

# ***Church History***



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- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16<sup>th</sup> century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19<sup>th</sup> century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20<sup>th</sup> century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21<sup>st</sup> century



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  - *The “Dark Ages” Overview*
  - *Flagrant Abuses of Authority: Zeno, Theodoric, and Clovis*
  - *Auctoritas Sacrata Pontificum: Gelasius*
  - *The Rise of the Monk: Benedict, Brendan, and Dennis*
  - *The Politics of Death: Justinian and Columba*
  - *Kingdoms of God*
  - *Streamlining the Church*
  - *European Empires: The Carolingians*
  - *European Empires: The Northmen (part one)*





# The Early Middle Ages

- Important stuff was going on up north...
  - 731 The Venerable Bede wrote his *History*
    - Around the same time that Charles Martel was beating back the Muslims at the Battle of Tours an elderly British monk named Bæda wrote *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People*
      - Bæda (Latinized as "Bede") was born in Newcastle, in Northumbria, around 672
      - Bede was essentially raised in a monastery
        - Born to a wealthy family, at the age of 7, Bede was sent to the nearby monastery at Monkwearmouth to study
        - By the time he was 10, he had decided to become a monk, and transferred with his mentor, Ceolfrið, to the neighboring monastery of Jarrow
          - [NOTE: in 690, Jarrow was visited by the Celtic Bishop Adomnán from Iona, where the monks debated the dating of Easter, and Bede became utterly disgusted with the Celtic church's insistence on doing their own thing]





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        - To put this into some context, Ceolfrið was also the bishop who converted King Nechtan of the Picts, who then expelled the Celtic monks from Scotland in 717, so you can tell which way the monastery of Jarrow's sympathies tended to lay





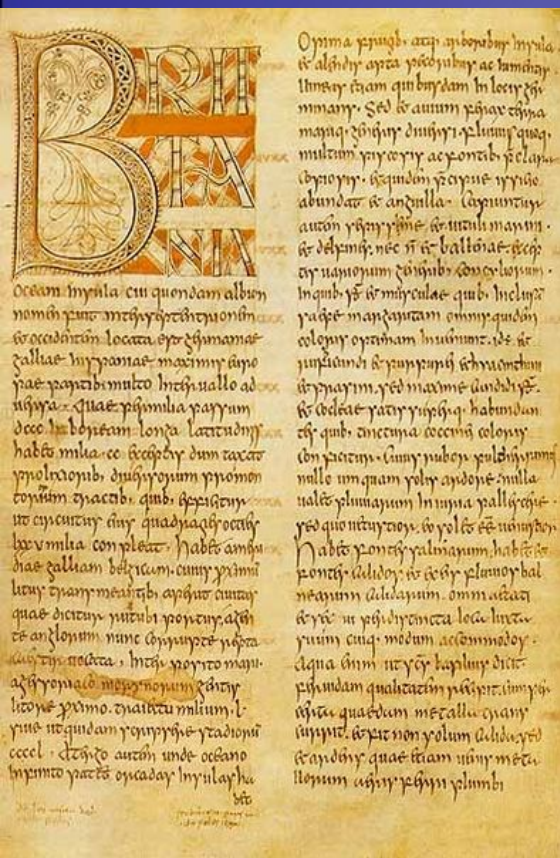
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      - Bede was essentially raised in a monastery
      - Nonetheless, there were things about the Celts that Bede *did* respect—not the least of which was their focus on education
        - The twin monasteries at Newcastle amassed a library of 200-250 books—which was *unheard of* in that day
        - But he realized that there was no comprehensive, trustworthy history of the Church’s work in Britain—and decided to rectify that by writing his own
          - [much as he had written many of Jarrow’s basic textbooks on music, metrics, and exegesis]



# The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
  - *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is a tremendously important historical artifact for several reasons
    - First off, it's the first attempt to make a clear and accurate picture of the history of Britain [well, sorta—as is the case with all pre-Enlightenment histories, it had its biases and eccentricities]
    - Prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, “history” wasn't about facts and accurate details as much as it was about expressing a tradition from which we should learn good lessons
    - The idea that history should be “accurate” is a product more of the Age of Reason (i.e.; the “Enlightenment”) that focused more on rationalism than on faith, and emphasized the use of the scientific method on every aspect of life
    - Whether that was a “good” shift or a “bad” shift will be a matter of discussion in about 1000 years... and (I would suggest) an overly simplistic dichotomy





