the Ark of the Covenant plays in I Kings, explains much of the use of temple-imagery throughout Bede's *On I Samuel*, three-quarters completed when Ceolfrith left Wearmouth-Jarrow in June 716. Nonetheless, the exegete's fondness for such imagery remains noteworthy – especially when directed towards discussing the person as the dwelling-place or temple of God.³⁹ Bede does not seem to have used this interpretation of the temple as individual much in his earliest works, but it grew increasingly common in the years leading up to 716.⁴⁰ *On I Samuel* may also prove that Bede perfected his interpretation of the tabernacle as the present and the temple as the heavenly Church around this time. He provided an elaborate exegesis of the ark's movements, reading them as a symbol of the diversity within the Church. The various staging-posts in the ark's journeying represent different ways of life (contemplation and action, for example), which all implicitly belong to the earthly Church. Arrival in Jerusalem (the 'vision of peace') symbolises the move from pilgrimage on earth to heaven and the dedication of the temple represents the final resurrection.⁴¹

While not actually mentioning the Mosaic tabernacle, the same contrast between the ark's movement and its final stability appears here as in Bede's later temple-commentaries. Interestingly, *On the Song of Songs*, upon parts of which Book Four of *On*

³⁸ *Sam.*, pp. 31-4, 67, 137. Also *Reg.*, I pp. 296-7. Augustine, *DCD*, XVII.4-5 pp. 554-66; Jonathan Black, 'De Civitate Dei and the Commentaries of Gregory the Great, Bede and Hrabanus Maurus on the Book of Samuel', *Augustinian Studies*, 15 (1984), pp. 114-27.

³⁹ *Sam.*, pp. 21, 58, 66. Imagery of entering the faith as entering the temple is also present: *ibid.*, pp. 18, 32.

⁴⁰ *Cant.*, p. 279; *Luc.*, pp. 66, 311.

⁴¹ *Sam.*, pp. 59-60 [The interpretation is too long to quote in full] 'Non autem absque magni significatione mysterii credas arcam domini sic uaria per loca mutatam... usque ad tempora dedicationis domus Dei qua perpetuam in sancto sanctorum sedem mansionis accepit. Nequaquam haec frustra sed in ecclesiae typum gesta cognosce quae in multimoda sed pacatissima suorum diuersitate membrorum... in his qui iam de corpore egressi saeculi uariantis euasere labores uisionem aeternae pacis ascendit nec per eos tamen ipsos in caeli iam sede regnantes pro peregrinantibus in terra suis aequae membris et adhuc contra hostem dimicantibus orando certare desistit donec resurrectionis coruscante gloria quae felix eius est dedicatio in caelestia sancta sanctorum...'

I Samuel seem to draw, appears to make this distinction between the tabernacle and temple.⁴² Holder has argued that this relationship of *On the Song of Songs* with the commentary on Samuel and its anti-Pelagian character (which indicates perhaps the live question of the Easter Controversy) suggest a date prior to 716 for the former.⁴³ *On the Song of Songs* may also be linked to Bede's commentary on Proverbs which begins by interpreting the building of the temple as referring to the growth of the Church.⁴⁴ The dating of these works has by no means been established – Thacker felt that they belong to the latter part of Bede's career (after 716);⁴⁵ for our purposes it is significant that no scholarship has sought to date them to the period before 710. Their brief mentions of the temple may indicate Bede's post-716 familiarity with the image, or they may be indications of his growing interest in it in the years running up to the departure of the Codex Amiatinus.⁴⁶

One can construct a reasonably clear image of Bede during these years (c.710-716): he wrote long commentaries for a distinguished clerical audience all over England and with an increased focus upon the Old Testament. Furthermore, Bede at this time formed his understanding of the temple which he would later set forth in detail in his temple-commentaries. We have seen how many of Bede's interpretations of the temple-image emerge in these years for the first time. While he had discussed the temple previously, he had done so primarily when the biblical text demanded it. For example, Bede discussed

⁴² *Cant.*, p. 322 'in tabernaculo uel templo Salomonis in quorum introitu labrum uel mare aeneum erat positum... quia fontem regenerationis dominus procuraret quo initiati uel praesentis societatem ecclesiae uel mansionem aeternae domus quae est in caelis possumus ingredi.'

⁴³ Holder, 'Anti-Pelagian Character', pp. 100-3.

⁴⁴ Bede, *In Proverbia*, p. 23 'templi constructione ac dedicatione aedificationem sanctae ecclesiae quae tempore resurrectionis in aeternum dedicabitur insinuat'. For the possible relationship between the two commentaries on 'Solomonic' works: Holder, 'Feminine Christ', pp. 115-6.

⁴⁵ Thacker, 'Ordering of Understanding', pp. 54-5.

⁴⁶ I would favour a pre-716 date. Both works use a traditional etymology of *sinagoga* and *ecclesia* which Bede also utilised in *On Luke*, but which he avoided in the temple-commentaries of the 720s: *Cant.*, p. 190; *Luc.*, p. 101; *In Proverbia*, pp. 49-50; *Tab.*, pp. 42-43; *Temp.*, p. 157.

Christ as cornerstone linking the Jewish and gentile peoples in his commentaries on Acts and the Catholic Epistles – but only because the image of the cornerstone appeared in those books.⁴⁷ In the works of c.710-716 the same image appears more frequently and in cases where the scriptural text did not demand it.⁴⁸

Bede's use of the temple-image clearly changed over the course of these years. That does not mean that it had achieved its final form by 716. In *On Luke* Bede interpreted the moulds broken to reveal the bronze temple-vessels as symbolising the ceremonies of the Law, replaced by the gospel truth; *On the Temple* eschews this interpretation in favour of one concentrating on the contrast between this life and the next.⁴⁹ Bede explained the barrier around the roof of the temple with reference to King Ochozias' death by falling in both *On the Temple* and *Thirty Questions on Kings*, but the former provides an allegorical interpretation of this, apparently not yet formulated when he wrote the latter.⁵⁰ Hence, Bede continued to think creatively about the temple-image after 716, developing new interpretations or abandoning old ones. Nonetheless, the core of Bede's interest in that image, which reached fruition in the temple-commentaries, developed in the years immediately preceding 716.

Looking at some of Bede's major writings from the decade or so after the Codex Amiatinus left Northumbria confirms this. They provide less evidence that the temple-image was still an active and exciting research interest for Bede, appearing in all sorts of unexpected contexts; rather the appearances of the temple in the early 720s suggest that Bede had developed, to an advanced stage, a detailed and influential exegesis of it. For instance, in *On Genesis* he brought the exegesis of the temple into his interpretations of

⁴⁷ *Act.*, p. 26; *EpCath.*, pp. 236-7.

⁴⁸ *Sam.*, pp. 64, 167; *Cant.*, pp. 314-5, 317; *Luc.*, p. 355. On the cornerstone: pp. 78-9 above; O'Reilly, 'Multitude of Isles', pp. 219-24.

⁴⁹ *Luc.*, p. 363; *Temp.*, pp. 223-4.

⁵⁰ *Reg.*, XIII pp. 305-6; *Temp.*, pp. 163-4.

Noah's ark and the tower of Babel.⁵¹ Such a decision makes perfect sense but was substantially original to Bede; he seems to have been so comfortable and keen on the detailed architectural interpretation of the temple-image by now that he self-consciously modelled his approach to Babel upon it.⁵² The exegesis of the ark contains a particularly striking statement. There Bede, discussing how Noah could have fitted so many birds and beasts into a boat, rebutted the suggestion, deriving from Origen, that Moses gave the ark's measurements in geometric cubits – six times as large as standard cubits.⁵³ This makes no sense, Bede argued, since one must assume that Moses gave measurements in a consistent manner; if he had always used geometric cubits the tabernacle would have been impossibly huge – far too big to be carried around the desert and larger even than Solomon's temple!⁵⁴ It seems unlikely that Bede searched through the Pentateuch for every mention of cubits to test Origen's hypothesis. Rather it appears that he knew the tabernacle's measurements so well that he spotted the flaw in the argument.

Bede drew upon the temple-image in a similar fashion when not commenting upon scripture also. In *On the Reckoning of Time* he explained that the temple 'was finished in seven years, and dedicated in the seventh month of the eighth year, as a symbol of the totality of time in which the Church of Christ, which is made perfect in the future [age], is built up in this world.'⁵⁵ Strikingly, this is one of only five allegorical comments in the entire world-chronicle, and Bede did not even bother to explain how this spiritual

⁵¹ *Gen.*, pp. 107, 109-10, 160. While Noah's ark called to mind the temple-image for Bede, the reverse process rarely occurred, suggesting the priority of the temple: *Ezra.*, p. 274.

⁵² See pp. 126-36 above.

⁵³ Bede quoted Augustine, *In Heptateuchum*, I.4 p. 3 (*Gen.*, pp. 111-2), but the point comes from Origen/Rufinus, *In Genesim*, II.2 p. 29.

