

371. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 211 (SC 1812)
Bede, “*Historia ecclesiastica*”; “*Epistola Cuthberti*” with
“Bede’s Death Song”
[Ker 321]

HISTORY: On the verso of flyleaf ‘i’ (numbered in ink ‘1’) there is an early 13c ex libris: ‘*liber s(an)c(t)e crucis de waltha(m)*’ from Holy Cross at Waltham (Essex) refounded in 1177 as an Augustinian priory. N. R. Ker observes that the same inscription was also written “apparently” by the same scribe on the front pastedowns of London, BL, Stowe 35, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C. 3000, and Cambridge, St John’s College 126 (Ker 1942–45: 299). Webber dates the manuscript to the fourth quarter of the 12c and identifies 13c annotations that mark *Historia ecclesiastica* i.23–ii.3 for reading in refectory (Webber 2016: 66, 73). The manuscript belonged to Thomas Allen and later to Sir Kenelm Digby, who gave it to the Bodleian Library in 1634. On f. 2r, top margin, is written ‘*Vindica te tibi Kenelme Digby.*’ On Digby’s motto see Fulton (1937: 40). Colgrave and Mynors (1969: lv–lvi) include this manuscript in their southern group, also containing both the “*Historia ecclesiastica*” and the “*Epistola Cuthberti*.” This manuscript is the base text for Dobbie’s (1937) “Insular Version” (“Digby Group”) of the “*Epistola*.”

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: The 17c clasped binding is leather stamped in gold with the arms of Sir Kenelm Digby. Foliated on the top right rectos. On the first pastedown and on the recto of numbered flyleaf ‘1’ is the old number ‘K. D. 211’; on its verso is the “Allen number” ‘A7’ (Watson, 1978: 303, 311). On flyleaf (f. [ii]) a post-medieval hand has written ‘*Bedaes Historia.*’ The six flyleaves are parchment. The arrangement of sheets is continental, in gatherings of 8. There are quire signatures on the first thirteen quires, in roman numerals at the bottom center verso of the last leaf in each quire. The manuscript is ruled for two columns, 36 lines per column, in pencil. Prick marks are visible at the outer edge and inner gutter of the folios. Eight prick marks are visible on the upper and lower

edge of the page to guide the ruling of the columns. The writing space is 235 × 160 mm. in two columns. The columns measure 68 or 69 mm. between their inner bounding lines. The bound volume measures 325 × 222 mm. The script is a proto-Gothic minuscule, written in dark brown ink. On f. 2r/1 there is a large ornamented initial 'g' in blue with a leaf design in green, yellow, violet, and red. An elaborate red capital 'B' on f. 3v1/26 with a similar leaf design in green, yellow, and violet begins Book I. Subsequent books of the "Historia ecclesiastica" often have decorated initials, though with less detail. Initials throughout are in red, green, and blue. The initials for the individual capitula for the lists of chapter headings are in alternating blue, red, and green. Chapter initials are ornamented with scroll work. F. 109 is mutilated, column 2 having been cut away. In that process some of col. 1 was cropped. The verso of f. 109 appears to have been blank. On the parchment flyleaf immediately following f. 109 are late medieval pen trials. Among them are "Dum cor non orat in unum lingua laborat" (Walther: 1963-69, item 6476) and "Fatus preedit sequitur pudor et malo ledit." Both are printed by Hunt and Watson (1999: 93). This flyleaf has been slashed several times.

COLLATION: a parchment flyleaf, numbered '1' plus two more parchment flyleaves unnumbered (f. [ii]-[iii]); ff. 2-109; three parchment flyleaves (ff. [iv]-[vi]) [i.e. there are three flyleaves at front and three at back. The first flyleaf is numbered '1' in black ink (hence the numbering of the first folio of text as '2'. No other flyleaf is numbered]; I-XIII^s (ff. 2-105), XIV^s (wants 3, 6, 7, 8; ff. 106-109).