# The Early Middle Ages

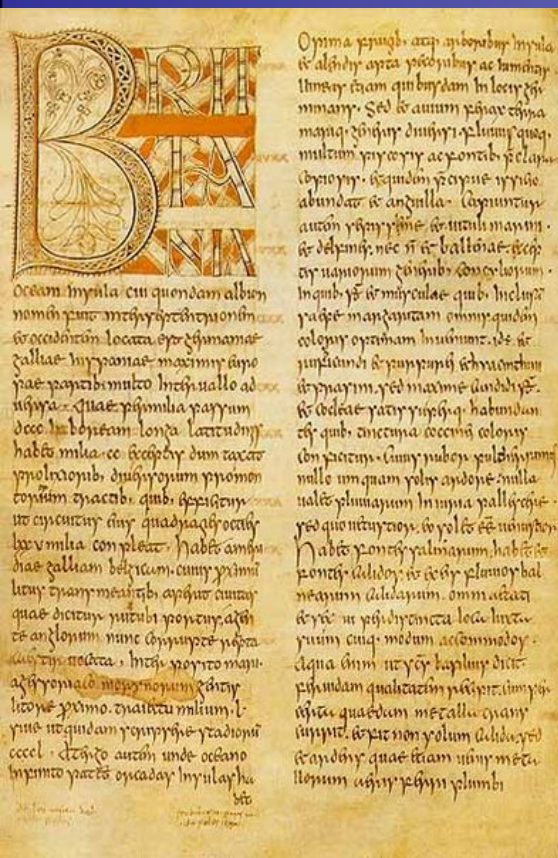
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So Bede's *History* had its biases:

- the Celts were so terribly wrong about roughly everything—and thus, the Council of Whitby is the climax and dénouement of the third book (of five)





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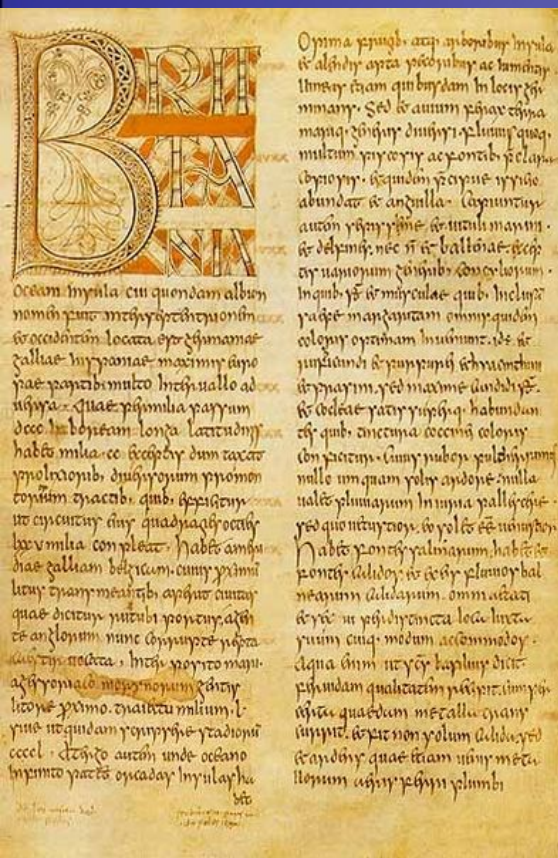
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- So Bede's *History* had its biases:

- the Celts were so terribly wrong
- the Britons were wrong not to punish the Saxons for being pagan—they should have *forced* conversions, like Charlemagne did





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      - The idea that history should be “accurate” is a product more of the Age of Reason (i.e.; the “Enlightenment”) that focused more on rationalism than on faith, and emphasized the use of the scientific method on every aspect of life
    - So *Bede's History* had its biases:
      - the Celts were so terribly wrong
      - the Britons were wrong
      - and Bede focused on Northumbrian monks and missionaries—never even mentioning Winfrid Boniface