⁵⁴ *Gen.*, p. 112 'Si autem et ibi geometricos cubitos sectabatur, ergo ipsum tabernaculum non triginta cubitos longum et denos cubitos altum ac latum factum est, ut legitur, uerum sescuplicato hoc numero, centum octoginta cubitos in longitudine et sexagenos in altitudine ac latitudine habebat. Sicque longior multo et latior quam templum Salomonis factum est...'

⁵⁵ *DTR*, LXVI pp. 475-6 'templum domino aedificare coepit...quod in figuram uniuersi temporis, quo in hoc saeculo Christi aedificatur ecclesia, quae in futuro perficitur, VII annis perfecit et septimo octauo anni mense dedicauit'; trans. Wallis, p. 172.

interpretation depended on his scheme of the eight world-ages.⁵⁶ He seems to have thought such a comment unexceptional in a work of the mid-720s aimed at a Wearmouth-Jarrow audience. By the first half of the 720s, of course, Bede had already embarked upon writing the temple-commentaries proper: *On the Tabernacle* probably dates from this period.

The evidence suggests that Bede wrote that work shortly after he commented upon Noah's ark in 720.⁵⁷ Showing the Law's spiritual meaning to be greater than its literal, Bede used the story of Noah and provided a summary of its exegesis which matches that put forth in *On Genesis*; earlier on he had noted the issue of the length of the cubit which Moses used in the accounts of 'both Noah's ark and the making of the tabernacle'.⁵⁸ This suggests that the question of the ark's measurements (and the tabernacle's role in solving it) was fresh in Bede's mind. The temple-image does not burst unexpectedly into the text of Bede's writings in the early 720s as it did in the early 710s; instead he channelled his clear interest in the topic into focused study. *On the Tabernacle* thus provides examples of the whole range of approaches to the temple-image explored in this thesis. In it Bede noted for the first time Cassiodorus' responsibility for the ancient picture to which he had access and outlined the exegetical relationship between the tabernacle and temple in more detail than he did anywhere else.⁵⁹

Bede's early interest in the New Testament seems to have petered out by the 720s; the New Testament works which he produced in this period, in fact, looked back to the

⁵⁶ See p. 75 above. For the suggestion that Bede deliberately avoided mystical numerology in *DTR*: Faith Wallis, "'Number Mystique'" in Early Medieval Computus Texts', in *Mathematics and the Divine*, ed. Koetsier and Bergmans, pp. 179-99, at 191-5.

⁵⁷ For the evidence that Bede's account of Noah in *On Genesis* can be securely dated to 720: Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, pp. 45-7, 322-6.

⁵⁸ *Tab.*, pp. 69, 13 'Quidam solent interrogare cuius quantitatis sit aestimandus cubitus quem Moyses uel in archa Noe uel in factura tabernaculi posuerit'; trans. Holder, p. 11.

⁵⁹ *Tab.*, pp. 81, 42-3.

earlier part of his career. In *On Mark* (in which he made reference to the completed *On the Tabernacle*⁶⁰) Bede habitually repeated whole sections of the earlier *On Luke*.

However, some interesting changes in his use of the temple-image shine light on how his thought developed between the two works. In the earlier commentary, when discussing the cleansing of the temple, Bede simply quoted extensively from Gregory the Great.⁶¹ Discussing the account of the cleansing in Mark, he re-used some of this quotation (that part interpreting the temple as the individual mind), while also using a different text from Gregory to make a point about clerical corruption, which he had previously discussed, using different language, in *On Luke*.⁶² However, in an original move, commenting upon Mark, Bede added another level of interpretation, wondering that if Christ condemned those performing valid business in the temple, how much angrier would he be to see people gossiping and laughing ‘in the shrines consecrated to God’?⁶³ Just a few pages earlier Bede had also made this link between the temple of Jerusalem and contemporary church-buildings.⁶⁴ A new interpretation of the temple had entered his thought sometime between writing the commentary concerning Luke and that on Mark.

Bede provided a third interpretation of the cleansing of the temple in his homily on John’s account of the story. The homily follows the later *On Mark* much more closely than the earlier *On Luke*: it also makes the link between the sellers in the temple and

⁶⁰ *Marc.*, p. 464.

⁶¹ *Luc.*, p. 349, quoting Gregory, *In Evangelia*, II.XXXIX.6-7 p. 386. For Bede’s use of the story of the cleansing, in the context of earlier and later writers: Emmanuel Bain, ‘Les marchands chassés du Temple, entre commentaires et usages sociaux’, *Médiévales*, 55 (2008), pp. 53-74, esp. 55-9.

⁶² Quotation repeated: *Marc.*, p. 580 (= *Luc.*, p. 349), quoting Gregory, *In Evangelia*, II.XXXIX.7 p. 386. New quotation: *Marc.*, p. 579, quoting Gregory, *In Evangelia*, I.XVII.13 p. 127.

⁶³ *Marc.*, pp. 578-9 ‘Si ergo dominus nec ea uolebat in templo uenundari quae in templo uolebat offerri... quanta putas animaduersione puniret si inuenisset aliquos ibi risui uel uaniloquio uacantes aut alii cuilibet uitio mancipatos? Si enim ea quae alibi libere geri poterant dominus in domo sua temporalia negotia geri non patitur, quanto magis ea quae nusquam fieri licet plus caelestis irae merentur si in aedibus Deo sacratis aguntur?’.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 575 ‘Quod ingressus ciuitatem primo templum adiit formam nobis religionis quam sequamur praemonstrat ut cum forte uillam aut oppidum aut alium quemlibet locum in quo sit domus orationis Deo consecrata intramus primo ad hanc divertamus et postquam nos domino per orationum studia commendauerimus sic deinde ad agenda ea propter quae uenimus temporalia negotia secedamus’.

those disrespecting churches.⁶⁵ Delivering a homily provides the kind of situation which could have led Bede to refine and develop his approach to the temple-image in this case. The purpose of a commentary is to hand on orthodox understanding of the Bible, to which end the quoting of long passages from patristic sources can prove useful. A homily must connect with a listening audience, speak to their experience and deliver a clear moral message. Plausibly, writing for a church-congregation provided the necessary impetus for Bede to develop a message about how one ought to behave in church, using the story of the cleansing.⁶⁶ If this argument convinces, then it suggests that Bede composed *Homily II.1* between *On Luke* and *On Mark* (probably in the decade or so after 715).

Like the commentary on Mark's gospel, Bede's *Retraction on Acts* broke little new ground; Bede aimed to correct and amend some of the comments in his earlier work on the Acts of the Apostles, particularly in light of his improved understanding of Greek. The *Retraction* says little of substance about the temple-image, excepting one bravura usage where Bede declared that the shedding of Christ's blood had turned the entire globe into a house of prayer, as the sacrifice of victims had once consecrated the tabernacle and temple to the Lord.⁶⁷ He retained his conviction that the material temple was inferior to the universal temple-Church which would embrace Northumbria as well as Jerusalem. Nevertheless Bede did change his attitude to the physical temple, at least at

⁶⁵ *Hom.*, II.1 p. 185 'Quid ergo, fratres mei, quid putamus faceret dominus si rixis dissidentes, si fabulis uacantes, si risu dissolutos uel alio quolibet scelere reperiret inretitos, qui hostias quae sibi immolarentur ementes in templo uidit et eliminare festinauit? Haec propter illos diximus qui ecclesiam ingressi non solum intentionem orandi neglegunt uerum etiam ea pro quibus orare debuerant augent...'

⁶⁶ Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, X.4-10 pp. 102-7, greatly influenced Bede's homily. Augustine used the story of the cleansing to condemn those drinking 'in locis sanctis' (X.9 p. 106) in honour of the martyrs (a local practice he sought to stamp out); Bede based his own exhortation to moral behavior on Augustine.

⁶⁷ *Ret.*, p. 112 'Signum est ergo quia significabat uniuersum orbem sanguine domini esse abluendum, ut, sicut aliquando tabernaculum siue templum sanguine uictimarum erat domino consecratum, ita nunc per omnem mundum populus fidelium illi in domum sanctam ipsius sanguine dedicaretur, nec solum Hierosolymis esset locus orandi, uerum in omni loco dominationis eius leuarent electi manus suas per orationes puras ad dominum'.

the level of emphasis. His earliest works seem unimpressed by its gaudy riches; even between 710 and 716 Bede frequently went out of his way to highlight the temporal nature of the temple, destined to be degraded and destroyed.⁶⁸ This fits into a wider interest in Bede's work from that period in the ramifications of the incarnation on history – in particular the rejection of the old dispensation and the transfer of God's grace to the gentiles. Later in his career, however, Bede did not focus so much on the temple's temporality – he recognised that it had to pass away but did so with a new respect for the divinely-instituted glorious building.⁶⁹ He pointed out that the Mosaic priesthood and its ritual had gone on a literal level, but his emphasis shifted from historical disruption to spiritual continuity.⁷⁰ Bede and his brothers continued to fulfil the everlasting law God had given to Aaron and his descendants.⁷¹

This blurring of the boundaries between the biblical world of the temple and contemporary Northumbria reaches a high-point in *On the Temple* and *On Ezra and Nehemiah* – the two works with the best claims to be Bede's final commentaries. Of course, previous exegetical works had reflected contemporary concerns also, but DeGregorio has convincingly argued that this process appears particularly clearly in *On Ezra and Nehemiah*.⁷² These final temple-commentaries contain strikingly precise references to the Anglo-Saxon world, with mention of monasteries that fail to provide

⁶⁸ E.g. *Luc.*, pp. 363-4; *Sam.*, pp. 240, 247, 254.

