CAPITOLO

# 1

# Islands at the Edge of Empire

*"I have always found it sweet to learn, or to teach, or to write." (semper aut discere, aut docere, aut scribere dulce habui) — Bede, Historia ecclesiastica V.24 (translation by the editors)*

**OBIETTIVI**

1. I can describe Britain from the Roman conquest to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, with the key dates.
2. I can explain how Anglo-Saxon culture passed from the spoken word to the written page, and why Bede is important.
3. I can read and comment on Bede's sparrow simile and on Cædmon's Hymn, with a parallel translation.
4. I can use the past perfect continuous and combine the four narrative tenses in a story.
5. I can tell an anecdote and write a biographical profile.
6. I can compare the Roman heritage of Britain and Italy, in words and in monuments.

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English literature does not begin with a book. It begins with islands on the edge of the known world, with peoples who told their stories aloud and did not write them down, and with a long line of newcomers: Roman soldiers, Germanic farmers and warriors, Irish and Roman monks. This chapter follows that story from Julius Caesar's landing in 55 BC to the death of Bede in AD 735. By the end of it, the first poem in English had been written down, and the first history of the English people had been completed — in Latin.

You read two texts by Bede, a Northumbrian monk, and the oldest English poem whose author we can name; you add the fourth narrative tense, the **past perfect continuous**; and you meet Giulia, Sam, Aoife and Callum again, one year later.

**LEARNING TO LEARN**

**How to read a literature chapter.** A chapter like this one is not a novel: do not start at the first line and hope. Spend five minutes on a first, quick reading. (1) **Skim the timeline** (Figura 1.1): which centuries does the chapter cover? Which events are amber (history) and which are violet (literature and culture)? (2) **Read the headings** and the Sintesi at the end: they are the skeleton of the chapter. (3) **Look at the texts**: who wrote them, when, in what language? Then read section by section and build a **study map** on one page: the period in the centre, with branches for history, people, works, key terms and one quotation each. Use it to revise — and use the same method for your Italian and Latin literature books.

## 1.1 History and Society: Britain from Rome to the Anglo-Saxons

### 1.1.1 Islands at the edge of the world

Two large islands, Britain and Ireland, lie off the north-western coast of Europe. For the Greeks and Romans they were at the edge of the world, beyond the Ocean that surrounded the lands they knew. The Romans called the larger one **Britannia** and the smaller one *Hibernia*. Bede, eight centuries later, began his history with the same picture: "Britain, an island of the Ocean, which was once called Albion, lies between the north and the west" (*Brittania Oceani insula, cui quondam Albion nomen fuit*, *Historia ecclesiastica* I.1; translation by the editors).

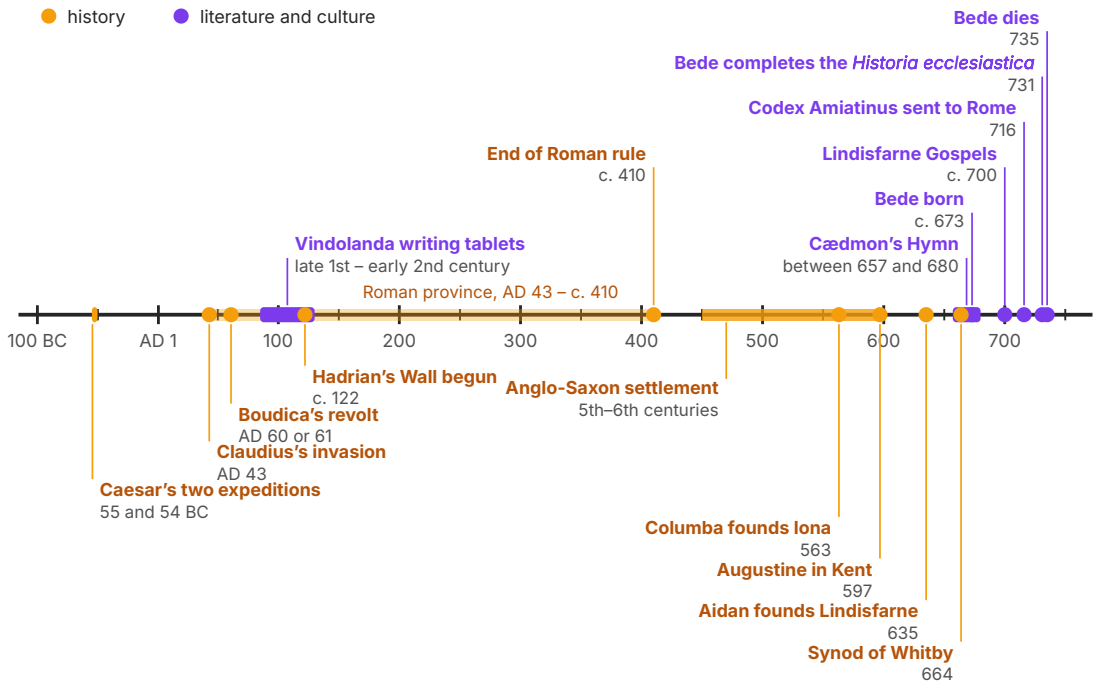



**Figura 1.1** From Caesar to Bede: a proportional timeline, 55 BC – AD 735 (ticks every 50 years; there is no year 0 between 1 BC and AD 1). Amber: history; violet: literature and culture. Bars show periods, dots single events. Several dates are approximate (c.).

Before the Romans, Britain and Ireland were inhabited by many **tribes**, each with its own king or chief and its own territory. They are usually called **Celts**, because they spoke Celtic languages, the ancestors of modern Welsh, Irish and Scottish Gaelic. They were farmers and warriors who built hillforts and traded with Gaul (modern France). Their religious leaders were the **druids**, priests and teachers. But the Celts of Britain left no written texts: almost everything we read about them was written by Greek and Roman authors, who were often their enemies. When a Roman writes about the Britons, we are reading a **Roman view**, not a Briton's.

**APPROFONDIMENTO**

**What the Romans wrote about the Britons.** Julius Caesar, who fought in Britain, wrote that "all the Britons dye themselves with *vitrum*, which gives a blue colour, and so they look more frightening in battle" (*Omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit colorem*, *De bello Gallico* V.14). *Vitrum* is usually identified as **woad**, a plant that gives a blue dye. He also wrote that the teaching of the druids was "thought to have been found in Britain and brought from there into Gaul" (VI.13). The historian Tacitus, writing about AD 98, gave a chief of Caledonia (northern Scotland) a famous line against Rome: "they make a desert and call it peace" (*ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*, *Agricola* 30). The words are Tacitus's, not the chief's: a Roman senator criticises Rome through the voice of an enemy. All translations by the editors.

### 1.1.2 The Roman conquest

**Julius Caesar** crossed the Channel twice, in **55** and **54 BC**, during his war in Gaul. He defeated some tribes and took hostages, but he did not stay. The real **conquest** began almost a century later, in **AD 43**, when the emperor **Claudius** sent an army of about four legions, perhaps 40 000 men including auxiliary troops. Claudius himself came for a short time and entered Camulodunum (Colchester), the most important town in the south-east. Britain became a Roman **province**, *Britannia*.

Not everyone accepted Roman rule. In **AD 60 or 61 Boudica**, the queen of the Iceni (a tribe in what is now Norfolk), led a great revolt after the Romans had seized her kingdom and humiliated her family. The rebels burnt Camulodunum, Londinium and Verulamium (St Albans) before a Roman army defeated them. Our sources, Tacitus and Cassius Dio, are once again Roman views.

The Romans moved north and west, but they never conquered the whole island, and they never invaded Ireland. Around **AD 122** the emperor **Hadrian** visited Britain and ordered a wall to be built across the north of England, from the river Tyne to the Solway Firth: **Hadrian's Wall**, about 117 kilometres (80 Roman miles) long, with forts, gates and watchtowers (Figura 1.2). It was a **frontier**: a line that controlled who and what came in and out of the province. About twenty years later the Romans built a second wall of turf further north, the Antonine Wall, but they abandoned it within a generation.