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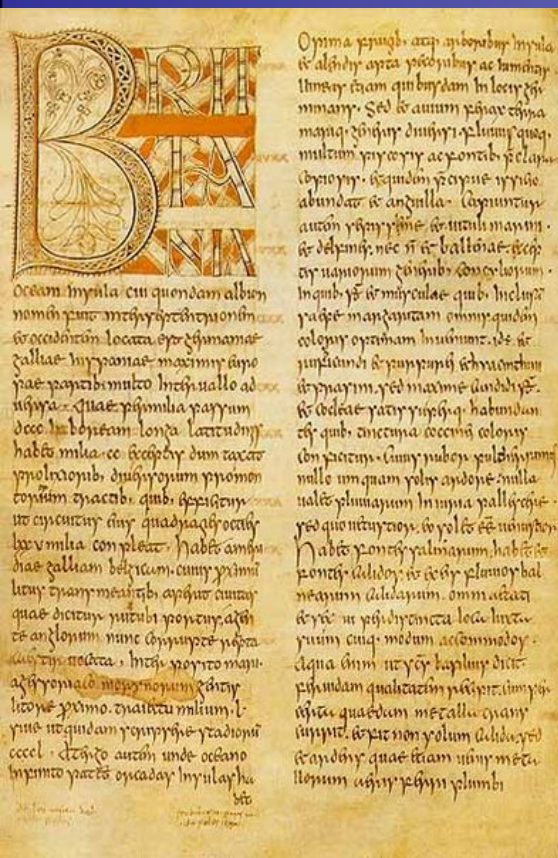
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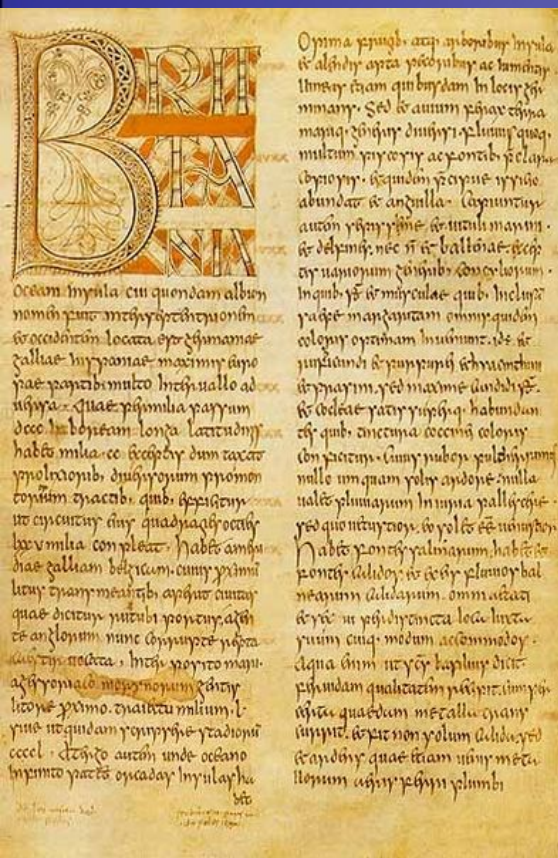
- But as Bede himself wrote,  
“If history records good things of good men, the thoughtful hearer is encouraged to imitate what is good; or if it records evil of wicked men, the good, religious reader or listener is encouraged to avoid all that is sinful and perverse, and to follow what he knows to be good and pleasing to God”

- So his *History* was, at its heart, an attempt to give case studies for people to learn from



# The Early Middle Ages

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  - An *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is a tremendously important historical artifact for several reasons
    - First off, it's the first attempt to make a clear and accurate picture of the history of Britain
    - So Bede did *tons* of research and tried—far more than anyone else did in the Middle Ages—to make sure that his facts were more or less correct
    - He sifted through facts, legends, myths, etc., and tried to make distinctions between them (which, again, was kind of *novel* for the time) and nailed down fairly accurate lists of kings, timetables, descriptions of events, etc.
    - (for instance, his account of the Council of Whitby is the most complete and accurate one that we have)





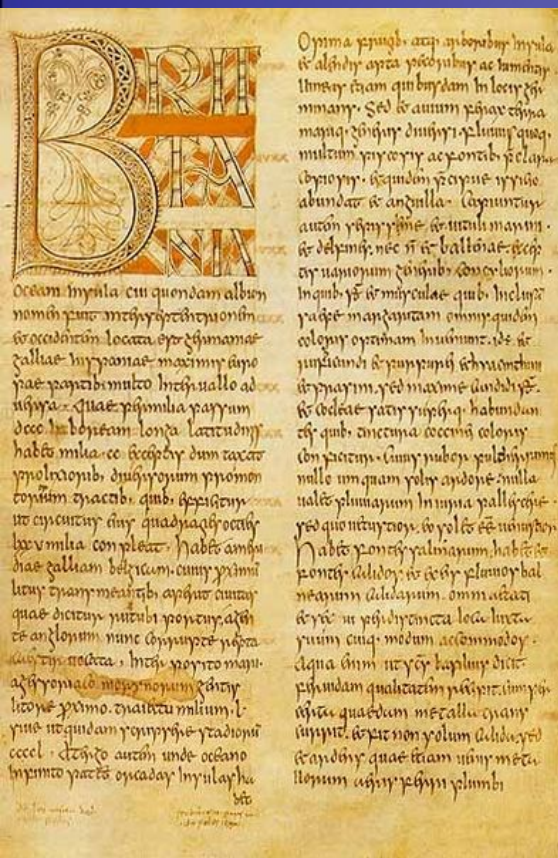
# The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
  - *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is a tremendously important historical artifact for several reasons
    - First off, it's the first attempt to make a clear and accurate picture of the history of Britain
    - Secondly, Bede made use of crucial historical tools
      - In sifting through sources, he was one of the first more modern historians to make distinctions between primary sources, secondary sources, and sources that were at best questionable
      - He also disliked the complex dating methods used by different monarchs under different systems, so he made use of the “*anno Domini*” (“AD”—or “year of our Lord”) system designed two centuries earlier by Dionysius Exiguus (AKA Dennis the Dwarf)
        - It had been in minimal use since its creation in 525, but Bede's *History* became one of the most popularly-read books of the Middle Ages, and thus popularized the “*anno Domini*” system as well
        - Thanks in large part to Bede's *History*, the “AD” system became the norm for historical dating—and still is today (though it's now often called “CE” for “Common Era”)