⁶⁹ I have found only one, rather vague, mention of the need for the temple's destruction in *On the Temple: Temp.*, p. 148 'in patria ipsa et ciuitate regia constructa inuiolabili semper fundamento consisteret donec inditum sibi figurarum caelestium munus impleret'. *Marc.*, p. 595; *DTR*, X p. 311; *Gen.*, p. 37 – Bede's statement that the temple was one of the glories of the fourth age seems not to derive from any earlier source.

⁷⁰ O'Brien, 'Jewish Church', pp. 69-73.

⁷¹ *Tab.*, p. 139 'Nam et nostra humilitas ad illud semen pertinet de quo dictum est quia *legitimum sempiternum erit ipsi et semini eius per successiones* [Exodus 30.21] non quidem de Aaron stirpe nascendo sed credendo in eum in quem et Aaron cum sanctis illius aevi creditit...'

⁷² DeGregorio, 'Reform of the Northumbrian Church', pp. 3-20; *idem*, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah*, pp. xxx-xxxvi. For *On 1 Samuel* as a similar kind of response to Bede's contemporary worries: Thacker, 'Bede, the Britons and the Book of Samuel'; Darby, *End of Time*, pp. 165-85.

pastoral care, and praise for the members of the Gregorian mission.⁷³ The long prologue to *On the Temple* unusually avoids discussion of methodology and argues strongly for the relevance of scriptural meditation to ‘us’, for correction and consolation in difficult times.⁷⁴ *On the Temple* mainly consists of architectural descriptions and measurements and includes little narrative; but the prologue makes clear that Bede considered this, apparently static, temple-image as supremely relevant to his life and that of his contemporaries.

It may seem rather strange then that so little clear use of the temple-image appears in the *Ecclesiastical History*, which Bede must have been writing alongside *On the Temple* and *On Ezra and Nehemiah*.⁷⁵ But we should not forget that the *Ecclesiastical History* formed not just the culmination of Bede’s life’s work (once the scholarly consensus); it was also something new, reaching out (at least in theory) to an audience beyond religious communities. The lack of explicit recourse to the temple-image in these circumstances makes sense. Scholars have certainly shown that the links between the history and these commentaries are there to be found on close examination.⁷⁶ Fundamentally the *Ecclesiastical History* reveals that Bede’s interest in the Insular world had become quite explicit in his later years. The final temple-commentaries reflect the same impulse. The importance of the temple-image is that it became the site where the synthesis of Bede’s world and the biblical past took place.

⁷³ *Ezra.*, p. 303; *Temp.*, p. 218.

⁷⁴ *Temp.*, pp. 143-5. *Sam.*, pp. 9-10, has a somewhat similar feel but the main argument there (as in *Ezra.*, p. 237) is that scripture should be read spiritually – i.e. the concern is primarily hermeneutic. The only prologues to Bedan commentaries longer than that of *On the Temple* are those which contain discussions of some other issue: *Luc.*, pp. 7-10, explains the evangelists’ symbols and *Apoc.*, pp. 223-31, details the seven rules of Tyconius.

⁷⁵ O’Reilly, ‘Multitude of Isles’, pp. 201-2.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; O’Reilly, ‘Introduction’, pp. xxxiv-xxxix; Mayr-Harting, *Rule of St Benedict, and Social Class*, pp. 13, 20-2; Julia Barrow, ‘How Coifi Pierced Christ’s Side: A Re-Examination of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History* II, Chapter 13’, *JEH*, 62 (2011), pp. 693-706.

The temple-image had not always been so significant to Bede and this section has mapped, in part, how the monk's thought and approach to it developed over time. The evidence clearly suggests that Bede was comparatively uninterested in the temple up until sometime after 710, and that in the years before 716 something outside his own exegetical activity drove his fascination with this image. By around 720 a quite well-developed interpretation existed in Bede's mind, influencing how he approached other parts of the Bible; shortly thereafter he embarked on an ambitious project of commentaries dedicated to the temple-image. Unsurprisingly, the evidence is not always straightforward: Bede's interest in sacrificial priesthood came much earlier than that in sacred architecture. The current state of the evidence means that any explanation of the development of Bede's thought will only be partial – but it is no less valid for all that.

Linking this development with the Codex Amiatinus depends of course upon the date of that manuscript, about which some ambiguity does exist. Ceolfrith became abbot in 689 and could have begun work on his pandects shortly thereafter. Richard Marsden, however, has argued persuasively that the Codex Amiatinus was likely to have been the last of the three Bibles made – perhaps in the years immediately prior to 716.⁷⁷ The Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium almost certainly did not rush through it all in the first six months of 716: they had time to go through and correct the entire biblical text.⁷⁸ Nor need it have been produced over a single defined period – costs may have necessitated

⁷⁷ Marsden, *Text of the Old Testament*, pp. 100-6. The argument that the Codex Amiatinus was in fact the first made of Ceolfrith's pandects and was a 'library copy' until being used as a gift for St Peter (Beall, 'Illuminated Pages of the Codex Amiatinus', pp. 131-69; also Bruce-Mitford, *Art of the Codex Amiatinus*, p. 7), never fully explained, is weakened by Chazelle, 'Ceolfrid's Gift', which has recently strengthened the probability that the codex was always intended to be sent to Rome, which in turn makes a later rather than an earlier date more likely.

⁷⁸ Marsden, *Text of the Old Testament*, pp. 99-100. The words of Bede and the author of the *Life of Ceolfrith* also imply that the pandect was made some time before the journey to Rome: *HA*, 15 p. 379; *VCeol.*, 20 p. 395.

spacing production out over a number of years.⁷⁹ The text could have been produced first and the first quire of illuminations and prefatory matter added only shortly before the manuscript left the monastery.⁸⁰ Interestingly, the tabernacle bifolium does not share the same first stitching as the rest of the opening quire, which may suggest that it was a comparatively late addition to the design.⁸¹ The work and planning that went into the codex probably took place, then, over a number of years sometime before June 716. That would provide a plausible explanation for the spike in interest in the temple-image throughout Bede's writings from the half-decade or so before 716.

The use of the temple-image in the Codex Amiatinus derived, of course, from the diagrams and designs available to the Wearmouth-Jarrow community in the Codex Grandior.⁸² Bede clearly studied these images in some detail, and perhaps had more access to them over the course of his career than he had to the Amiatinus. Hence, Meyvaert has suggested that the temple-commentaries are the result of 'the spell cast by these images' on Bede.⁸³ However, the monk would not have been so interested in Cassiodorus' work if it had not provided the model for the new pandect which had a special place in Wearmouth-Jarrow's history. And the decision to link Cassiodorus' use of the temple-image with the Northumbrian monastery would have been made, not by Bede, but by Ceolfrith. In other words, the importance of the Codex Grandior to the development of Bede's thought on the temple must have been dependent upon, and secondary to, the communal significance of the Codex Amiatinus.

⁷⁹ Gameson, 'Cost of the Codex Amiatinus', p. 6.

⁸⁰ Cf. Chazelle, 'Vision of God', p. 103. There clearly were some detailed preparations for the journey – including in relation to gifts: *VCeol.*, 22 p. 395 '...ordinavit et munera quae beato Petro essent referenda...'.⁸¹

⁸¹ Meyvaert, 'Dissension in Bede's Community', pp. 305-8. But Chazelle, 'Ceolfrid's Gift', p. 136, and 'Painting the Voice of God', p. 44, suggests that the monks at Wearmouth-Jarrow decided not to sew the bifolium into the binding for artistic or spiritual reasons. O'Reilly, 'Seeing the God of Gods', p. 15, argues for the thematic unity of the codex's opening quire.

⁸² See pp. 90-3 above.

⁸³ Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus', p. 883.