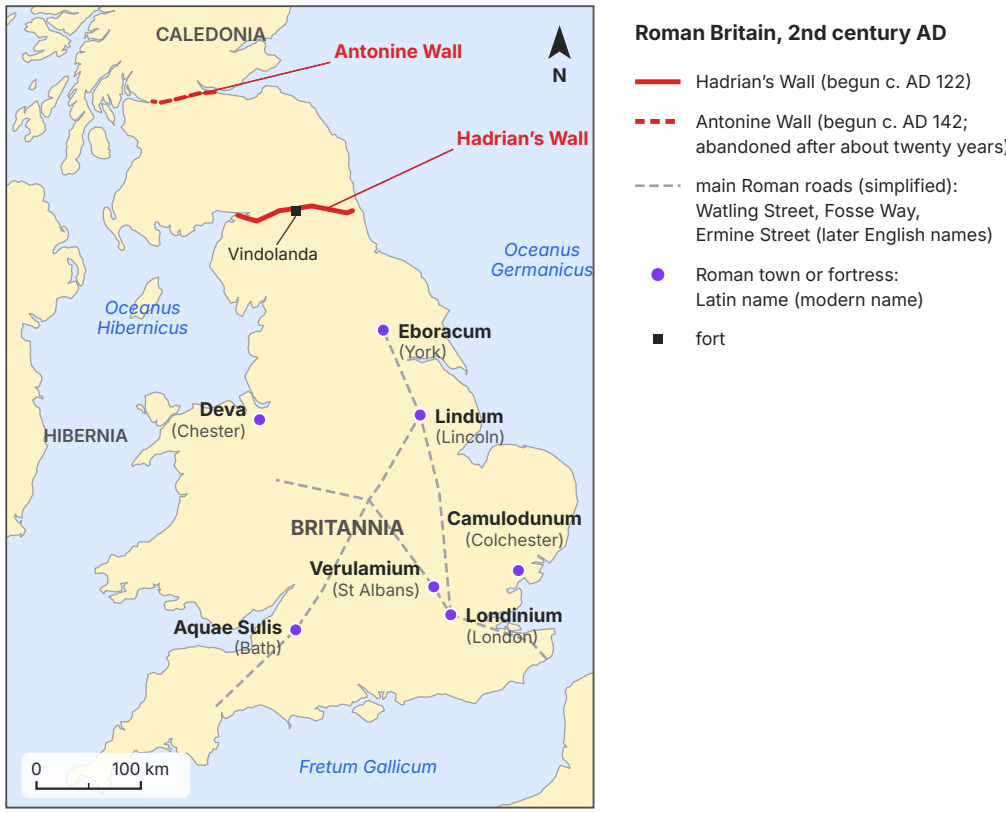



**Figura 1.2** Roman Britain in the 2nd century AD. The walls and the towns are placed from their known positions; the roads are simplified to straight lines between towns. The names of the roads are later, Anglo-Saxon names. Coastline from Natural Earth (modern), equirectangular projection.

### 1.1.3 Roman life in Britain

For more than three and a half centuries Britain was part of the Empire, with Roman roads, forts and towns. **Londinium** (London), founded on the Thames soon after the conquest, became the largest town and a centre of trade. **Eboracum** (York) and **Deva** (Chester) were legionary fortresses; at **Aquae Sulis** (Bath) visitors bathed in a hot spring and prayed to the goddess Sulis Minerva. Many Britons, especially the rich, adopted Roman houses, food and the Latin language: historians call this **romanisation**. In the countryside and in the far west, life changed much less.

Writing arrived with Rome. At Vindolanda, a fort just south of Hadrian's Wall, archaeologists have found hundreds of thin wooden writing tablets from the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD: letters, lists and reports in Latin, written in ink. One is an invitation to a birthday party from one officer's wife to another. They are among the oldest handwritten documents found in Britain. Christianity, too, arrived in the Roman period.

### 1.1.4 The end of Roman Britain and the Anglo-Saxons

At the beginning of the 5th century the Empire was in crisis, and the legions left Britain to fight elsewhere. By about **410** Roman rule had ended, and the Britons were on their own.

In the following two centuries, groups of Germanic peoples crossed the North Sea and **settled** in eastern and southern Britain. Bede names three of them — "the Saxons, the Angles and the Jutes" (*Saxonibus, Anglis, Iutis*, I.15) — and gives the date 449 for the arrival of the first ships; the date and the story of the two brothers who led them, Hengist and Horsa, are a tradition, not proved history. Historians and archaeologists see a long, complicated process: some newcomers came as paid soldiers, others as farmers with their families; some Britons fought them, others lived with them and slowly adopted their language. We call these peoples the **Anglo-Saxons**, and their language **Old English** (chapter 2 explains it). The name *England* comes from them: *Englaland*, "the land of the Angles".

The Britons kept their language and independence in the west — Wales, Cornwall, the northwest — and some crossed the Channel to Armorica, which took its modern name from them: Brittany. In the east, by about 600, the newcomers had formed several kingdoms: the largest were **Northumbria**, **Mercia** and **Wessex**, and the smaller ones East Anglia, Essex, Kent and Sussex (Figura 1.3). Kingdoms joined, split and fought one another, and their borders changed constantly.




**Figura 1.3** The main Anglo-Saxon and British kingdoms around 700 (boundaries approximate and simplified; they changed often between 600 and 800). Violet crosses: the monasteries and church centres named in this chapter. The colours only separate neighbouring kingdoms.

### 1.1.5 Missionaries and monasteries

The Anglo-Saxons were pagans: they worshipped Germanic gods such as Woden and Thunor, whose names survive in *Wednesday* and *Thursday*. Their **conversion** to Christianity came from two directions. From the north-west came monks from Ireland, Christian since the 5th century: in **563** the Irish monk Columba founded a monastery on **Iona**, a small island off the west coast of Scotland. From the south came Rome: in **597** Pope Gregory the Great sent a group of **missionaries** led by **Augustine** to Kent, whose king, Æthelberht, had a Christian wife. Augustine became the first archbishop of **Canterbury**.

In Northumbria both traditions met. In 635 King Oswald invited Aidan, a monk from Iona, to found a monastery on **Lindisfarne**, an island off the north-east coast. The Irish and the Roman churches disagreed on some practices, above all on how to calculate the date of Easter; in **664** a meeting at Whitby, the Synod of Whitby, chose the Roman method. From then on, **monasteries** — communities of monks or nuns living under a rule — were the centres of learning in England,

with schools, libraries and workshops where books were copied. One of them, the twin monastery of Wearmouth–Jarrow, produced the greatest scholar of the age: Bede.

## 1.2 Literature: from the Spoken Word to the Written Page

### 1.2.1 A culture of the voice

For the Anglo-Saxons, as for the Celts before them, poetry was something you heard, not something you read. In the hall of a king or a lord, after the feast, a poet sang or recited to the sound of a harp. The Old English word for this professional poet was **scop** (pronounced like "shop"): he knew by heart the stories of heroes and ancestors, the history of the family that fed him, and the praise of its generosity. Poems lived in memory and changed a little every time they were performed. This is an **oral tradition**: a body of stories and poems passed on by word of mouth, from one generation to the next.

Oral poets used fixed phrases and a verse form based on stress and repeated initial sounds, which made long poems easier to remember (chapter 3 studies it with *Beowulf*). The consequence is simple: most of what the Anglo-Saxons sang is lost. We have only the poems that someone decided to write down.

### 1.2.2 Latin, monks and books

The Anglo-Saxons had an alphabet of their own, the runes, but they used it only for short inscriptions on objects and stones (chapter 2). Real **literacy** — the ability to read and write long texts — came with the Church, and the language of the Church was **Latin**. For many centuries in western Europe, Latin was the written language of religion, law, science and history, while people spoke their own languages every day. Writing in English, the language of the people, was the exception. A language that people speak, as opposed to a learned language such as Latin, is called the **vernacular**.

Books were made in the monastery's **scriptorium**, the writing room. A monk wrote with a quill pen and ink on **parchment**, prepared animal skin, because paper was not yet used in Europe. Every book was a **manuscript** (from Latin *manu scriptus*, "written by hand"), so every copy was slow, expensive and slightly different from the others. The finest books, such as the gospel book made at Lindisfarne around 700 (the date is debated), were decorated with bright colours and gold: they are **illuminated** manuscripts.

Yet the vernacular was written too, very early. Bede tells us that King Æthelberht of Kent, the king who welcomed Augustine, made laws "written in the language of the English" (*conscripta Anglorum sermone*, II.5). These laws, from about 600, are the oldest known texts in English, although they survive only in a copy made five centuries later.

### 1.2.3 Bede, the father of English history

**Bede** was born in about 673 on the lands of the monastery of Wearmouth, in Northumbria. At the age of seven his family gave him to the monastery to be educated, and he spent the rest of his life in the twin community of Wearmouth and Jarrow, which owned one of the best libraries in Europe: its founder, Benedict Biscop, had brought books back from his journeys to Rome. Bede became a deacon at nineteen and a priest at thirty. He wrote dozens of works in Latin: commentaries on the Bible, lives of saints, textbooks on grammar, poetry and science. His book on the calculation of time, *De temporum ratione* (725), made popular the system of counting years from the birth of Christ, *anno Domini* — the "AD" used in this book.

His masterpiece is the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*), in five books, which he completed in **731**. It tells the story of Britain from Caesar to Bede's own time, with the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons at its centre. Bede was a careful historian for his time: he collected documents, asked friends to copy letters in Canterbury and Rome, and named his informants. At the end of the work he explains that he wrote what he could learn "from the writings of the ancients, from the tradition of our elders, or from my own knowledge" (*vel ex litteris antiquorum, vel ex traditione maiorum, vel ex mea ipse cognitione*, V.24). His history also contains miracles, which he believed in, and it shows the past from the point of view of a Northumbrian monk. Bede died at Jarrow in **735**; his remains are now in Durham Cathedral.

> **ERRORE FREQUENTE**
>
> ✗ «Bede scrisse la prima storia d'Inghilterra in inglese.» → ✓ Beda scrisse la *Historia ecclesiastica* in **latino**, la lingua scritta della Chiesa e della cultura. Una traduzione in inglese antico fu fatta più tardi, alla fine del IX secolo.
>
> ✗ «L'inglese antico è la lingua di Shakespeare.» → ✓ L'**inglese antico** (*Old English*) è la lingua degli anglosassoni, circa 450–1100: per un inglese di oggi è una lingua straniera. Shakespeare scrive in *Early Modern English*, l'inglese della prima età moderna, molto più vicino al nostro (capitolo 2).

