Translating the Anglo-Saxon Way
Ælfric’s Grammar

• First vernacular Latin grammar in Medieval Europe

LITTERA is stæf on englisc and is se læsta dæl on bocum

‘Littera is ‘letter’ in English and is the smallest part in a book’
Ælfric on vowels and consonants

• In Latin there are twenty three letters: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, x, y, z. Of those there are five *uocales*, or vowels, that are voiced: a, e, i, o, u.

• All of the other letters are called *consonantes*, that is ‘sounding with’, for they make sound only when combined with one of the five voiced letters.

• There are seven *semiuocales*: f, l, m, n, r, s, x. These are called half-voiced because they are not fully-voiced like the *quinque uocales*. The other nine *consonantes* are said to be *mutae*, that is ‘silent’. They are not completely silent but they have little sound. They are: b, c, d, g, h, k, p, q, t.

Sonority scale (vowels > approximants > nasals > fricatives > stops)
Lindisfarne Gospels
Iohannes

Cui homen craet

Deo Roman

inermis missus

com praebentatunm
Lindisfarne glosses

- L. *patrem* - OE *fæder* ‘father’
- L. *dies* - OE *ða dagas* ‘the days’
Double glosses

• L. *adferce* - OE *berað* · *bringað*  ‘bring!’
L. *arbitretur*

OE *he lettes* ·*· he doemeð* ·*· he woenas*

‘judge, think’
Quadruple glosses

OE *biwoedded* ⸱ *beboden* ⸱ *befeastnad* ⸱ *betaht*

‘married, espoused’ – L. *desponsata*
OE ceastre Ł alle burgwaras ‘city / all city dwellers’ - L. civitas

OE ceastre ‘city’
L. civitas ‘city; citizenship, citizens united in a community’
OE laf 'l wif 'widow / wife' - L. uxorem

OE laf 'what is left, remnant, widow'

'Moses said, if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife' (Mt 22:24)
• *se micla dear* ‘the big animal’

• ‘You blind guides. You strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel’ Mt 23:24
• L. *centori* (centurio) ‘centurion’
OE ðe centur · þæt is hundraðes monna hlaferd
‘the centurion: who is the lord of a hundred men’
Et relictà ciuitate nazareth uenit et habitauit in capharnaum maritimam (Mt 4:13)

‘And leaving the city Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum on the sea coast’
Runic glosses

- L. *nemo*
- OE *nænigman* ‘no man’
Dealing with Latin syntax

“paving letters” b, c, e, d, a indicate OE word order

SO NOT:
“death daily before eyes with expectation to have”

BUT:
\[\text{aHabban } b\text{deað } c\text{dæghwamlice } d\text{gewenedne } e\text{ætforan eagan}\]

“To have death daily with expectation before eyes”
Dealing with Latin syntax

ic singe drihtne þam þe goda sealde me
cantabo domino qui bona tribuit mihi:

7 ic singe naman drihtnes þæs heahstan
& psallam nomini domini altissimi;
Scratched glosses

- L. *propinquitatis* ‘nearness’
- *h* (OE *hiwcuðnes* ‘familiarity’)
Scratched glosses

- L. *torrido* ‘scorching’
- *f* (OE *fyr-* , *fyrhat* ‘fire hot’)

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*Scratched glosses*