The evidence suggests that the pandect's preparation did not merely spur Bede into interest in the temple-image. Rather, many of the details of Bede's interpretation of the temple were formed in that context, albeit not all of them and not without room for further development: in *On Luke* Bede's reading of the temple vessels is not that of *On the Temple* years later – but his interpretation of the bronze sea effectively is. This suggests that the creation of the Codex Amiatinus provided Bede with specific interpretations and understandings of the temple, probably derived at that time from communal discussion surrounding the opening quire and its meaning. Bede's writings show that talk and debate played an important role in contemporary monastic culture: talk concerning the saints and miracles, but also about the Bible and how to understand it.⁸⁴ The *Letter to Plegwine* presents the image of Bede and his brother monks debating the lengths of the world ages – an argument grounded in biblical interpretation.⁸⁵ As Cuthbert's mentor Boisil was dying, the two men read through John's gospel, and *discussed it*.⁸⁶ Awareness of the existence of this discursive culture should, as Mark Stansbury has suggested, 'redirect our view of the reading and understanding of texts away from the solitary activity of scholars to the social activity of communities'.⁸⁷ At least some of the interpretations to be found in Bede's temple-commentaries probably result from just such social activity at Wearmouth-Jarrow.

⁸⁴ Discussion concerning saints: *VCP*, prol. pp. 144-5, XLVI pp. 304-5; *HE*, IV.19 pp. 390-2, V.18 pp. 512-5.

⁸⁵ Bede, *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, 15 pp. 624-5. The letter was occasioned when Bede had been accused of heresy during discussion (of his works or of issues of scriptural chronology?) at Wilfrid's table: *ibid.*, 1 p. 617.

⁸⁶ *VCP*, VIII pp. 182-3 'Est autem mihi codex habens quaterniones septem, quas singulis diebus singulas possumus Domino adiuuante legendo, et quantum opus est inter nos conferendo percurrere'. Also *Ret.*, p. 155, where queries about the meaning of scripture went far beyond Britain. The letters Bede received from Acca, Nothelm, the nun who enquired about the Canticle of Habakkuk, etc., indicate a wide culture of discussion and questioning concerning matters of exegesis – most of which would have left little or no trace in the historical record.

⁸⁷ Stansbury, 'Early-Medieval Biblical Commentaries', p. 50. Also Meyvaert, 'New Perspective on the Ruthwell Cross', p. 164: 'much of what Bede writes must reflect, not only his own personal thoughts, but also a store of meditations on Scripture, orally transmitted, and circulating among the monasteries of his day.'

A Monk and his Monastery

Monastic discussion clearly took place between, as well as within, individual communities. The chronology of Bede's use of the temple-image mapped out above could have more than one explanation; for example, the fact that serious interest in the temple appears in his work predominantly after Acca became his patron might prove significant. Bede was not the only Northumbrian to use the temple-image in his writings – Stephen's *Life of Wilfrid*, a work written partially at Acca's request, also deploys the image. Stephen compared Wilfrid restoring the church at York to Christ cleansing the temple; the building of the great stone church at Ripon saw Wilfrid paralleled with Moses constructing the tabernacle and Solomon the temple.⁸⁸ In other words, Stephen primarily used the temple-image in order to glorify Wilfrid's architectural activities.⁸⁹ This might indicate a 'Wilfridian' approach to the temple which Acca's patronage would have brought to Bede's attention.

Stephen and Bede's attitudes to physical churches initially appear quite different. While interested in the Old Testament shrines to God, Bede never assigned any divine significance or allegorical meaning to any buildings other than those discussed in the Bible.⁹⁰ Indeed, throughout his career, he condemned those who put constructing rich churches above building up the Church of living stones – famously contrasting Gregory the Great with other popes on this point.⁹¹ Possibly, then, Bede would have disapproved

⁸⁸ VW, XVI-XVII pp. 34-7.

⁸⁹ This does not mean that he did not intend a spiritual significance: Mark D. Laynesmith, 'Stephen of Ripon and the Bible: Allegorical and Typological Interpretations of the *Life of St Wilfrid*', *EME*, 9 (2000), pp. 163-82, at 172-4.

⁹⁰ Holder, 'Allegory and History'; George Hardin Brown, 'The Church as Non-Symbol in the Age of Bede', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. Hawkes and Mills, pp. 359-64.

⁹¹ *HE*, II.1 pp. 128-9 'Nam alii quidam pontifices construendis orandisque auro uel argento ecclesiis operam dabant, hic autem totus erga animarum lucra uacabat'; also *Ezra.*, p. 303. Jennifer O'Reilly, 'The Art of Authority', in *After Rome*, ed. Charles-Edwards, pp. 141-89, at 146-7; *eadem*, 'Introduction', pp. xlvi-li.

of Stephen's use of the temple-image to justify grand contemporary churches. If Stephen merely articulated ideas common to the Wilfridian community, might not Bede have sought to correct such views? Increased contact with Acca after 710 could have led the monk of Jarrow to engage more with the temple-image, in order to satisfy his new patron and redirect the Wilfridian attitude to it along lines of which Bede approved.⁹²

Early in *On Luke* Bede explained that David gave all the plans and measurements for the temple to Solomon 'so that, with the state of worship thriving externally, the height of devotion might also increase internally'.⁹³ The statement seems not dissimilar to some comments of Stephen stating that the purpose of the tabernacle's construction was to stimulate greater faith from the Israelite people.⁹⁴ Towards the end of *On Luke* Bede attacked people who delighted in building in marble and gold when Christ had not had a place to rest his head.⁹⁵ This could be seen as a case of Bede carefully engaging with the temple-image as understood by the Wilfridians, agreeing with them in part but also seeking to correct them of a materialistic focus. Such an explanation would situate Bede's use of the temple in debate between different communities rather than in consensus within one community.⁹⁶

⁹² O'Reilly, 'Introduction', p. 1, explicitly dismisses this interpretation of *On the Temple*; Chazelle, "Romanness", pp. 91-2, suggests that the Codex Amiatinus was intended to contrast with the highly material *Romanitas* of the nascent cult of Wilfrid. For a different case where Bede may have tried to use his contacts with Acca to redirect the ideas of the Hexham community: Darby, *End of Time*, pp. 83-91.

⁹³ *Luc.*, p. 21 'ut crescente extrinsecus statu culturae etiam deuotionis interius culmen augesceret'. Also *Hom.*, II.19 p. 320.

⁹⁴ VW, XVII pp. 34-5 'Sicut enim Moyses tabernaculum seculare manu factum...ad concitandam Israhelitico populo culturae Dei fidem...ita vero beatissimus Wilfrithus episcopus thalamum veri sponsi et et sponsae in conspectu populorum, corde credentium et fide confitentium...decoravit'. A version of Stephen's *Life* probably appeared by 715 and thus could have been known to Bede when writing *On Luke*, but it was probably more closely associated with Ripon then with Acca's Hexham: D.P. Kirby, 'Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the "Life of Wilfrid"', *English Historical Review*, 98 (1983), pp. 101-14.

⁹⁵ *Luc.*, p. 375 'Audiant quibus aedificandarum domorum cura est et ambitiosarum porticum cogitatur instructio quos pretiosorum marmorum pompa et distincta auro laquearia delectant cognoscant Christum omnium dominum qui locum ubi caput inclinaret non habuit'.

⁹⁶ I am indebted to Matthew Kempshall for discussion on this subject. We should not, of course, assume that consensus, rather than disagreement, was always the rule at Wearmouth-Jarrow: Meyvaert, 'Dissension in Bede's Community'.

Problems, however, exist with this line of interpretation. Making a link between actual contemporary locations and the temple or tabernacle of the Old Testament was not unique to the *Life of Wilfrid*, but may have been widespread in the Insular world. The compilers of the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* (possibly connected with Iona during Bede's own lifetime) explicitly urged monastic enclosure on the model of the temple-precincts, with zones of increasing holiness, each more exclusive than the previous.⁹⁷ Adomnán of Iona seems to have held this view of the monastic complex which may have been common throughout the Insular world.⁹⁸ The fact that both the Columban and Wilfridian *familiae* could have thought of their religious structures in terms of the temple indicates just how common and uncontroversial an attitude this was. The image of the temple infused the liturgy of church-dedication and Bede's own homilies for the celebration of the feast of dedication begin with this understanding of the church as the Lord's temple – although they move on to make the utterly conventional point that the congregation is more truly the temple.⁹⁹

The contrast between Bede and Stephen should not be pushed too far. In fact, as the previous section has shown, Bede interpreted the biblical temple, on occasion, as

⁹⁷ Herrmann Wasserschleben (ed.), *Die Irische Kanonensammlung* (Leipzig: Bernard Tauchnitz, 1885), XLIV.1-7 pp. 174-6. For the date and origin of the *Collectio*: Roy Flechner, 'A Study and Edition of the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2006), pp. 9*-17*. For the argument that Irish monasteries were deliberately built on the model of the temple: David H. Jenkins, 'Holy, Holier, Holiest': *The Sacred Topography of the Early Medieval Irish Church* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

⁹⁸ Aidan MacDonald, 'Aspects of the Monastic Landscape in Adomnán's *Life of Columba*', in *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars*, ed. John Carey et al. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 15-30. Most Anglo-Saxon monasteries were enclosed somehow, even if only symbolically: Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 97-106; Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 196-9. For the problem of enclosure/boundaries on Lindisfarne: Deirdre O'Sullivan, 'Space, Silence and Shortage on Lindisfarne: The Archaeology of Asceticism', in *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. Helena Hamerow and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp. 33-52, at 38-40.