### 1.2.4 Cædmon, the first English poet known by name

One of the most famous chapters of Bede's *History* (IV.24) tells the story of **Cædmon**, a cowherd who worked for the monastery of Whitby in the time of its abbess Hild (657–680). He could not sing, Bede says, until one night a figure appeared to him in a dream and asked him to sing about the Creation. He sang a short **hymn**, a song of praise to God, and from then on he turned the stories of the Bible into English verse. Only those first nine lines survive. Their author is the first English poet whose name we know — although we know it only because Bede told his story.

**IN SINTESI**

**Three languages, three ways of keeping words.** *Celtic languages*: spoken by the Britons and the Irish; their early poetry was oral, and Roman authors described them from outside. *Latin*: the language of Rome and then of the Church; written in monasteries, it was the language of Bede's *History*. *Old English*: the language of the Anglo-Saxons; at first oral poetry sung by the *scop*, then, from about 600, also written — laws, and the first poems copied by monks.

## 1.3 Texts: Bede and Cædmon

Both texts come from Bede's *History*: a speech by a Northumbrian nobleman, and Cædmon's poem with Bede's account of its birth. The Latin and the Old English are printed beside a modern English translation by the editors.

### 1.3.1 T1 · Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* II.13: the sparrow in the hall

**Context.** Around 627 King Edwin of Northumbria, who had listened to the preaching of the Roman missionary Paulinus, asked his counsellors whether they should accept the new religion. The first to answer was Coifi, the chief of the pagan priests. Then one of the king's chief men spoke. Bede reports his words in Latin; we do not know if a real speech lies behind them.

**Tabella 1.1** T1 — Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* II.13 (Latin original and translation by the editors). Latin text from The Latin Library, based on Plummer's edition; spelling normalised (*v* for consonantal *u*).

| Latin (Bede, 731) | Modern English (translation by the editors) |
|---|---|
| *"Talis", inquiens, "mihi videtur, rex, vita hominum praesens in terris, ad conparationem eius, quod nobis incertum est, temporis,* | "This present life of men on earth, O king," he said, "seems to me, compared with the time that is unknown to us, |
| *quale cum te residente ad caenam cum ducibus ac ministris tuis tempore brumali, accenso quidem foco in medio, et calido effecto caenaculo, furentibus autem foris per omnia turbinibus hiemalium pluviarum vel nivium,* | like this: you are sitting at dinner with your chief men and your servants in winter; a fire is burning in the middle of the hall and the room is warm, while outside the storms of winter rain and snow are raging everywhere; |
| *adveniens unus passerum domum citissime pervolaverit; qui cum per unum ostium ingrediens, mox per aliud exierit.* | and a single sparrow comes and flies very quickly through the hall: it comes in through one door and soon goes out through another. |
| *Ipso quidem tempore, quo intus est, hiemis tempestate non tangitur, sed tamen parvissimo spatio serenitatis ad momentum excurso, mox de hieme in hiemem regrediens, tuis oculis elabitur.* | While it is inside, it is not touched by the winter storm; but after a very short moment of calm it soon goes back from winter into winter, and it slips away from your eyes. |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ita haec vita hominum ad modicum apparet; quid autem sequatur, quidve praecesserit, prorsus ignoramus.* | In the same way this life of men appears for a short while; but what follows, or what came before, we do not know at all. |
| *Unde si haec nova doctrina certius aliquid attulit, merito esse sequenda videtur."* | So if this new teaching has brought us something more certain, it seems right to follow it." |

**Glosses.** *chief men*: nobles who advised the king (Latin *duces*); *hall*: the large room of a royal house, where the king ate, drank and listened to poets with his men; *slips away*: disappears quietly.

#### Analysis

The speech is built on a **simile** (*similitudine*), a comparison introduced by *like* or *as* (Latin *talis… quale*, "such… as"). One side of the comparison is human life; the other is a scene that every Anglo-Saxon warrior knew well: the king's hall in winter, with the fire in the middle, the food, the company, the storm outside. The sparrow is each of us. The hall is our short life on earth, warm and bright; the winter outside is the darkness before birth and after death, which nobody can see.

The bird goes "from winter into winter" (*de hieme in hiemem*): the phrase is symmetrical, like the two doors. The conclusion is practical: if the new religion can tell us something certain about the darkness outside, we should follow it. For Bede the speech explains why a kingdom accepted Christianity; for modern readers it is one of the most moving images of human life in medieval literature.

1. Who speaks, to whom, and on what occasion? Why is the occasion important?
2. Find three details that make the hall comfortable and three that make the outside frightening.
3. What do the two doors stand for? Why does the bird fly "very quickly"?
4. The nobleman says "we do not know at all". What exactly don't they know?
5. Is the final argument religious, practical or both? Explain in two or three sentences.

### 1.3.2 T2 · Cædmon's Hymn (Old English, West Saxon version), with Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* IV.24

**Context.** Bede tells the story of Cædmon in Latin. This is how it begins (an extract, translation by the editors).

*He had lived as a layman until he was quite old, and he had never learnt any songs. So sometimes at a feast, when everyone had to sing in turn, as soon as he saw the harp coming near him, he would get up from the table and go home. Once, when he had done this, he went out to the stable of the animals, because he had been given the care of them that night. There he lay down to sleep, and in a dream someone stood beside him, greeted him and called him by his name. "Cædmon", he said, "sing me something." He answered: "I cannot sing. That is why I left the feast and came here: because I could not*

*sing." The other said again: "All the same, you must sing for me." "What must I sing?" he asked. "Sing", he said, "about the beginning of created things." At this answer he at once began to sing verses that he had never heard, in praise of God the Creator.*

Bede then gives the meaning of the poem in Latin, and adds a famous warning: "This is the sense, not the actual order of the words that he sang while he was asleep; for poems, however well they are composed, cannot be translated word for word from one language into another without losing some of their beauty and dignity" (*neque enim possunt carmina, quamvis optime composita, ex alia in aliam linguam ad verbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri*). The Old English words survive anyway: the oldest copies, in the Northumbrian dialect, were added to manuscripts of Bede's Latin *History* soon after his death; the West Saxon version printed here comes from the Old English translation of the *History* (late 9th century).

**Tabella 1.2** T2 — Cædmon's Hymn, ll. 1–9 (Old English original and translation by the editors). Text of J. W. Bright, *An Anglo-Saxon Reader* (1913), which follows the Tanner manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Tanner 10); length marks omitted.

| Old English | Modern English (translation by the editors) |
|---|---|
| *Nu we sculon herigean heofonrices Weard,* | Now we must praise the Guardian of the heavenly kingdom, |
| *Meotodes meahte ond his modgeþanc,* | the might of the Creator and the thought of his mind, |
| *weorc Wuldorfæder, swa he wundra gehwæs,* | the work of the Father of glory, as he, of every wonder, |
| *ece Drihten or onstealde.* | the eternal Lord, established the beginning. |
| *He ærest sceop eorðan bearnum* | He first created for the children of the earth 5 |
| *heofan to hrofe, halig Scyppend;* | heaven as a roof, the holy Creator; |
| *þa middangeard monncynnes Weard* | then the middle-earth the Guardian of mankind, |
| *ece Drihten, æfter teode* | the eternal Lord, afterwards prepared, |
| *firum foldan, Frea ælmihtig.* | the land for men, the Lord almighty. |

**Glosses.** *Weard*: guardian (modern *ward*); *Meotod*: "the Measurer", a poetic name for God the Creator; *modgeþanc*: mind + thought; *or*: beginning; *onstealde*: established, set up; *sceop*: created (related to modern *shape*); *bearn*: child (Scots *bairn*); *middangeard*: "middle-earth", the world of human beings, between heaven above and hell below; *teode*: prepared, adorned; *firum*: for men, for people; *folde*: earth, land. Some editions print the first line without *we*: the manuscripts do not all agree.

### Analysis

**Form.** Even without knowing Old English you can see that the Hymn has no rhyme. Each line is divided into two halves by a pause, and the halves are linked by sounds: ***h**erigean* / ***h**eofonrices*, ***m**eahte* / ***m**odgeþanc*, ***w**eorc* / ***w**uldorfæder* / ***w**undra*. This is the verse of the oral poets, which chapter 3 explains. Cædmon, the cowherd who "could not sing", uses the form of the scop.

**Language.** Many words have modern cousins: *heofan* (and *heofon-* in line 1) / heaven, *weorc* / work, *fæder* / father, *wundor* / wonder, *eorðe* / earth, *hrof* / roof, *halig* / holy, *ælmihtig* / almighty. Others have disappeared, like *ece* (eternal) and *drihten* (lord). Notice the letters þ (thorn) and ð (eth), both pronounced "th": chapter 2 presents the Old English alphabet.

**Theme.** The Hymn praises God as the creator of the world, and it does so by naming him again and again, each time in a different way: Guardian of the heavenly kingdom, Creator, Father of glory, eternal Lord, holy Creator, Guardian of mankind, Lord almighty. Titles such as guardian and lord were those a scop gave to a king: the old art of the hall now serves the new faith. And heaven as a *roof* over the children of the earth takes us back to T1: once again the world is a hall, and human beings live inside it.