# The Early Middle Ages

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  - An *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is a tremendously important historical artifact for several reasons
    - First off, it's the first attempt to make a clear and accurate picture of the history of Britain
    - Secondly, Bede made use of crucial historical tools
    - As a result, the *History* made history cool again
    - British people (i.e.; kings) who might have no interest in reading histories of Byzantine emperors from past centuries could appreciate the histories of their own people—especially if that meant that their own rule would be remembered as history
    - So suddenly—again, thanks in no small part to the popularity of Bede's *History*—we see an explosion in kings supporting scholasticism, literacy, and overall education projects throughout Britain





# The Early Middle Ages

- Important stuff was going on up north...

731

732

The Venerable Bede wrote his *History*

Bede travelled... about 75 miles...

- Popular as he was after his death, Bede had several run-ins with other British bishops while he was still alive
  - In 708, he was accused of heresy because he calculated the age of the Earth differently than the Roman Catholic historian, Isidore of Seville, had done a century earlier
    - Isidore—and Augustine... and thus, Rome—said that the history of the world was made up of six great Ages, each lasting 1000 years
      - Thus, the Earth was created in 5500 BC (and Augustine argued that history would therefore end in 500 AD)
  - Bede argued that the world was created in 3952 BC, and drunken monks at a feast at Hexham thus accused him of heresy to their Bishop, Wilfrið
    - When Wilfrið refused to defend Bede, the two developed a mutual disdain that lasted throughout both men's lives





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- In 708, he was accused of heresy

- In 732, he travelled 75 miles to York to debate the dating of Easter with Bishop Egbert (a former student of Bede's), and to argue that Egbert should break his large (and rich) diocese up into smaller parts (which Egbert chose not to do)

- While he was up north, he also visited the century-old monastery on the island of Lindisfarne, to visit the rooms of the Northumbrian missionary, Cuthbert (about whom Bede had written a book and some poetry a decade earlier)

- Cuthbert was buried in the nearby Durham Cathedral





# *The Early Middle Ages*

- Funky little teaching moment—
  - The commonly used way to refer to Bede is as “the Venerable Bede”
  - This epithet for Bede actually comes from the Latin inscription on *his* tomb at Durham Cathedral—  
“*Hic sunt in fossa Bedæ venerabilis ossa*”  
 (“Here are buried the bones of the Venerable Bede”)



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781

Christianity hit its zenith in China

- The Church had grown steadily since its introduction to China by Alopen in 634
  - In 638, Emperor Taizong issued an official proclamation protecting Christianity, and he himself had the first church built in the capital city of Xi'an





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  - In 638, Emperor Taizong issued an official proclamation protecting Christianity
  - In 745, Emperor Xuanzong declared that all “Persian” temples (Islamic, Zoroastrian, etc.) should now be “Roman” temples (i.e.; Christian)



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Christianity hit its zenith in China

- The Church had grown steadily since its introduction to China by Alopen in 634
  - In 781, a stele was erected in Xi'an that celebrated 150 years of Christianity in China
  - Interestingly, it focused on God's majesty and Christianity's philosophy of illumination, but never mentions Christ's crucifixion or resurrection





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Bede travelled... about 75 miles...

Christianity hit its zenith in China

- The Church had grown steadily since its introduction to China by Alopen in 634
  - But in 845, Emperor Wuzong declared all foreign religions outlawed, slaughtered thousands of Christians, destroyed all of the monasteries and churches, and confiscated all of their goods
  - Within a century, the Church in China was dead...



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  - 732 Bede travelled... about 75 miles...
  - 781 Christianity hit its zenith in China
  - 793 The Vikings ransacked Lindisfarne
    - But more on that next week...