⁹⁹ E.g. *Hom.*, II.24 p. 359 'Neque enim putandum est quia domus solummodo in qua ad orandum uel ad mysteria celebranda conuenimus templum sit domini et non ipsi qui in nomine domini conuenimus multo amplius templum eius et appellemur et simus'; Dominique Iogna-Prat, 'Lieu de culte et exégèse liturgique à l'époque carolingienne', in *Bible in the Carolingian Era*, ed. Chazelle and Edwards, pp. 215-44, at 222-3; See pp. 56-7 above.

symbolising the contemporary church-building. He did so notably in *On Mark* but, as argued above, it seems that he was there merely reusing an interpretation which he had developed in the context of *Homily II.1*.¹⁰⁰ On close examination Bede's homilies can be found to make frequent use of this link between the temple and the Christian church. Bede called upon the congregation to imitate the apostles' attendance at the temple by remaining in church at the canonical hours.¹⁰¹ His homily on John's account of the cleansing explains why a church is like the temple: it is 'the house of prayer where the body of the Lord is consecrated'.¹⁰² The location of the Christian sacraments is a place of sacrifice, and thus analogous to the temple of Jerusalem.

The eucharist was, for Bede, a sacrifice offered upon the altar of a church as the passion had been a sacrifice offered upon the altar of the cross.¹⁰³ As a consequence he could draw a quite explicit analogy between the church and the Jewish temple: 'If [Christ] chose to walk in the temple, where the flesh and blood of brute animals used to be offered, much more will he rejoice to visit our house of prayer, where the sacrament of his own body and blood is celebrated.'¹⁰⁴ A number of Bede's homilies make this same essential point. Christ, having been circumcised, journeyed to the temple to give sacrifice as a figure of the Christian's movement from the baptismal font to the altar to offer the

¹⁰⁰ While Bede did draw a link between the temple and the church-building, I am entirely unconvinced by the argument (Calvin B. Kendall, *The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and Their Verse Inscriptions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 12) that the reference to *templum Domini* at *DST*, II.11 pp. 168-9, in fact means *church* and that Bede proposed that churches could be read following a fourfold exegesis. While the Jewish temple could symbolise a church-building, the reverse would surely have made no sense for Bede.

¹⁰¹ *Hom.*, II.16 p. 300.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, II.1 p. 188 'maxime domum orationis ubi corpus domini consecratur ubi angelorum praesentia semper adesse non dubitatur ne quid ineptum fiat...totis uiribus agamus'; adapted from trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 7.

¹⁰³ E.g. *Hom.*, II.7 p. 231; *Luc.*, pp. 411-2; *Ezra.*, p. 329.

¹⁰⁴ *Hom.*, II.24 p. 358 'Si ergo ambulare uoluit in templo in quo caro et sanguis brutorum animalium offerebatur, multo magis nostram orationis domum ubi carnis ipsius ac sanguinis sacramenta celebrantur uisitare gaudebit'; trans. Martin & Hurst, II, 241-2. For the importance of the eucharist in the process by which churches come to be seen as holy places: Dominique Iogna-Prat, *La Maison Dieu: Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge (v.800-v.1200)* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), pp. 449-59.

sacrifice of Christ's body and blood.¹⁰⁵ Bede condemned the Jews who came to the temple to be cleansed, but plotted there to murder Christ; similarly one ought not to approach the altar to participate in the eucharist when filled with hatred towards other members of Christ – to do so is to turn the house of prayer into a den of thieves.¹⁰⁶ In his homilies Bede showed no sign of being uncomfortable with linking the contemporary location of the sacraments with the temple; it seems likely that he and Stephen of Ripon would have agreed substantially about this use of the temple-image.

However, it does not seem probable that Bede came to this understanding of the temple because Acca convinced him of any Wilfridian interpretation. The appearance of the temple-as-church-building interpretation in the homilies in particular directs our focus, once again, to Wearmouth-Jarrow. Of course, no clear proof survives that Bede himself preached these homilies in one of the monastery's churches. Many were quite possibly purely literary exercises intended for general use – though the presence of a homily on Benedict Biscop in the final collection does prove that the community at Wearmouth-Jarrow was the intended audience for at least some of the homilies.¹⁰⁷ Homilies, as discussed in the last chapter, are designed to build a relationship with their audience; even if Bede never delivered his homilies he would have had an imaginary audience in mind which would have shaped his expectations. That imaginary audience must have reflected Bede's own experience of church congregations, and that experience would primarily, and possibly overwhelmingly, have been of congregations at Wearmouth and Jarrow. Bede's imagined audience probably, therefore, shared many interests with his own monastic community.

¹⁰⁵ *Hom.*, I.14 pp. 101-2, I.18 p. 130.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, II.4 pp. 207-8.

¹⁰⁷ Lawrence T. Martin, 'Bede and Preaching', in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. DeGregorio, pp. 156-69, at 162-3. See pp. 165-6 above.

The temple does indeed seem to have been one of those interests. Frequently Bede expressed his pleasure at discussing the details of the Jewish temple with his brothers who, he suspected, would delight in hearing about it.¹⁰⁸ If he personally disapproved of an obsession with fine buildings, his sense of fraternal duty may have encouraged him to preach on subjects appealing to a community convinced of the temple-like qualities of their stone churches. Scholars have on occasion suggested that the temple provided a model for Wearmouth-Jarrow.¹⁰⁹ Certain stone features may particularly have called the biblical archetype to mind: for instance, a covered walkway (possibly colonnaded on one side) at Wearmouth was quite probably described as a *porticus* – a word which Bede used to describe the cloister-like structures he imagined surrounding Solomon’s temple.¹¹⁰ The monastery certainly did not mimic the temple exactly, but it would not have needed to in order to count as a copy in the medieval mind; a few symbolic features would have been enough to make the link.¹¹¹

One ought never to forget just how unusual stone buildings were in the Anglo-Saxon world of wood; even for church-buildings stone did not constitute the norm.¹¹² Anglo-Saxons were fascinated and more than a little cowed by grand Roman stone structures.

¹⁰⁸ *Hom.*, II.1 pp. 189-90, II.19 p. 319, II.24 p. 363, II.25 p. 377 ‘Haec nos, carissimi, in praesentis festi nostri gaudium de factura templi pauca ex pluribus fraternitati uestrae exposuisse libuit quatenus et miranda terrestri domus domini fabrica delectaret auditum...’.

¹⁰⁹ Holder, ‘Allegory and History’, pp. 123-5; Wood, *Ceolfrid*, p. 15; Cramp, *Monastic Sites*, I, 352; Chazelle, ‘Art and Reverence’, p. 87.

¹¹⁰ Thacker, *Bede and Augustine*, pp. 30-1; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, ‘The Term *Porticus* and *Imitatio Romae* in Early Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Text and Gloss*, ed. Conrad O’Brian et al., pp. 13-34; Cramp, *Monastic Sites*, I, 95-8, 112. *Ezra.*, p. 298; *Temp.*, pp. 192-3.

¹¹¹ Richard Krautheimer, ‘Introduction to an “Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture”’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), pp. 1-33, at 1-20. For other possible examples of such architectural mimicry in early Anglo-Saxon England: Richard Bailey, ‘St Wilfrid, Ripon and Hexham’, in *Studies in Insular Art and Archeology*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov and Robert Farrell (Oxford, OH: Miami University School of Fine Arts, 1991), pp. 3-25, at 20-2; O’Reilly, ‘Art of Authority’, p. 149.

¹¹² Jane Hawkes, ‘*Iuxta Morem Romanorum*: Stone and Sculpture in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 69-99.

These were, in the language of Old English verse, the ‘work of giants’.¹¹³ Bede’s explanation as to why the judges of ancient Israel heard cases at the gates of a city may give a glimpse of his own experience of Anglo-Saxon peasants coming to Wearmouth-Jarrow: the judges sat outside the city ‘lest peasants or shepherds were struck dumb by the unaccustomed buildings of the city’.¹¹⁴ The secular and ecclesiastical élite might not have been rendered speechless by stonework, but they remained fascinated with it as Cuthbert’s tour of the Roman stonework of Carlisle shows.¹¹⁵ Bede’s community must have been aware that they lived amongst exceptional structures, different from the mundane buildings around them, and would have turned to scripture to make sense of that difference.¹¹⁶

Bede’s lived experience in this exceptional built environment provides, then, a plausible reason for the on-going importance of the temple-image in his work. If using the Codex Grandior as the model for their own pandects provided the initial impetus for the Wearmouth-Jarrow community to think about the temple, the daily routine amongst their stone churches and structures likely helped to internalise that image as part of their identity.¹¹⁷ Whatever Bede’s misgivings about costly buildings, his account of the monastery remains strikingly materialistic and he probably mimicked the *Liber Pontificalis* in its fascination with construction work and physical displays of wealth.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ E.g. ‘The Ruin’, ed. and trans. Hamer, *Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse*, pp. 25-9.