1. Why did Cædmon leave the feast? What does this tell us about how people entertained themselves?
2. How many names for God can you find in the Hymn? Make a list.
3. Bede says that a poem cannot be translated word for word. Compare line 3 of the Old English with our translation: what did we have to change?
4. In what order does God create things, according to lines 5–9?
5. Both T1 and T2 use the image of a house or a hall. What does it mean in each text?
6. Is Bede's story about Cædmon history, legend or both? Give reasons.

**ESEMPIO SVOLTO**

**Reading Old English: finding the modern cousins.** Take line 6, *heofan to hrofe, halig Scyppend*.

1. Say it aloud, slowly: *HEH-von toh HROH-veh, HAH-lee SHÜP-pend* (the *f* between vowels sounds like *v*; *sc* sounds like *sh*).
2. Look for words that look or sound like modern English: *heofan* → heaven; *to* → to; *hrof* → roof (the *h* before *r* was lost later); *halig* → holy.
3. Find the word with no modern cousin: *Scyppend*, "the one who shapes" — Creator (*sceppan*, to create, is related to *shape*).
4. Put the meaning together and check it against the context: "heaven as a roof, the holy Creator" — the Creator made heaven as a roof for the children of the earth (line 5).

The ending *-e* in *hrofe* shows the grammatical case: Old English nouns changed their endings, like Latin nouns. You meet this again in chapter 2.

## 1.4 Language: Narrative Tenses and the Past Perfect Continuous

### 1.4.1 Recap: four points from *English 2*

The four tables below are a reminder of *English 2*, not a new lesson: if you are not sure about a point, go back to the unit in the caption, then practise it in the exercises.

**Tabella 1.3** Recap: narrative tenses (*English 2*, Unit 2)

| Tense | Form | Job in a story | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| past simple | *arrived, went* | the main events, in order | *The Romans arrived in AD 43.* |
| past continuous | *was / were + -ing* | the background; an action in progress | *It was snowing when the sparrow flew in.* |
| past perfect | *had + past participle* | an earlier event | *Cædmon had never learnt any songs.* |

**Tabella 1.4** Recap: the passive (*English 2*, Unit 3)

| Tense | Form | Example |
|---|---|---|
| present / past simple | *is / was + past participle* | *The Wall was built in the 120s.* |
| present perfect | *has / have been + past participle* | *Hundreds of tablets have been found.* |
| past perfect | *had been + past participle* | *Londinium had been burnt by the rebels.* |
| with modals | *can / must / will + be + past participle* | *The site will be opened next year.* |

**Tabella 1.5** Recap: conditionals (*English 2*, Units 4 and 11)

| Type | Form | Example |
|---|---|---|
| zero | *if* + present, present | *If you mix blue and yellow, you get green.* |
| first | *if* + present, *will* | *If it rains, we'll visit the museum.* |
| second | *if* + past, *would* | *If I lived in York, I would visit the Minster.* |
| third | *if* + past perfect, *would have* + past participle | *If Bede hadn't written his History, we would have known much less.* |

**Tabella 1.6** Recap: reported speech (*English 2*, Unit 7)

| Direct speech | Reported speech |
|---|---|
| *"I cannot sing."* | *He said (that) he could not sing.* |
| *"What must I sing?"* | *He asked what he had to sing.* (statement word order) |
| *"Sing me something."* | *The figure told him to sing something.* |
| *"I left the feast."* | *He explained that he had left the feast.* |

### 1.4.2 The past perfect continuous

In a story we sometimes need to go back to an **activity** that had been going on for some time before a moment in the past. For this we use the **past perfect continuous**: *had been* + *-ing*. It is the fourth narrative tense, and it combines two ideas you already know — the "looking back" of the past perfect and the "in progress" of the continuous forms (Figura 1.4).

**Tabella 1.7** Past perfect continuous: form (*had been* + *-ing*)

| Affirmative | Negative | Questions | Short answers |
|---|---|---|---|
| *I / you / he / she / we / they had been working* (*'d been working*) | *I / he / they had not been working* (*hadn't been working*) | *Had you been working? How long had they been working?* | *Yes, I had. / No, I hadn't.* |

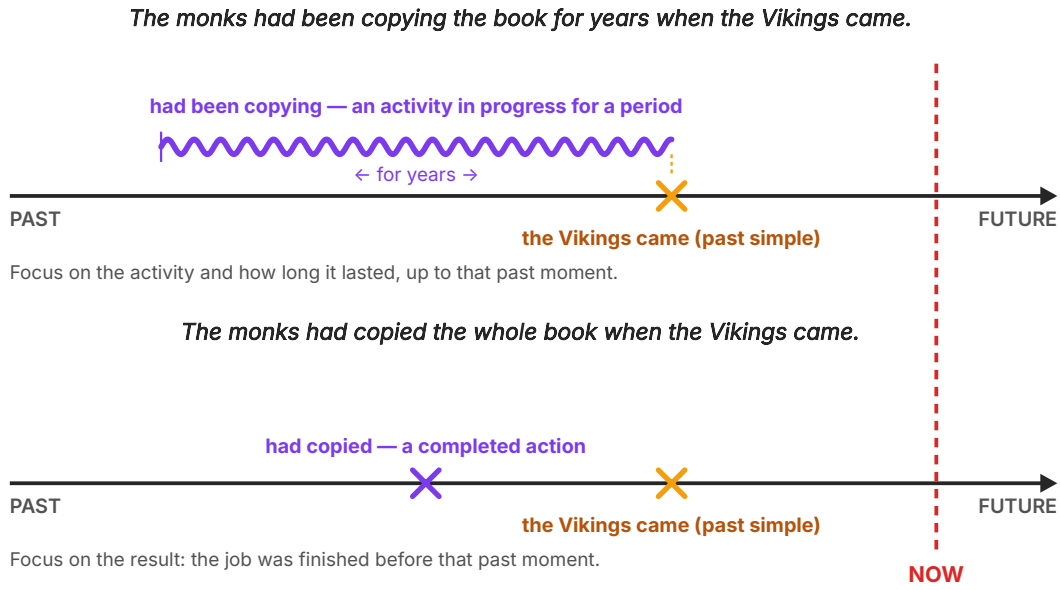



**Figura 1.4** Past perfect continuous and past perfect simple. Above: an activity in progress for a period (violet wave) up to a moment in the past (amber cross). Below: an action completed (violet cross) before that moment.

We use the past perfect continuous:

- for the **duration** of an activity up to a past moment, often with *for*, *since* or *How long…?*: *The monks had been copying the book for years when the Vikings came.* · *How long had Bede been working on his History when he finished it?*
- to explain the **cause** of a past situation, a visible result: *Sam's boots were covered in mud: he had been walking along the Wall all day.* · *Her eyes were red. Had she been crying?*
- for repeated actions over a period before a past moment: *Archaeologists had been digging at Vindolanda for decades before they found the first writing tablets.*

Compare it with the **past perfect simple**, which looks at a **completed** action or at a result, often with a number or a quantity: *By 731 Bede **had written** dozens of books* (result: how many) — *Bede **had been writing** all morning when the bell rang* (activity: how long). As with the present perfect continuous (*English 2*, Unit 8), we do not normally use state verbs in the continuous form: ✓ *They had known each other for years*, ✗ *They had been knowing each other*.

**GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO**

**Il past perfect continuous** (*had been* + forma in *-ing*, uguale per tutte le persone). Indica un'attività che durava da un certo tempo fino a un momento del passato, oppure la causa di una situazione passata: *I had been waiting for an hour when the bus arrived* = aspettavo da un'ora quando arrivò l'autobus.

**Confronto con l'italiano.** In italiano non esiste un «trapassato progressivo» come tempo della grammatica: si usa di solito l'**imperfetto + da** (*studiava da tre ore*), oppure il trapassato prossimo (*aveva studiato tutto il giorno*) o la perifrasi *stava* + *gerundio*. Attenzione dunque a non tradurre parola per parola: *lavoravo lì da due anni quando mi hanno chiamato = I had been working there for two years when they called me* (✗ *I worked there since two years*).

**ERRORE FREQUENTE**

✗ *When I met him, he was living in York since 2020.* → ✓ *...he had been living in York since 2020.* (durata fino a un momento passato: non il past continuous)

✗ *She had been knowing the answer.* → ✓ *She had known the answer.* (verbo di stato) · ✗ *They had been building three forts by 125.* → ✓ *They had built three forts by 125.* (risultato con un numero: past perfect simple)

✗ *He had being walking.* / ✗ *He has been walking when it started to rain.* → ✓ *He had been walking when it started to rain.*

### 1.4.3 The four narrative tenses together

A good story uses all four narrative tenses, each with its own job (Figura 1.5): the past simple moves the story forward; the past continuous paints the background; the past perfect and the past perfect continuous take the reader back to what had happened, or had been happening, before. Read this short anecdote and identify the tenses.