CONTENTS:

- ff. 1, [ii]-[iii] blank flyleaves, but for early shelfmarks and on f. 1v, the 12c ex libris, 'liber s(an)c(t)e crucis de waltha(m)' and pentrials
- "Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People" (ed. Colgrave and Mynors 1969)
- f. 2ra/1-2vb/29 "Preface": *Incipit prefatio uenerabilis bede pr(es)b(ite)ri | in ecclesiasticam historiam gentis angloꝝrum ad regem celwffum. [sic] | 'GLORIOSISSIMO RE|gi celwlfo BeDA| famulus (Christ)i & presbiter; hystori|am gentis anglor(um) eccl(es)iasticam q(ua)m nup(er) edideram'; ends: 'ad instru|ctione(m) posteritatis litteris manda|re studuimus.' Explicit p(re)fatio.*
 - ff. 2vb/29-3va/19 List of chapters, Book I: *In|cipiunt capitula libri primi. | 'i. De situ brittannie. u(e)l hybernie. & | priscis earum incolis'; ends:*

- ‘.xxxiiii. Vt æthelfridus rex northanhumbror(um) scot|torum gentes prelio conterens. ab anglo|rum finibus expulerit’ | **Expliciunt capitula.**
3. ff. 3va/19–23ra/1 Book I: **Incipit liber | primus eccl(es)iastice historie gen|tis anglorum uenerabilis | Bede presbiteri ad Regem | celwlfum. | Capitulum primum.** | ‘BRITANNIA oceani | insula. cui quonda(m) | Albion nomen fuit’; ends: ‘ad hanc diem | in prelium uenire audebat.’ || **Explicit liber primus.**
4. f. 23ra/1–23rb/15 List of chapters, Book II: **Incipiunt | capitula libri secundi. cap(itulum) .i.** ‘De obitu beati pape Gregorii’; ends: ‘xix. Ut occiso eaduino paulinus cantiam re|diens. rofensis eccl(es)ie p(re)sulatu(m) suscep(er)it.’ | **Explic[iunt] capitula.** (‘-it’ was erased in ‘explic[it]’);
5. ff. 23rb/15–39rb/33 Book II: **Incip[it]** [for ‘incipit’ the second minim of a ‘u’ and ‘nt’ have been erased] **liber secundus.** | ‘His temporib(us) id est an|no d(omi)nice incarnationis | sexcentesimo q(ui)nto’; ends: ‘Et ipse senex ac plenus dieru(m). iux|ta sc(ri)pt(ur)as. patru(m) uiam secutus est.’ **Explic(it) lib(er) .ii.**
6. f. 39rb/33–39vb/36 List of chapters, Book III: **Incipiu(n)t cap(itu)la lib(ri) iii(us).** [*sic*] | ‘Ut primi successores Ædwini re|gis & fide(m) sue gentis p(ro)diderint’; ends: ‘xxvii. Ut orientales saxones temp(or)e mortalitatis | ad ydolatria(m) reu(er)si s(ed) p(er) instantia(m) iaruman|ni ep(iscop)i mox sint ab errore correcti’ **Explic(i)unt cap(itu)la**
7. ff. 40ra/1–61ra/22 Book III: **Incipit lib(er) iii.** | ‘At interfecto in pugna no|bilissimo rege edwino’; ends: ‘& ipsi sacerdotes doctores|q(ue) eo(rum) domu(m) rediere letantes.’ | **Explicit lib(er) tercius.**
8. f. 61ra/22–61vb/34 List of chapters, Book IV: **Incipiunt capi|tula. lib(ri) quart(i).** [altered from ‘liber quartus’] ‘cap(itulum) .i. | Vt defuncto d(eu)s dedit uihardus ad | suscipiendu(m) ep(isco)patu(m) roma(m) sit missu(s)’; ends: ‘xxxi. Vt ad reliquias eius quidam mirifice fue|rit ab oculi languore sanatus’ | **Expliciunt capitula libri.iii`i`.** [final ‘i’ added in black over a red punctus by way of correction to ‘iii.’]
9. ff. 61va/35–84vb/12 Book IV: **Incipit libeR quartus.** | ‘Cap(itulum) p(ri)mum || IN anno prefato prefate eclypsis. & | mox sequentis pestilentie’; ends: ‘ac si nil unquam in eo de formita|tis ac tumoris apparuisset.’ **Explicit | lib(er) iiiii(us).**
10. ff. 84vb/12–85ra/36 List of chapters, Book V: **Incipiunt capitula libri .v.** ‘Cap(itulum) .i. | Ut æthelwaldus successor cuthberti | in anachoritica uita laborantib(us)’; ends: ‘xxiiii. Recapitulatio chronica totius op(er)is & | de p(er)sona auctoris.’ **Explici`un`t capitula.**