¹¹⁴ Bede, *In Proverbia*, p. 158 ‘nec rusticos uel pastores insolita urbis aedificia stupefacere’. Cf. *VW*, XXII pp. 46-7.

¹¹⁵ *VCP*, XXVII pp. 242-5 ‘deducentibus eum ciuibus ut uideret moenia ciuitatis fontemque in ea miro quondam Romanorum opera extractum...’. For discussion: Orton & Wood, *Fragments of History*, pp. 26-7.

¹¹⁶ See Thomas Pickles, ‘Anglo-Saxon Monasteries as Sacred Places: Topography, Exegesis and Vocation’, in *Sacred Text – Sacred Space: Architectural, Spiritual and Literary Convergences in England and Wales*, ed. Joseph Sterrett and Peter Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 35-55.

¹¹⁷ Describing churches as temples was quite common in poetry: Aethelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, ed. A. Campbell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 12-5, 36-7, 50-1; Aldhelm, *Carmina Ecclesiastica*, I-III pp. 11-8.

¹¹⁸ Coates, ‘Ceolfrid’, pp. 73-4; Gunn, *Bede’s Historiae*, pp. 116-30. A similar set of priorities is displayed in Bede’s account of Acca’s work at Hexham: *HE*, V.20 pp. 530-1.

The stone buildings of the monastery clearly played an important role in the community's identity, as Nechtan's request to Ceolfrith for experts to build him a stone church attests.¹¹⁹ If Bede suspected that preaching about the architectural features of the temple would delight and serve as a good means to educate his brother monks, the evidence suggests that he guessed right.

The historian cannot walk amidst the stones of Wearmouth-Jarrow with its early eighth-century inhabitants and experience how such an environment would have shaped, possibly distorted, their self-image. We can, however, piece together some hints concerning the monastery's identity. Bede mourned Ceolfrith's departure in 716 by comparing the abbot with Moses and Aaron;¹²⁰ Pope Gregory II made the same comparison in his letter to the new abbot Hwaetberht accepting Wearmouth-Jarrow's gifts and praising the deceased Ceolfrith.¹²¹ Bede wrote before the papal letter arrived and so could not simply have parroted its phrases. Rather, both writers most likely expressed an understanding of Ceolfrith current in Wearmouth-Jarrow at the time of the Codex Amiatinus' departure – one which could have been explained to the pope by those monks who presented the manuscript in Rome. The picture of the tabernacle within the codex, the names of Moses and Aaron written inside the enclosure, might have acted as a symbolic representation of Wearmouth-Jarrow.¹²² Benedict Biscop's reported dying words similarly linked the monastery with Old Testament Israel.¹²³

¹¹⁹ *HE*, V.21 pp. 532-5.

¹²⁰ *Sam.*, p. 212 'Sed qui Moysi longaeuo ab humanis rebus tollendo Iesum Naue in ducatum qui Eleazarum in sacerdotium Aaron patri substituit ipse prouecto aetate Ceolfrido ad beatorum apostolorum limina sancta properanti Huetberctum...ad regendas...animas abbatis uice substituit'. Bede clearly wrote this before news of Ceolfrith's death at Langres had reached Wearmouth-Jarrow.

¹²¹ *VCeol.*, 39 p. 403 'Aaron et Moysi sanctis diuinae plebis ducibus ad promissionis patriam tendentibus euocatis...superstitem discipulum institutum cum asseclis gubernandis Iesu elegantissimi ducis...perornet.' Plummer noted that the text here is corrupt: *Opera Historica*, II, 377.

¹²² See Chazelle, 'Painting the Voice of God', p. 52. For a rich analysis of how the imagery of Exodus may relate to Ceolfrith's final journey and how it was understood: O'Reilly, 'Seeing the God of Gods', pp. 12-8.

¹²³ *HA*, 13 p. 377; *VCeol.*, 25 p. 397.

Material in the temple-commentaries came from locations other than Wearmouth-Jarrow on occasion. Bede's decision to celebrate the leaders of the Roman mission to the English in *On the Temple* would have been perfectly acceptable to his brother monks, but probably arose from contact with Nothelm and Albinus who sought to promote Canterbury's Rome-centred view of the Anglo-Saxon Church.¹²⁴ Albinus played an important role in urging Bede to write the *Ecclesiastical History* and Nothelm undertook the necessary research in the papal archives in Rome;¹²⁵ Nothelm's role as contact between the abbot of Peter and Paul's and Bede, as well as his elevation to the archbishopric in 735, implies that he was sympathetic to Canterbury's interests.¹²⁶ Considering that both men must have been in frequent contact with Bede in the years before 731 it is unlikely that they were unaware of *On the Temple*.¹²⁷ Indeed, as noted above, Nothelm had enquired concerning the temple-image previously, and Bede sent Albinus *On the Temple* shortly after its completion with a letter which underlines his interest in the work.¹²⁸

Canterbury would have found much appealing in Bede's use of the temple-image. The archiepiscopal church promoted an ideology of a unified Anglo-Saxon Church founded by Rome, a link symbolised in the stone buildings which made Canterbury an imitation

¹²⁴ *Temp.*, p. 218. Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory*, p. 10; *idem*, "Footsteps of the Fathers", pp. 278-9.

¹²⁵ *HE*, praef. pp. 2-5. Kirby, *Contemporary Setting*, esp. pp. 3-8; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 296-7. Higham, *(Re-)reading Bede*, pp. 76-8, questions the influence of Albinus on the *HE*.

¹²⁶ Canterbury, of course, contained two religious communities, one at Peter and Paul's and one at the cathedral. The two seem to have co-operated closely in the early period, however: (arch)bishops were buried in the monastery, Theodore and Hadrian seem to have jointly run the Canterbury school and both communities may have participated in the cathedral liturgy: Richard Emms, 'The Early History of Saint Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury', in *St Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), pp. 410-27, at 410-5.

¹²⁷ Meyvaert, "Footsteps of the Fathers", p. 276, argues that contact between Bede and Canterbury concerning the *HE* probably began before 716.

¹²⁸ Westgard, 'Bede's Letter to Albinus', p. 214 'Sed et aliud, quod te pariter desiderare comperi, uolumen tibi uice remunerationis aequae ad transscribendum destinaui, uidelicet illud quid de structura templi Salomonis atque allegorica eius interpretatio nuper edidi'. The text of the letter published by Plummer (*Opera Historica*, I, 3), based on a transcription from a now lost MS, reads 'partim' rather than 'pariter' – a mistake easily made in copying, Westgard (p. 211 n. 6) argues. The correct reading highlights that *On the Temple* was not necessarily of secondary importance to the *HE* for Albinus.

of the eternal city.¹²⁹ There is nothing surprising in the discovery that many Anglo-Saxon clerics from the Roman tradition in the late seventh and early eighth centuries had similar opinions – indeed we would expect it. But such general similarities do not negate the lack of specific evidence for interest in the temple-image at Canterbury. The published glosses on Exodus from the Canterbury school display no especial interest in the Mosaic tabernacle and provide a purely descriptive commentary on the priestly vestments.¹³⁰ Many traditional elements of Christian interpretation of the temple-image were, no doubt, known at Canterbury.¹³¹ But we would expect something more than a few traditional interpretations to mark the primary source and impetus behind Bede's exceptional engagement with the temple-image.¹³² The use of the temple-image in Bede's writings probably reflects the influence of a northern Insular context, rather than the interests of Canterbury.

The temple-image crops up in Stephen's *Life of Wilfrid* and in Irish writings which may suggest a common cultural approach to the temple; the ivory carving of the temple in the Franks Casket probably also derives from eighth-century Northumbria.¹³³ Despite the possible influence of such examples, the Codex Amiatinus, with its images of the

¹²⁹ Nicholas Brooks, 'Canterbury, Rome and the Construction of English Identity', in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, ed. Julia M.H. Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 221-46; *idem*, 'Canterbury and Rome: The Limits and Myth of Romanitas', *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 49 (2002), pp. 797-832; Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 66-8.

¹³⁰ Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, pp. 352-9. Many of the texts associated with the Canterbury school remain unpublished – including glosses on Kings and other potentially relevant books of the Bible. But these are related to the purely literal glosses on words found in the Leiden Glossary and are unlikely to bear much resemblance to Bede's exegetical approach. For the Leiden glosses on Paralipomenon and Ezra & Nehemiah (neither of which displays any interest in the temple-image within these biblical books): J.H. Hessels (ed.), *A Late Eighth-Century Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary preserved in the Library of the Leiden University* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), pp. 10-1, 21.

¹³¹ See Stevenson, 'Laterculus Malalianus', pp. 136-41.