*It **was raining** hard when Callum and Sam finally **reached** the fort at Vindolanda. They **had been walking** along Hadrian's Wall since breakfast, and they were soaked: Callum **had left** his raincoat in his dad's car. While Sam **was looking** for the entrance, Callum **sat down** on an old Roman stone and **laughed**.*

**past continuous**
— the background
*It was raining.*

**past simple**
— the main events
*They reached the fort.*

**past perfect continuous**
— an activity that led up to it
*They had been walking since breakfast.*

**past perfect**
— an earlier, completed event
*Callum had left his raincoat in the car.*

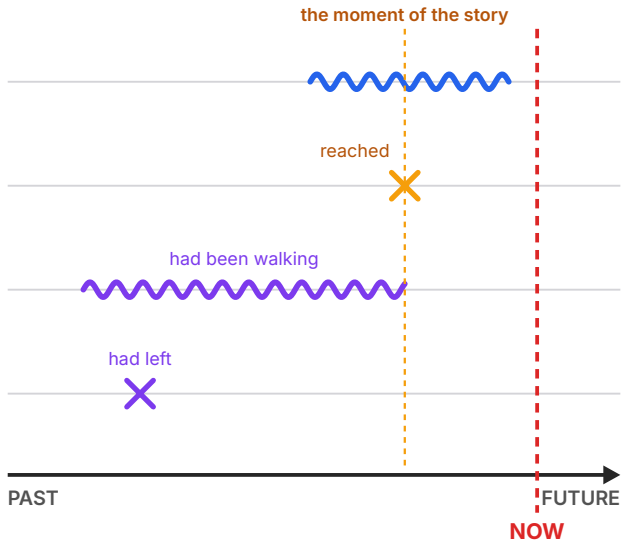



**Figura 1.5** The four narrative tenses in one story. The amber dashed line marks the moment of the story; the past perfect and the past perfect continuous look back from it.

**GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO**

**I quattro tempi del racconto.** Past simple = passato remoto o prossimo (i fatti principali); past continuous = imperfetto (lo sfondo); past perfect = trapassato prossimo (un fatto anteriore); past perfect continuous = di solito imperfetto + *da* o trapassato (un'attività anteriore e la sua durata).

**Confronto con l'italiano.** L'italiano usa l'imperfetto sia per lo sfondo (*pioveva*) sia per la durata (*camminavano da ore*); l'inglese distingue: *it was raining* ma *they had been walking for hours*. Chiediti sempre: l'azione era in corso **in quel momento** (past continuous) o **durava da prima** fino a quel momento (past perfect continuous)?

## 1.5 Skills: Narrating the Past

### 1.5.1 Vocabulary: history and archaeology

Historians study the past mainly through written sources, archaeologists through the things people left in the ground. Tabella 1.8 collects their key words.

**Tabella 1.8** History and archaeology: key words

| Word | Meaning | Example |
|---|---|---|
| **invade** (v.) → *invasion*, *invader* | enter a country with an army to take control | *Claudius invaded Britain in AD 43.* |
| **conquer** (v.) → *conquest*, *conqueror* | take control of a place or people by force | *The Romans never conquered Ireland.* |
| **settle** (v.) → *settlement*, *settler* | go to live in a new place, usually for good | *Angles and Saxons settled in the east.* |
| *tribe* (n.) | a group of families with a common culture and leader | *Boudica's tribe was the Iceni.* |
| *empire* (n.) | a group of countries ruled by one emperor or state | *Britain was a province of the Roman Empire.* |
| *ruins* (n. pl.) | the remains of a building that has fallen down | *We walked among the ruins of the fort.* |
| **excavate** (v.) → *excavation* | dig in the ground to find objects from the past | *The site was excavated in the 1970s.* |
| **site** (n.) | a place where something was, or where archaeologists work | *Vindolanda is a famous Roman site.* |
| **artefact** (n.) | an object made by people, especially one of historical interest | *Coins, shoes and tablets are artefacts.* |

Useful collocations: *an archaeological **dig**, to **date** an object* (find out how old it is), *the **remains** of a building*. Italian *rovine* = *ruins* (*the ruins of the fort*); *a ruin* is one building in ruins.

### Word formation: nouns from verbs with *-al*, *-ure*, *-ance*

In *English 2* (Unit 1) you made nouns with *-ment*: *settle* → *settlement*. Three more suffixes make nouns from verbs.

**Tabella 1.9** Nouns from verbs: *-al*, *-ure*, *-ance*

| Suffix | Verb → noun |
|---|---|
| *-al* | *arrive → arrival · survive → survival · bury → burial · refuse → refusal · deny → denial · propose → proposal* |
| *-ure* | *depart → departure · fail → failure · close → closure · press → pressure · mix → mixture · please → pleasure* |
| *-ance* | *resist → resistance · appear → appearance · perform → performance · guide → guidance · disturb → disturbance · accept → acceptance* |

Check the spelling: a final *-e* disappears (*arrive → arrival*, *close → closure*, *guide → guidance*), and *-y* after a consonant becomes *-i-* (*bury → burial*, *deny → denial*). The stress stays on the same syllable as in the verb: *arRIVE → arRIVal*. Not every verb takes these suffixes: check a dictionary.

### 1.5.2 Reading: One Year Later, Again

**Before you read.** Think about the first weeks of this school year. What is new for you — subjects, teachers, timetable, plans? What has not changed?

The Bristol–Turin Link is back for its third year with a new name, the **Literature Trail**: Giulia's class in Turin and Sam's English Literature group in Bristol will read the same texts and write about them on a shared blog. As usual, the four friends wrote the first post. (testo della redazione)

**The Link Blog · Literature Trail · Post 1: One Year Later, Again**

**Giulia, Turin.** Third year! In Italy that means a new subject on our timetable: English literature. Prof.ssa Rossi, who has taught us English since last year, now teaches us literature too, and on the first day she wrote a date on the board: AD 731. Nobody knew what it was: it is the year in which a monk called Bede finished the first history of the English, and that is where our Trail starts. Good news: I passed my B1 in July, as some of you know, and now I'm aiming at B2 by the end of next year. Marta says I've been talking about grammar all summer. That isn't true: I've also been talking about Lily's rabbit, Biscuit.

**Sam, Bristol.** I'm in Year 12 now, in the sixth form, which means I study only three subjects: English Literature, History and Biology. For two years everyone had been asking me what I wanted to do after my GCSEs, and I had been changing my mind every week; in the end I chose the subjects I enjoy. Mrs Hill, my English Literature teacher, has asked me to be the Trail's "peer guide": I explain the hard bits to the Turin group. (Help.) At home, Josh left in September to study computer science at university, and I've moved into his room. It still smells of his trainers. Lily has started Year 1 and reads everything, including my history notes.

**Aoife, Galway.** I'm in Fifth Year, the first of the two years before the Leaving Certificate. I still want to study marine science, but this term my project has nothing to do with the sea: we're comparing the oldest Irish texts with the oldest English ones. I had always thought Irish was much older than English. It turns out that the story is more complicated: both languages had been spoken for centuries before anyone wrote them down, and in both cases the first writers were monks. I'll tell you more when I know more.

**Callum, Bristol.** Year 12 for me too, with Maths, Geography and Art, and yes, I still have my clipboard. The crossing outside Hillside has been there since last winter, and I cross it every morning like a proud father. My summer story: in August Dad and I drove up to Edinburgh to see Mum, and Sam came with us. On the way we stopped for two days to walk along Hadrian's Wall. On the second day it was pouring with rain by the time we reached Vindolanda; we had been walking since breakfast, and I had left my raincoat in the car. While Sam was looking for the museum entrance, I sat on a Roman stone and laughed, because there was nothing else to

do. Inside the museum we read about a birthday invitation that was written there nearly two thousand years ago. Some things never change.

**Language in context.** Find the four narrative tenses in Callum's summer story. Then look at Sam's second sentence: *everyone had been asking me* and *I had been changing my mind* describe repeated activities over a long period up to a moment in the past.

### 1.5.3 Speaking: telling an anecdote

In *English 2* (Unit 2) you learnt to tell an anecdote. At B2 the story must be lively and easy to follow: set the scene, build up to the main event, and use the four narrative tenses to move backwards and forwards in time, as Callum does (Tabella 1.10).

**Tabella 1.10** Useful language — telling an anecdote

| Function | Phrases |
|---|---|
| Starting | *Did I ever tell you about the time…? · You won't believe what happened to me last…* |
| Setting the scene | *It was a cold Saturday in… · We had been travelling for hours, and… · It was getting dark…* |
| Going back in time | *What I didn't know was that… · Earlier that day I had… · It turned out that…* |
| The main event | *All of a sudden… · Just as we were…, … · At that very moment…* |
| Reacting (listener) | *No way! · What happened next? · You must have been furious! · I can imagine!* |
| Ending | *In the end… · To cut a long story short… · Looking back, it was quite funny.* |

1. **Pair work: a journey.** Tell your partner about a journey or a trip when something went wrong (bad weather, a lost object, a missed train). Speak for about two minutes; use all four narrative tenses at least once. Your partner reacts and asks two questions.
2. **Group work: a history anecdote.** In groups of three, choose an event from this chapter (Boudica's revolt, Augustine's arrival in Kent, Cædmon's dream) and tell it as if you had been there, in the first person. Each student tells one part of the story.

### 1.5.4 Writing: a biographical profile

A **biographical profile** is a short text about a real person's life and work, for a website, a magazine or a school project. Shorter and more selective than a biography, it chooses the facts that explain why the person matters; it is written in the third person, with linkers of time.