11. ff. 85ra/36–108ra/20 Book V: *Incip(it) lib(er) .v. ‘cap(itu)l(um). primu(m) () || Successit aute(m) uiro | d(omi)ni cuthberto in exercen|da uita solitaria’*; ends: *‘& parere semp(er) ante fa|ciem tua(m)’*; followed by close of the last paragraph of the ‘Preface’: *‘P(ro)pt(er)ea om(ne)s ad q(uo)s hec eade(m) hy|storia p(er)uenire potuerit n(ost)re nationis . . . apud o(mne)s fructu(m) pie intercessio(n)is | inueniam. Amen.’* *Explicit lib(er) .v.(us) | ecclesiastice historie gentis anglor(um) q(ua)m | uenerabilis. beda pr(es)b(ite)r() natus ex eade(m) ge(n)te | edidit.* (Colgrave and Mynors 1969: 6).

[Note: There have been several corrections to the incipit at f. 85ra/36: a letter, possibly a misplaced ‘v’ has been erased after ‘lib’ although it is equally possible that an erroneous ‘ri’ has been erased. The corrector has written an abbreviating stroke on the ascender of the ‘b’ and inserted a punctus, both in black ink. A letter has been erased after ‘primu,’ possibly an erroneous ‘s.’ The corrector has inserted a bar over the ‘u’ for the suspended ‘m.’ At f. 85rb/1, ‘cap(itulum) .i.’ is written again in red after ‘uiro.’ In the explicit, at f. 108ra/19, an ‘i’ appears to have been erased after ‘presbiter.’]

- 12a. ff. 108ra/20-f. 109r/1 ‘Epistola Cuthberti’: *De obitu uen(er)abil(is). bede pr(es)b(ite)ri .vii. kl jvnii. | ‘Dilectissimo in (Christ)o lectori cuth|wino cuthbertus condiscip(u)l(u)s | in deo eterna(m) salute(m). Munus|culu(m) q(uo)d misisti multu(m) libenter acce|pi’*; ends: *‘s[ed] breuitatem sermonis ineruditi[o] lingue facit’* (ed. Dobbie 1937: 119–27 (as the ‘insular’ version).
- b. 108rb/21–25: “Bede’s Death Song”: *‘Forþa(m) nedfere næm [sic] wyr|þeþ þances snotera þon(ne) hi(m) þearf sy | to gehicgenne ær his heonen-gan|ge. hwæt his gaste godes oþþe yfeles | æft(er) deaþe heonon demed weorþe’* (pr. Dobbie 1937: 76; repr. Ker 1942–45: pl. III; Robinson and Stanley item 3.25).
- ff. [iv]–[vi] blank parchment flyleaves, except for late medieval pentrials on f. [iv] recto.

PHOTO NOTES: The first page of text (f. 2r) is very dark and illegible on the fiche.

f. 109r has not been photographed. Currently, the photo of 108v is obscured by blank verso of the cropped f. 109. Folios 108v and 109r have to be reshot.

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