¹³² Canterbury, however, would have been a key staging-post if Cosmas Indicopleustes' *Christian Topography* had reached Wearmouth-Jarrow: pp. 52, 63 above.

¹³³ See pp. 153-4 above. Many questions remain about the origin of the Book of Kells/Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS A.I. (58), which bears a striking image of the temple on fol. 202v, but the scholarship leans towards assigning the manuscript a date many decades after the death of Bede. See Farr, *Book of Kells*, pp. 14-5, 51-103.

tabernacle, Ezra as high-priest and Christ as the heavenly ark, remains the most striking Insular use of the temple-image likely to have influenced Bede which I have been able to identify.¹³⁴ When evidence survives for the ideology of the community to which Bede belonged it would seem perverse to set it aside in favour of more distant sources. Any discussion concerning the temple's exegesis at Wearmouth-Jarrow would have been part of a wider conversation, but that local discussion provides, I would argue, the most likely source for the ideas found in Bede's temple-commentaries.

Holder has argued that the distinctive features of Bede's exegesis, including his interest in the temple-image, derive from his individual psychology or mind-set.¹³⁵ Doing so continues the long tradition of approaching his works with a focus upon Bede the man, the individual genius. This in turn belongs to the mainstream of our Romantic-individualist culture; we think of the published text of *The Waste Land* as Eliot's even though formed by a dialogue between the poet and others who criticised, edited – and *contributed*.¹³⁶ A critical apparatus allows the reader to see where Bede used the thoughts and words of the Church Fathers. It cannot reconstruct the influence of the communal culture at Wearmouth-Jarrow; historians must use their imagination for that, and that obviously is a risky strategy. Historical knowledge requires risks on occasion to advance, of course. The evidence, of Bede's use of the temple-image and the chronology of that

¹³⁴ See pp. 97-103, 110-3, 159 above; Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 'Remembering Jerusalem: Architecture and Meaning in Insular Canon Table Arcades', in *Making and Meaning in Insular Art*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 242-56, at 254, argues that the pillared arcades which decorate the pandect's canon tables (fols 798r-801r) refer to the Holy Sepulchre and, therefore, may have called the temple-image to mind (the Sepulchre being the new temple).

¹³⁵ Holder, 'Mysteries of Our Salvation', p. 162; *idem*, 'Allegory and History', p. 120: 'There seems to have been something about the balance, harmony, and regularity of architectural design that appealed to his imagination...'

¹³⁶ See T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: a Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, ed. Valerie Eliot (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1994). For commentary (focusing on a later period) on the inappropriate application of modern ideas concerning the individual author to medieval exegesis: Lesley Smith, 'Hugh of St. Cher and Medieval Collaboration', in *Transforming Relations: Essays on Jews and Christians throughout History in Honor of Michael A. Signer*, ed. Franklin T. Harkins (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), pp. 241-64, at 255-8.

use, suggests important links between the necessarily communal creation of the Codex Amiatinus and Bede's interpretation of the temple. Clear evidence exists to suppose that the brothers of Wearmouth-Jarrow identified closely with the temple-image and that some of Bede's works responded to their interests.

Is it plausible to imagine then that Bede's writings contain the results of communal discourse? Older interpretations of Bede as entirely, blissfully, unconnected with other activities at Wearmouth-Jarrow have become less popular, though still occasionally aired.¹³⁷ In the preface to *On Luke* Bede claimed to be his own *dictator*, note-taker and copyist during the work's composition.¹³⁸ That suggests a lack of support from his community, though Wearmouth-Jarrow's scribes may have been busy working on the Codex Amiatinus at this time or Bede could have treated such work as fulfilling his monastic duty of manual labour.¹³⁹ At the end of his life Bede seems to have been no solitary scholar: surrounded, rather, on his death-bed by note-takers and students hanging on his every word.¹⁴⁰ And in a world without modern medical assistance, as Higham points out, failing eyesight probably meant that Bede required help with reading and writing long before 735 – the final temple-commentaries and the *Ecclesiastical History* may well have been written with extensive support.¹⁴¹ In the context of such a well-regimented institution as Wearmouth-Jarrow it is unlikely that resources would have been directed to assisting Bede's work unless it was, in some way, 'officially' endorsed.

As a monk Bede belonged to a way of life built upon an ideal of absolute obedience, where the individual's interests disappeared into the collective which had 'but one heart

¹³⁷ E.g. Ward, *Venerable Bede*, p. 5.

¹³⁸ *Luc.*, p. 7 'ipse mihi dictator simul notarius et librarius existerem'.

¹³⁹ Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 216-8.

¹⁴⁰ Cuthbert, *De Obitu Bedae*, pp. 580-7. For an overview of Bede's known contacts throughout his scholarly life: Dorothy Whitelock, 'Bede and His Teachers and Friends', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. Bonner, pp. 19-39.

¹⁴¹ Higham, *(Re-)reading Bede*, p. 8.

and one soul'.¹⁴² His identification with Wearmouth-Jarrow would have been all the closer for his youth upon entering the monastery; whether he initially entered simply for reasons of education or as a child oblate, Bede remained at Wearmouth-Jarrow from the age of seven onwards. The Benedictine ideal was 'a communal life where the individual was lost in the crowd and stripped of those eccentricities which we call personality'.¹⁴³ Such an ideal, of course, never matched the reality of the life which Bede, or any other medieval monk, lived. Recent work has emphasised the importance of secular and family connections within Anglo-Saxon monasticism; in an early medieval context even oblation did not sever the link between the monk and the kin group beyond the monastery.¹⁴⁴ The aristocratic environment of an Anglo-Saxon monastery was one where the habit failed to strip the individual of worldly distinctions or insulate them from external influences. Bede's status as a monk does not in itself make it certain that he would have imbibed a communal ethos or that his writings would put forward the results of communal discourse.

But Bede's case may be somewhat different from that of the average Anglo-Saxon monk. There is reason to doubt that his integration into Wearmouth-Jarrow would have been balanced by continuing loyalties to a kin group outside the monastery. Bede never mentions his parents, rather saying that his relatives sent him to Benedict Biscop.¹⁴⁵

Some scholars have suggested that he may have lost one or both parents; his entry into a

¹⁴² Acts 4.32 – *Tab.*, p. 42; *Temp.*, p. 163; *Gen.*, p. 128; see pp. 132-3 above. For the influence of Bede's monasticism on his exegesis: DeGregorio, 'Bede, the Monk'.

¹⁴³ R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1967), p. 213. For a more recent statement of a similar interpretation of early-medieval monasticism: Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 129-36. For Bede's knowledge of the Benedictine Rule: p. 33 above.

¹⁴⁴ Cubitt, 'Monastic Memory and Identity', pp. 259-61; Mayke de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 219-27.

¹⁴⁵ *HE*, V.24 pp. 566-7 'cum essem annorum VII, cura propinquorum datus sum educandus reuerentissimo abbati Benedicto...'. Alcuin, *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, ed. Peter Godman, *The Bishops, Kings and Saints of York* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 102-3, did specify that Bede was sent to the monastery by his *parentes* – a word which could perhaps mean relatives, but suggests that he believed (drawing on oral traditions?) that Bede's parents donated him.

religious house could have been because his own family proved unable or unwilling to support him.¹⁴⁶ Such arguments cannot go beyond the tentative. Bede's writings, however, occasionally evidence a distrust of the aristocratic kin group and preference for the spiritual, monastic, family.¹⁴⁷ His homily in praise of Benedict Biscop highlights especially the rejection of the aristocrat's duty to propagate children according to the flesh and urges the community to see themselves as the founder's 'spiritual children'.¹⁴⁸ Bede's comments on Wearmouth-Jarrow do not sound like those of an individualist or of someone held back by external connections from complete submersion into the spiritual family.¹⁴⁹ The psychological effect on children of being raised within a religious community is difficult to recover – but it must have led frequently to a close identification with the monastery.¹⁵⁰ Bede certainly seems to have been one of the cases where it did so.

We should note that in early medieval society the kind of 'constructed' kinship which Bede used to describe his monastic community was quite common; friendship and

¹⁴⁶ Wood, 'Gifts of Wearmouth and Jarrow', p. 113; Pelteret, 'Bede's Women', pp. 24-5; Ward, *Venerable Bede*, p. 3. For a different interpretation of Bede's description of his 'oblation': Jong, *In Samuel's Image*, pp. 48, 213.

¹⁴⁷ Wood, 'Gifts of Wearmouth and Jarrow', pp. 113-4; Mayr-Harting, *Rule of St. Benedict, and Social Class*; Olivier Szerwiniack, 'Frères et sœurs dans l'*Histoire ecclésiastique du peuple anglais* de Bède le Vénérable: De la fratrie biologique à la fratrie spirituelle', *RB*, 118 (2008), pp. 239-61.