**Tabella 1.11** Model text — a biographical profile

| **Bede (c. 673–735): the monk who wrote England's first history** |
|---|
| When Bede died in 735, he had hardly ever left the north-east of England. Yet the books he wrote were read all over Europe, and he is still called "the father of English history". |
| Bede was born in about 673 near the monastery of Wearmouth, in Northumbria. At the age of seven his family sent him to the monks to be educated, and he never left the community of Wearmouth and Jarrow. He became a deacon at nineteen and a priest at thirty. In the monastery's great library he found books that had been brought from Rome, and he read them all his life. |
| Bede wrote dozens of works in Latin, on the Bible, on science and on the measurement of time. He helped to make popular the system of counting years from the birth of Christ, the "AD" we still use. In 731, after he had been collecting documents and stories for years, he completed his masterpiece, the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. |
| Bede's *History* is our main source for early Anglo-Saxon England, and the story of Cædmon is found only there. In his own words, he had always found it sweet "to learn, or to teach, or to write". Few people have done all three so well. (211 words) |

**Structure.** Title (name, dates, and why the person matters) → introduction with a hook (a contrast: he never travelled, but his books did) → early life → main work and achievements → importance today, with a short quotation. One idea per paragraph.

**Language.** Time expressions give the chronology (*at the age of seven, in 731, all his life*); the past perfect forms look back from a key moment (*after he had been collecting documents for years*); the present is only for what is true today (*is still called*).

**Checklist.** Before you hand in a profile, check:

- Does the title say who the person was and why they matter?
- Does the first paragraph make the reader want to go on?
- Are the facts in chronological order, with dates and linkers of time?
- Did I choose only the important facts (not every date of the person's life)?
- Did I use the narrative tenses correctly, and the present only for what is true now?
- Are all my facts checked in a reliable source?

**Task.** Write a biographical profile (180–220 words) for the Literature Trail blog of a person from history, science, art or sport whom you admire. Follow the structure of the model. *Research:* find your facts in a reliable online source — a museum, a library, a university or an encyclopedia — and check every date in a second source before you use it.

## 1.6 Connections: Rome in Britain, Rome in Italy

Giulia's city, Turin, was a Roman town too: *Augusta Taurinorum*, founded in the 1st century BC. Its old centre still follows the Roman grid of straight streets, and one of its Roman gates, the

Porta Palatina, is still standing. Rome left its marks on both countries, but the marks are different.

### 1.6.1 Latin words in English and in Italian

Italian *comes from* Latin; English, a Germanic language (chapter 2), took Latin words as loans. Some of the oldest are linked to Roman roads and the Roman army. The Germanic peoples had already borrowed the Latin *strata* ("paved road") on the continent: it became Old English *stræt*, modern *street* (German *Straße*), while in Italy the same word became *strada*. Latin *castra* ("military camp") became Old English *ceaster*, the name the Anglo-Saxons gave to the old Roman towns and forts: that is why so many English place-names end in **-chester**, **-caster** or **-cester** (Chester, Manchester, Lancaster, Doncaster, Leicester, Gloucester). Latin *vallum* ("rampart") became *wall*; in Italian the Wall of Hadrian is still called *il Vallo di Adriano*. Latin *milia (passuum)* ("a thousand paces") gave English *mile* and Italian *miglio*.

**Tabella 1.12** From Latin to English and Italian

| Latin | Old English → modern English | Italian |
|---|---|---|
| *strata (via)* | *stræt → street* | *strada* |
| *castra* | *ceaster → -chester / -caster / -cester* | *castro* (in place-names), *castello* (from *castellum*) |
| *vallum* | *weall → wall* | *vallo* |
| *milia (passuum)* | *mil → mile* | *miglio* |
| *vinum* | *win → wine* | *vino* |

### 1.6.2 A frontier and a network

In Italy, Roman engineering is above all a **network**. Roads such as the Via Appia (begun in 312 BC) and the Via Aemilia linked Rome to the towns of the peninsula, and many modern roads follow them. In Britain the Romans built roads too, but their most famous monument is a **frontier**: Hadrian's Wall, the north-western edge of the Empire, a line that separated and controlled. The two monuments tell two stories: the Italian roads speak of a centre and its connections, the Wall of an edge, where Rome met peoples it never conquered.

### 1.6.3 Bede in Italy

Bede never left Northumbria, but his name and his monastery's work reached Italy. In 716 the abbot of Wearmouth–Jarrow, Ceolfrith, set off for Rome with a huge Latin Bible made in the monastery as a gift for the Pope; he died on the journey, in France, but the book reached Italy. Later it was kept at the abbey of San Salvatore on Monte Amiata, in Tuscany, which gave it its name: the **Codex Amiatinus**. Today it is in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence; it is

the oldest surviving complete Latin Bible in a single volume. And in the *Paradiso* Dante places Bede in the Heaven of the Sun, among the great teachers of the Church:

«Vedi oltre fiammeggiar l'ardente spiro
d'Isidoro, di Beda e di Riccardo» — Dante, *Paradiso* X, 130–131

("See, beyond, the burning breath of Isidore, of Bede and of Richard blazing": Dante means that their spirits shine like flames. Translation by the editors.) For Dante, six centuries later, Bede was a master of Christian learning. In 1899 the Catholic Church declared him a Doctor of the Church.

**COLLEGAMENTI**

**Science and history: how do archaeologists date a site?** (1) **Stratigraphy**, the study of layers. A site is made of layers of soil and rubbish that accumulated over time. Normally the deeper a layer, the older it is (the law of superposition, borrowed from geology). (2) **Coins.** A coin with an emperor's name can be dated; a layer cannot be older than the most recent coin found in it, so a coin of Hadrian means that the layer was formed during or after his reign. (3) **Tree rings.** At wet sites like Vindolanda, wood survives; the pattern of its growth rings can be matched with a known sequence to find the year in which the tree was cut. (4) **Radiocarbon dating.** All living things take in carbon, including a small amount of a radioactive form, carbon-14. After death no new carbon enters, and the carbon-14 slowly decays: half of it disappears in about 5700 years. Measuring how much is left tells scientists roughly how long ago the plant or animal died.

*Maths link:* if half of the carbon-14 disappears in about 5700 years, what fraction is left after about 11 400 years? (A quarter.)

1. Find three place-names in England with *-chester*, *-caster* or *-cester*. Can you find Italian place-names that come from Latin *castrum* / *castellum*?
2. Which Roman roads or monuments are there near your town? Are they part of a network or a frontier?
3. Why do you think Dante, an Italian poet, knew and admired an English monk?

## SINTESI

- The Romans called Britain *Britannia*; its Celtic tribes left no written texts, so we see them mostly through Roman views (Caesar, Tacitus).
- Caesar landed in 55 and 54 BC; the conquest began in AD 43 under Claudius; Boudica revolted in AD 60 or 61; Hadrian's Wall was begun around AD 122.
- Roman Britain had towns (Londinium, Eboracum, Deva, Aquae Sulis), roads, forts and writing (the Vindolanda tablets); Roman rule ended around 410.
- From the 5th century Angles, Saxons and Jutes settled in Britain and formed kingdoms such as Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex; the Britons kept the west.
- Christianity came from Ireland (Iona 563, Lindisfarne 635) and from Rome (Augustine in Kent, 597); monasteries became centres of learning.
- Anglo-Saxon poetry was oral: the scop sang in the hall. Latin was the written language of the Church; English was written from about 600.
- Bede (c. 673–735), a monk of Wearmouth–Jarrow, completed the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* in Latin in 731.
- T1: in the sparrow simile, human life is a bird flying through a warm hall, "from winter into winter".
- T2: Cædmon's Hymn, the first English poem by a named poet, praises God the Creator with many names; Bede says poems cannot be translated word for word.
- The past perfect continuous (*had been* + *-ing*) expresses an activity and its duration up to a past moment, or the cause of a past situation.
- The four narrative tenses: past simple (events), past continuous (background), past perfect (earlier events), past perfect continuous (earlier activities).
- Latin left words in both languages: *street / strada*, *-chester / castra*, *wall / vallo*; Bede's monastery is linked to Italy by the Codex Amiatinus and by Dante.

## ESERCIZI

### History and Literature

1. ● In which year did Augustine's mission arrive in Kent?
   - **A.** 410
   - **B.** 664
   - **C.** 731
   - **D.** 597

2. ● In which language did Bede write his *Historia ecclesiastica*?

   **A.** Old English
   **B.** Old Irish
   **C.** Latin
   **D.** Greek

3. ● True or false? Correct the false statements. a The Romans conquered the whole of Britain and Ireland. b Boudica was the queen of the Iceni. c Hadrian's Wall ran from the Tyne to the Solway Firth. d Bede travelled to Rome to collect documents for his *History*. e Bede gives 449 as the date of the first Anglo-Saxon ships. f The Synod of Whitby chose the Irish method of calculating Easter.

4. ●● Complete the timeline with the dates in the box: *c. 122 · 43 · 563 · 597 · c. 410 · 731 · 55 BC*. a Caesar's first expedition · b Claudius's invasion · c Hadrian's Wall begun · d end of Roman rule · e Columba founds Iona · f Augustine arrives in Kent · g Bede completes his *History*.

5. ●● Match the people (1–8) with what they did (a–h). 1 Claudius · 2 Boudica · 3 Hadrian · 4 Augustine · 5 Aidan · 6 Hild · 7 Cædmon · 8 Æthelberht. a founded the monastery of Lindisfarne · b was abbess of Whitby · c led a revolt against Rome · d made the first laws written in English · e began the conquest of Britain · f was the first archbishop of Canterbury · g sang a hymn about the Creation · h ordered a wall across northern Britain.

6. ●● Explain each term in one sentence in your own words: a scop · b scriptorium · c vernacular · d manuscript · e oral tradition.

7. ●●● Answer in 40–60 words. a Why must we be careful when we read what Roman authors wrote about the Britons? b Why was the arrival of Christianity important for the history of English literature?

### Text Analysis

8. ● In T1, what does the sparrow stand for?

   **A.** a human being
   **B.** a king
   **C.** the new religion
   **D.** the winter

9. ●● T1. Answer the questions. a Where and when does the scene of the simile take place? b Why is the bird safe for a moment? c What is the "winter" before and after? d What does the nobleman suggest that the king should do, and why?

10. ●● T2. Find in the Hymn the Old English words for: a heaven · b earth · c roof · d work · e father · f holy · g almighty · h children. Which of them has no cousin in standard modern English?

11. ●● T2. Make a list of all the names and titles for God in the Hymn, in Old English and in modern English. Why do you think the poet uses so many?

12. ●● Retell Bede's account of Cædmon (from the moment he leaves the feast to the moment he begins to sing) in five or six sentences. Use reported speech and at least three narrative tenses.

13. ●●● Bede says that poems cannot be translated "word for word". Compare lines 3–4 of the Hymn with our translation and with Bede's Latin version, which says (translation by the editors): "the deeds of the Father of glory: how he, being the eternal God, became the author of all wonders". What did each translator change, and why? (60–80 words)

14. ●●● Compare T1 and T2 (80–100 words). Both texts use the image of a hall or a house: what does it stand for in each one? Which text is more hopeful? Give reasons.

### Language

15. ● Recap: narrative tenses. Complete with the past simple, past continuous or past perfect of the verbs in brackets. a When the Romans _____ (arrive), the Britons _____ (already / build) hillforts. b While the king _____ (sit) at dinner, a sparrow _____ (fly) into the hall. c Cædmon _____ (leave) the feast because he _____ (never / learn) to sing. d It _____ (snow) when the monks _____ (reach) Jarrow.

16. ● Recap: the passive. Rewrite the sentences in the passive. a The Romans built the Wall in the 120s. b Archaeologists have found hundreds of tablets at Vindolanda. c The rebels had burnt Londinium. d Monks copied every book by hand. e They will open a new museum next year.

17. ●● Recap: conditionals. Complete with the correct form of the verbs. a If Caesar _____ (stay) in Britain in 54 BC, the conquest _____ (begin) a century earlier. b If I _____ (live) near Hadrian's Wall, I _____ (walk) along it every weekend. c If you _____ (go) to Bath, you _____ (see) the Roman baths. d If you _____ (mix) blue and yellow, you _____ (get) green.

18. ●● Recap: reported speech. Report the dialogue between Cædmon and the figure in his dream. a "Cædmon, sing me something." (told) b "I cannot sing." (said) c "I left the feast because I could not sing." (explained) d "What must I sing?" (asked) e "Sing about the beginning of created things." (told)

19. ● Complete with the past perfect continuous of the verbs in brackets. a The archaeologists _____ (dig) for three weeks when they found the first tablet. b Callum was wet because he _____ (walk) in the rain. c How long _____ Bede _____ (write) when he finished the *History*? d We _____ (not / wait) long when the guide arrived. e Giulia was tired: she _____ (study) all afternoon.

20. ●● Past perfect simple or continuous? Choose the correct form. a By 731 Bede had written / had been writing dozens of books. b Her hands were dirty: she had dug / had been digging in the garden. c The monks had copied / had been copying the gospel book for months, but it still wasn't finished. d When Augustine arrived, the king had already married / had already been marrying a Christian princess. e They had known / had been knowing each other since childhood. f I had read / had been reading for an hour when the lights went out.

21. ●● Join the two sentences. Use the word in brackets and the past perfect continuous. a Sam was exhausted. He studied all night. (because) b The bus finally came. We waited for forty minutes. (when … for) c Aoife's brother was sunburnt. He sailed all day. (because) d The Romans left Britain. They ruled it for more than 350 years. (when … for)

22. ●● Find and correct the mistake in each sentence (✗). a ✗ When I met her, she was living in Galway since 2020. b ✗ They had been owning the house for years. c ✗ He was tired because he has been running. d ✗ By the end of the day we had been visiting three museums. e ✗ Had you be waiting long when the train arrived?

23. ●●● Complete the story with the correct narrative tense of the verbs in brackets (past simple, past continuous, past perfect or past perfect continuous). It _____ (1 get) dark when Marta _____ (2 finally / find) the museum. She _____ (3 look) for it for an hour, and her phone _____ (4 die) at lunchtime. A guard _____ (5 lock) the door, but when he _____ (6 see) her face, he _____ (7 smile) and _____ (8 let) her in.

24. ●●● Translate into English. a Quando siamo arrivati al Vallo di Adriano, pioveva da due ore. b Gli archeologi scavavano in quel sito da anni quando trovarono le tavolette. c Era stanco perché aveva lavorato tutto il giorno nello scriptorium.

### Vocabulary

25. ● Complete the sentences with the words in the box: *artefacts · conquered · empire · excavated · invaded · ruins · settled · site · tribe*. a The Iceni were a British _____ . b Claudius _____ Britain in AD 43, but the Romans never _____ the whole island. c Many Saxon families _____ in the south. d Britain was a province of the Roman _____ . e Today you can walk among the _____ of the fort. f The _____ was first _____ in the 1970s, and thousands of _____ were found.

26. ●● Write the noun formed from each verb with *-al*, *-ure* or *-ance*. Then use four of them in sentences of your own. a arrive · b resist · c depart · d bury · e appear · f fail · g survive · h guide · i close · j deny

27. ●● Odd one out. Which word does not belong? Say why. a invade · conquer · settle · excavate · b tribe · empire · kingdom · ruins · c arrival · burial · survival · capital · d departure · failure · pleasure · picture

### Writing and Speaking

28. ●● Write a biographical profile (180–220 words) of Cædmon, of Boudica or of a person you admire, for the Literature Trail blog. Follow the model and the checklist in the Writing section.

29. ●● Speaking. Work in pairs. Tell your partner an anecdote (about two minutes) that begins: *I had been looking forward to that day for weeks…* Use all four narrative tenses. Your partner reacts with phrases from Tabella 1.10 and asks two questions.

30. ●●● Research and speaking. Look for the Vindolanda tablets on the website of the British Museum or of the Vindolanda Trust. Choose one tablet and present it to the class in one minute: what it is, who wrote it, what it says, and why it is important. Name your source, and check that it is an official museum or university website.

### Towards B2

31. ●● Multiple-choice cloze. Choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for each gap.
Hadrian's Wall (1) _____ in about AD 122, after the emperor Hadrian had (2) _____ Britain. It runs for about 117 kilometres from coast (3) _____ coast. The soldiers who (4) _____ it came from all over the Empire. Today walkers (5) _____ the whole length in about a week, and many of them stop at Vindolanda, (6) _____ thousands of objects have been found.
1 A built B was begun C has begun D was beginning · 2 A visited B travelled C gone D arrived · 3 A from B at C to D by · 4 A covered B guarded C looked D saw · 5 A can walk B can to walk C must walking D are walk · 6 A which B that C where D what

32. ●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap.
Bede was born (1) _____ about 673. When he was seven, his family sent him (2) _____ the monastery of Wearmouth, and he spent (3) _____ rest of his life there. He (4) _____ been studying and writing for many years when he completed his *History* in 731. The book is still read today, (5) _____ it was written in Latin. Without it, we would know very (6) _____ about the early Anglo-Saxons.

33. ●●● Word formation cloze. Use the word in brackets to form a word that fits the gap.
The (1) _____ (arrive) of the Romans changed Britain for ever. After a long (2) _____ (resist), many tribes accepted Roman rule, and the (3) _____ (settle) of new towns began. Archaeological (4) _____ (excavate) show that (5) _____ (romanise) was strongest in the south. The (6) _____ (depart) of the legions around 410 left the Britons without (7) _____ (defend). A (8) _____ (bury) found at Sutton Hoo tells another story: that of the Anglo-Saxon kings (see chapter 3).

34. ●●● Key-word transformation. Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. Use the word in bold and between two and five words. a They started digging at nine and found the coin at noon. **BEEN** → They _____ three hours when they found the coin. b "I can't sing", said Cædmon. **COULD** → Cædmon said that _____ sing. c Somebody built the fort in the 2nd century. **WAS** → The fort _____ the 2nd century. d It was my first visit to York. **NEVER** → I _____ to York before. e I didn't take an umbrella, so I got wet. **IF** → I wouldn't have got wet _____ an umbrella. f She studied all day, so she was tired. **BECAUSE** → She was tired _____ studying all day.

## PER APPROFONDIRE

- [MOR] K. O. Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain*: the chapters on Roman Britain and on the Anglo-Saxon period.
- [NOR] S. Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. A: the introduction to the Middle Ages and the pages on Bede and Cædmon's Hymn.
- [CRY] D. Crystal, *The Stories of English*: the first chapters, on the arrival of English in Britain and its first written texts.
- [SWA] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entries on the past perfect and the past perfect continuous.

# Glossario del capitolo

**Anglo-Saxons**
*anglosassoni* — the Germanic peoples (Angles, Saxons, Jutes) who settled in Britain from the 5th century.