¹⁴⁸ *Hom.*, I.13 p. 93 'Filiis quos carnaliter habere dispexit centuplum accipere meruit spirituales...Nos namque sumus filii eius quos in hanc monachiae domum pius prouisor induxit; nos sumus filii quos diversis carnaliter editos parentibus in unam sanctae professionis familiam spiritaliter fecit adgregari...', p. 94 'Vnde necesse est, fratres carissimi, ut tamquam boni filii et tanto parenti digni exempla ac praecepta illius in omnibus seruare curemus...nos...qui uxores ducere ac filios carnaliter procreare angelicae conuersationis amore fastidiuimus'. Also *HA*, I p. 365.

¹⁴⁹ Rather he seems to have been most troubled when Wearmouth-Jarrow's founders did not match the ideal to which he held them: Coates, 'Ceolfrid', p. 85; Michael Gleason, 'Bede and his Fathers', *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 45 (1994), pp. 223-38.

¹⁵⁰ On early-medieval oblation and child-rearing in monasteries: Jong, *In Samuel's Image*; Patricia Quinn, *Better than the Sons of Kings: Boys and Monks in the early Middle Ages* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); John Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (London: Allen Lane, 1989), pp. 228-55. For Anglo-Saxon monasteries as families: Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 70-2.

kinship existed, for the Anglo-Saxons, on a continuum of interpersonal relations.¹⁵¹ Clannish, kin-based ties could cut across the new bonds which the Church sought to create in recently converted barbarian societies – but they could also be hijacked and recreated in a religious context. Aldhelm’s letter to the clergy of Wilfrid draws upon ideas of loyalty familiar from Anglo-Saxon warrior culture, but uses them to uphold the bonds of the religious *familia*.¹⁵² It has been shown that Boniface’s missions to the continent drew not upon the institutional resources of the Church, but upon personal and familial networks of individuals.¹⁵³ But Boniface’s correspondence also reveals how, when the security of the family was removed, men and women sought to replace it with spiritual bonds. Ecclesiastical connections provided the means by which those without parents or siblings could avoid being alone;¹⁵⁴ such examples may prove helpful when thinking about how the young Bede came to identify with his monastic house.

Thus, the societal norms of Bede’s time make it likely that he would have formed the kinds of bonds necessary to integrate tightly into the Wearmouth-Jarrow community. There is little sense in Bede’s own writings that personal, individual friendships were a key part of this process for him – rather the emphasis was on the collective.¹⁵⁵ Of perhaps more importance to present purposes is the question of Bede’s own individuality as

¹⁵¹ Jong, *In Samuel’s Image*, pp. 205-19; Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘Anglo-Saxon Kinship Revisited’, in *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. John Hines (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), pp. 171-204; Joseph H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); *idem*, *Christianizing Kinship: Ritual Sponsorship in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

¹⁵² Aldhelm, *Epistulae*, XII pp. 500-2. For a discussion of Wilfrid’s ‘fatherhood’ as a theme in Stephen’s *Life*: Foley, *Images of Sanctity*, pp. 53-70.

¹⁵³ Rosamond McKitterick, ‘Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections and Local Influences’, repr. in *eadem*, *The Frankish Kings and Culture in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), pp. 1-40.

¹⁵⁴ Tangl (ed.), *Die Briefe*, 13-4 pp. 18-26, 27 pp. 48-9, 29 pp. 52-3, 49 p. 78 ‘quod genitoris et genetricis et aliorum propinquorum nostrorum [ob] obitum ad Germanicas gentes transivimus...’.

¹⁵⁵ Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship & Community: The Monastic Experience 350-1250* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1988), pp. 91-6. For Bede’s *HA* as the portrait of a community, rather than of individual abbots: Alan Thacker, ‘The Social and Continental Background to early Anglo-Saxon Hagiography’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1976), pp. 183-7.

expressed in his writings. The monk of Jarrow was clearly an exceptional individual in many respects and he is unlikely to have been unaware of this. Nonetheless, despite the traditional certainty about ascertaining his personality, Bede himself remains somewhat nondescript, a distant presence in his own writings. A recent study of Bede's prose style has found, in effect, that he had none; preferring masterfully to mimic the styles of the Church Fathers, his prose lacks 'any kind of idiosyncrasy, even of personality'.¹⁵⁶ He could be original on occasion, but would probably not have thanked modern scholars for pointing it out. Bede's writings present us simply with a 'persona of orthodoxy', built up by the reliance on authorities rather than an emphasis on authorial individuality.¹⁵⁷

Witness the careful listing of sources at the beginning of the *Ecclesiastical History*, followed by the disclaimer: 'I humbly beg the reader, if he finds anything other than the truth set down in what I have written, not to impute it to me.'¹⁵⁸

While the statement is unlikely to be an entirely accurate representation of Bede's level of authorial control it does suggest that he was comfortable with seeing himself passing on, not merely the wisdom of the Fathers, but the oral knowledge of his contemporaries also.¹⁵⁹ With this in mind it is worthwhile noting the close resemblance between Wearmouth-Jarrow's ideology and worldview (as far as we can reconstruct it) and Bede's use of the temple-image. We have seen, in the body of this thesis, how the temple in Bede's writings celebrates the Anglo-Saxon place in the universal Church, ecclesiastical unity and Roman orthodoxy – all of which obviously form inter-related

¹⁵⁶ Richard Sharpe, 'The Varieties of Bede's Prose', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 129 (2005), pp. 339-55, quotation at 340.

¹⁵⁷ Hilliard, 'Bede as Scholar', p. 103. E.g. *Luc.*, pp. 6-10; *Ret.*, pp. 110-1; Bede, *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, esp. 16 p. 625. For Bede's use of authorities: Hill, *Benedictine Reform*, esp. pp. 2, 4; Conor O'Brien, 'Bede on Creation', *RB*, 123 (2013), pp. 255-73, at 271-2.

¹⁵⁸ *HE*, praef. pp. 6-7 'Lectoremque suppliciter obsecro ut, si qua in his quae scripsimus aliter quam se ueritas habet posita reppererit, non hoc nobis inputet...'

¹⁵⁹ For the *HE*'s dependence upon monastic oral culture: D.P. Kirby, 'Bede's Native Sources for the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 48 (1965-1966), pp. 341-71.

strands in Wearmouth-Jarrow's outlook as a self-consciously Romanising Anglo-Saxon monastery formed by the coming together of two separate institutions.¹⁶⁰ This is not to say that Bede never interpreted the temple-image in ways which relate to any wider context; Wearmouth-Jarrow did not have an exclusive hold over his ideas as contact with learned clerics in Northumbria, Kent, Wessex and elsewhere will have influenced Bede.¹⁶¹ Nonetheless, I have shown that good evidence exists for asserting that the influence of Wearmouth-Jarrow was of the greatest importance to Bede's use of the temple-image.

A few years ago, Scott DeGregorio urged that more scholarship examine how the 'lived experience' of Bede's monasticism influenced and shaped his exegesis.¹⁶² This thesis, in part, attempts to do just that by arguing that Bede's interpretation of the temple-image developed in response to and preserved ideas formed in the midst of that 'lived experience'. It was an experience not lived by Bede alone; the lives and ideas of many monks, most now nameless, constantly intersected with our author's creative career, although the *vestigia* they left in his work can barely now be guessed at. The question of non-textual influences upon Bede can never, necessarily, be solved. We can hope perhaps to reread most of the books which he read, though situated in a radically different historical and social context, but we can never hear again the conversations which Bede heard. The latter, however, were certainly as real, and perhaps as influential, as the former; the current respect for Bede's originality should not obscure his possible dependence upon the institution and people who surrounded him.

¹⁶⁰ See pp. 86-7, 133, 155-9 above.

¹⁶¹ See pp. 83-4, 126-32, 147-8 above. As well as Acca, Albinus and Nothelm, Bede corresponded with Daniel of Winchester and Pecthelm with whom he would have shared scriptural interests.

¹⁶² DeGregorio, 'Bede, the Monk', pp. 368-9.

In 'Things that Might Have Been' Borges mourned the non-existence of the work Bede could have written on Saxon mythology.¹⁶³ It is salutary to remember that the gaps in our knowledge of Bede and his world are perhaps far greater than that knowledge itself – for we do not know what might fill them. Nevertheless, this thesis has extended our knowledge of Bede's use of the temple-image and thereby raised fruitful questions about how we understand Bede as an author and a monk more generally. Returning to Bede's temple itself, the multivalent complexity of the image cannot be captured in a single sentence or two. But this thesis has shown that important connections exist tying together the different uses of the temple-image. We are left with a clear picture of how Bede used the temple to promote his vision of cosmic, ecclesiastical and individual unity through and with Christ, and the more ill-defined possibility that Bede shared that vision with his community.

¹⁶³ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Things that Might Have Been', trans. Alastair Reid, *New England Review*, 15 (1993), p. 101: 'I think of things that might have been and were not. / The treatise on Saxon mythology that Bede did not write...'

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