**Artefact**
*manufatto, reperto* — an object made by people, especially one of historical interest (AmE *artifact*).

**Biographical profile**
*profilo biografico* — a short, selective text about a real person's life and importance.

**Britannia**
*Britannia* — the Latin name of Britain, and of the Roman province created there from AD 43.

**Conversion**
*conversione* — the change from one religion to another, here from paganism to Christianity.

**Druid**
*druido* — a priest and teacher of the Celtic peoples, known to us mainly from Roman authors.

**Excavate**
*scavare (in archeologia)* — dig carefully in the ground to find objects from the past; noun *excavation*.

**Frontier**
*frontiera, confine* — the edge of a state or empire, often defended (Hadrian's Wall).

**Hymn**
*inno* — a song or poem of praise to God.

**Manuscript**
*manoscritto* — a book or document written by hand.

**Missionary**
*missionario* — a person sent to spread a religion in another country.

**Monastery**
*monastero* — a community of monks or nuns living under a rule, and the buildings where they live.

**Oral tradition**
*tradizione orale* — stories and poems passed on by word of mouth, not in writing.

**Past perfect continuous**
*«trapassato» + forma progressiva — had been + -ing*: an activity up to a past moment (*they had been walking for hours*).

**Romanisation**
*romanizzazione* — the adoption of Roman language, customs and way of life by a conquered people.

**Scop**
*poeta-cantore anglosassone* — a professional Old English poet who sang or recited in a lord's hall.

**Scriptorium**
*scriptorium* — the room in a monastery where books were copied by hand.

**Simile**
*similitudine* — a comparison introduced by *like* or *as*: life is like a sparrow's flight.

**Stratigraphy**
*stratigrafia* — the study of the layers of a site: normally the deeper the layer, the older it is.

**Vernacular**
*volgare, lingua parlata* — the everyday language of a people, as opposed to a learned language like Latin.

# Soluzioni

**1.** D (597).

**2.** C (Latin).

**3.** a F: they never conquered the whole of Britain (not the far north) and never invaded Ireland. b T. c T. d F: Bede never left Northumbria; friends copied documents for him in Canterbury and Rome. e T. f F: it chose the Roman method.

**4.** a 55 BC · b 43 · c c. 122 · d c. 410 · e 563 · f 597 · g 731.

**5.** 1 e · 2 c · 3 h · 4 f · 5 a · 6 b · 7 g · 8 d.

**6.** Model answers: a a professional Anglo-Saxon poet who sang or recited poems in the hall of a king or lord; b the room in a monastery where monks copied books by hand; c the language that people speak every day, as opposed to a learned language like Latin; d a book or document written by hand; e stories and poems passed on by word of mouth from one generation to the next.

**7.** Traccia. a The Britons left no written texts, so we depend on Greek and Roman authors, who were often their enemies or wrote for a Roman audience; they could exaggerate, misunderstand, or use the Britons to make a point about Rome (Tacitus's Calgacus). We should compare sources and ask who wrote them and why. b The Church brought literacy and Latin: monasteries had schools, libraries and scriptoria, where texts were written down and copied. Without monks, oral poetry like Cædmon's Hymn would have been lost, and there would be no history like Bede's.

**8.** A (a human being).

**9.** a In the king's hall, at dinner, in winter. b Because inside the hall there is a fire and no storm. c The time before birth and after death, which nobody knows. d To accept the new religion, because it may give them more certain knowledge about what comes before and after life.

**10.** a heofan, heofon- (heofonrices) · b eorðe (eorðan), folde · c hrof (hrofe) · d weorc · e fæder (Wuldorfæder) · f halig · g ælmihtig · h bearn (bearnum). *Bearn* has no cousin in standard modern English (only Scots *bairn*); *folde* has disappeared too.

**11.** heofonrices Weard (Guardian of the heavenly kingdom), Meotod (Creator, "Measurer"), Wuldorfæder (Father of glory), ece Drihten (eternal Lord, twice), halig Scyppend (holy Creator), monncynnes Weard (Guardian of mankind), Frea ælmihtig (Lord almighty). The many names praise God from different points of view (power, creation, eternity, protection); repeating an idea with new words was a typical technique of oral poetry, and it gives the short poem the solemn tone of a hymn.

**12.** Model answer: Cædmon left the feast because he had never learnt to sing and the harp was coming near him. He went to the stable, because he had been given the care of the animals that night. While he was sleeping, a figure appeared in a dream and told him to sing something. Cædmon answered that he could not sing and that this was the reason why he had left the feast. The figure insisted and told him to sing about the beginning of created things, so Cædmon began to sing verses he had never heard before.

**13.** Traccia. Our translation keeps the line division, so it follows the Old English word order and leaves an unusual English sentence ("as he, of every wonder, / the eternal Lord, established the beginning"); a smooth modern sentence would be "how he, the eternal Lord, established the beginning of every wonder". Bede's Latin gives only the sense: it joins lines and changes the image ("became the author of all wonders"), because he wanted Latin readers to understand the meaning, not to hear the poem. Both lose something: rhythm and alliteration disappear in any translation.

**14.** Traccia. In T1 the hall stands for human life: warm and bright but short, surrounded by the dark unknown ("from winter into winter"). In T2 heaven is a roof that God made over the children of the earth: the whole world is a house built and protected by the Creator. T2 is more hopeful: in T1 the nobleman does not know what comes before and after life, while in T2 the poet praises a God who made the house and guards it. T1 asks the question; T2, written by a Christian, gives the answer.

**15.** a arrived, had already built · b was sitting, flew · c left (had left), had never learnt (learned) · d was snowing, reached.

**16.** a The Wall was built (by the Romans) in the 120s. b Hundreds of tablets have been found at Vindolanda (by archaeologists). c Londinium had been burnt (by the rebels). d Every book was copied by hand (by monks). e A new museum will be opened next year.

**17.** a had stayed, would have begun · b lived, would walk (were living / would be walking also possible) · c go, will see (can see) · d mix, get.

**18.** a The figure told Cædmon to sing (him) something. b Cædmon said (that) he could not (couldn't) sing. c He explained that he had left the feast because he could not sing. d He asked what he had to (must) sing. e The figure told him to sing about the beginning of created things.

**19.** a had been digging · b had been walking · c had … been writing · d hadn't been waiting · e had been studying.

**20.** a had written (result, with a number) · b had been digging (cause of a visible result) · c had been copying (activity not finished) · d had already married · e had known (state verb) · f had been reading (an activity in progress when the lights went out; *had read* is possible but less natural).

**21.** a Sam was exhausted because he had been studying all night. b When the bus finally came, we had been waiting for forty minutes. c Aoife's brother was sunburnt because he had been sailing all day. d When the Romans left Britain, they had been ruling it for more than 350 years. (*had ruled* is also acceptable: *rule* can be seen as a state.)

**22.** a …she had been living in Galway since 2020. b They had owned the house for years. (state verb) c …because he had been running. d …we had visited three museums. (result with a number) e Had you been waiting long when the train arrived?

**23.** 1 was getting · 2 finally found · 3 had been looking · 4 had died · 5 was locking · 6 saw · 7 smiled · 8 let.

**24.** a When we arrived at (reached) Hadrian's Wall, it had been raining for two hours. b The archaeologists had been digging (excavating) at that site for years when they found the tablets. c He was tired because he had been working in the scriptorium all day.

**25.** a tribe · b invaded, conquered · c settled · d Empire · e ruins · f site, excavated, artefacts.

**26.** a arrival · b resistance · c departure · d burial · e appearance · f failure · g survival · h guidance · i closure · j denial. Sentences: open answers.

**27.** a excavate (the others are actions of armies or newcomers; excavate is what archaeologists do) · b ruins (the others are groups of people or states) · c capital (the others are nouns made from verbs with *-al*; *capital* does not come from a verb) · d picture (the others come from verbs with *-ure*: depart, fail, please; *picture* is not formed from a verb in English).

**28.** Open answer. Assessment: the five-part structure (title, hook, early life, work, importance); facts selected and in chronological order; linkers of time; narrative tenses correct, present only for what is true now; length 180–220 words. Possible title for Cædmon: *Cædmon (7th century): the cowherd who became a poet*.

**29.** Model answer: "I had been looking forward to that day for weeks: our class was going to visit the Roman museum in Turin. On the morning of the trip it was raining, and the bus was late. We had been waiting at the station for half an hour when the teacher realised that she had left the tickets at school. While she was running back, the bus arrived and left without us! To cut a long story short,

we visited the museum in the afternoon, and it turned out to be the best trip of the year." Listener: "No way! What happened next? You must have been furious!"

**30.** Open answer. Example: Tablet 291, the birthday invitation from Claudia Severa to Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of the commander at Vindolanda, about AD 100: written in ink on a thin wooden leaf, partly in Claudia's own handwriting; it is important because it is among the earliest known examples of Latin handwriting by a woman, and it shows the private life of a frontier fort. Sources: the British Museum collection online; Vindolanda Tablets Online (University of Oxford).

**31.** 1 B · 2 A · 3 C · 4 B · 5 A · 6 C.

**32.** 1 in · 2 to · 3 the · 4 had · 5 although (though) · 6 little.

**33.** 1 arrival · 2 resistance · 3 settlement · 4 excavations · 5 romanisation (romanization) · 6 departure · 7 defence (AmE defense) · 8 burial.

**34.** a had been digging for · b he could not (couldn't) · c was built in · d had never been · e if I had taken (if I'd taken) · f because she had been.