Desire, Sin, and Education: Sodom's Story in Anglo-Saxon Latin Literature

The educational use of Genesis 19:15-29 in Anglo-Latin Literature between 600 and 800.

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Summary

In the past thirty years, scholarly attention on Anglo-Saxon references to Sodom has largely centred on the role same-sex desire played in the Anglo-Saxon definition of the Sodomites' sins. This focus has led to limited attention on mentions of Sodom's sins in Anglo-Latin sources that cannot be used to reconstruct the role same-sex desire played in this definition. Consequently, studies often analyse fragments of texts for clues about the role of same-sex acts in the author's interpretation of Sodom's sins. This can lead to an interpretation of the text that, although perhaps valid when applied to the particular fragment, loses credibility when viewed in light of the text as a whole. To address this issue this thesis explores how Anglo-Saxon authors, writing in Latin between 600 and 800, used Sodom's story to transmit rules and regulations about appropriate gendered and sexual behaviour, instead of focussing on what Anglo-Saxons believed the Sodomites did to deserve punishment.

Anglo-Saxon authors followed two main educational approaches when using Sodom, both inspired by the Church Fathers. The first was through an allegorical interpretation of Lot's flight from Sodom via Zoar to the mountains (Gen. 19:15-29). These historical places were used as markers against which someone's spiritual development could be measured. Bede was the first to explicitly frame this allegory as a tool to teach the proper handling of illicit sexual desires. He also emphasized the contagious nature of Sodom's vices and introduced gendered language: returning to Sodom signified 'feminine frailty' unsuitable for the vir perfectus (perfect man). Alcuin uses an interpretation comparable to Bede's but compared spiritual regression to a decline from *vir perfectus* to a less perfect state of *adolescentia.* The same tradition influenced Alcuin's *Quaestiones in Genesim* in which he combined a literal interpretation of Genesis with an educational approach akin to the allegorical interpretation, using Sodom's story to present diverse ways of dealing with sexual desire. Although Aldhelm did not explicitly use the Sodom allegory, the prose version of his *De Virginitate* similarly used Sodom's story to warn against spiritual regression from heavenly contemplation to earthly desires.

The second approach was constructing a sinful dynamic around Sodom's demise. This dynamic, already described by the Church Fathers, involved the Sodomites falling prey to *luxuria* (excessive desire) due to their wealth, leading to excessive *libido* and, ultimately, to the attempted rape of the angels, which resulted in the Sodomites' divine punishment. Contrary to the Church Fathers Bede, expecting his audience to associate a particularly heinous sin with the Sodomites (their 'infando') without needing to explain it, used this expectation to dissuade them from committing more 'common' sins relating to luxuria by claiming that these other sins also led to Sodom's downfall. Other Anglo-Saxon authors used a similar strategy by including relatively minor sins in the early stages of the sinful dynamic, suggesting that similar sins ultimately led to Sodom's demise. The educational potential of this dynamic is evident in Boniface's Enigmata and Aldhelm's poetic version of *De Virginitate,* where excessive drinking is portrayed as the start of a sinful trajectory leading to a fate like that of Sodom. Boniface's letters from around 747 illustrate the dynamic's corrective potential, in which he warned the king of Mercia that failing to regulate earthly desires would lead to moral depravity, loss of spiritual and military power, and ultimately destruction by enemies or divine wrath. The punitive potential of the dynamic is suggested in a shift in language between Anglo-Saxon and Irish penitentials. While Irish penitentials used Sodom as a biblical simile to describe certain sinners as fornicating 'like the Sodomites', Anglo-Saxon penitentials began labelling them 'Sodomites'. Like a thief committed theft, a sodomite committed a certain sin. Although there is no direct link between this change and the use of Sodom's sinful dynamic it seems a logical consequence: if authors warned people who failed to regulate their (sexual) desires that they would become like the Sodomites, calling people who failed to heed these warnings 'Sodomites' seems a logical next step. Sodom's sinful dynamic, therefore, provided a language to talk about and create a group of sinners which before did not exist.

Interpreting Sodom: a new perspective

'God gave an example of those who are going to act with impiety, in order that we, having absolutely certain tokens of perdition of the wicked, might more vigilantly flee from their eternal torments.'[1]

Bede (c.673-735) on Sodom's destruction

Even a cursory look at Genesis 18-19 reveals why Bede might have seen the story of Sodom's destruction as a good repellent against impious behaviour. According to Genesis, the cry of Sodom's sins was so great that it alerted God, who sent messengers to Sodom to investigate (Gen.18:19-20). On their very first night in Sodom, the inhabitants tried to rape the angels (Gen.19:4-9).[2] Upon this attack, the angels escorted Lot, their Godfearing and hospitable host, from the city (Gen.19:15-23). The following morning, God destroyed the city with fire and brimstone, killing all inhabitants and all other living things (Gen.19:24-25). The educative potential of this story is clear: a reference to Sodom's fiery destruction would surely aid any attempt to convince readers or listeners about the inherent dangers of Sodomitic behaviour.[3] This might have contributed to the relative popularity of the story. Bede, for example, mentions Sodom over eighty times in his works.[4] Although less than figures like Augustine and Jerome, Bede trumps writers like Isidore (34), Gregory the Great (22) and Ambrose (47).[5] This popularity is also reflected in the Anglo-Saxon Latin penitentials, which all contain references to Sodom and in the works of Anglo-Saxon writers like Aldhelm, Boniface and Alcuin, although they use Sodom less often than Bede.[6] With this popularity in mind, this thesis analyses how Anglo-Saxon authors writing between 600 and 800 used Sodom's story to educate or correct their readers.

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[1] Bede, *In Genesim*, 2:10 (p.48) [p.114]: '*Sicut etiam euersis eisdem Sodomorum ciuitatibus, quae quondam ut paradisus Domini inrigabantur exemplum eorum qui impie acturi sunt posuit ut, uestigia perditionis malorum certissima in pundo habentes, uigilantius aeterna eorum tormenta fugeremus.*' Unless stated otherwise, the translations cited in the main text are taken from: Calvin B. Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis* (Liverpool 2008). Whenever an edition of a source is cited in this thesis, the relevant page is referenced in parentheses. As will become clear in the remainder of this thesis, some of the translations in circulation for the works studied should be used with some care. To enable easier comparison between the context surrounding any quotation from a translation which is not my own, the relevant page number of the translation is cited in square brackets after the reference to the edition. Unless stated otherwise, the page numbers always refer to the edition and translation reference in the Bibliography at the end of this thesis. To aid the comparison between Jones's edition of Bede's commentary on Genesis, previous editions, and Kendall's translation, whenever Bede's *In Genesim* is cited, the page number in Jones' edition and the verse and chapter of Genesis on which Bede comments are provided. Jones' edition has some shortcomings, see: Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, 53-57.

[2] Throughout this thesis, I refer to the requests of the Sodomites described in Gen.19:4-9 as an attempt to rape the angels. As chapter one will show, this aligns with the Biblical interpretation Anglo-Saxon authors were acquainted with. The nature of the Sodomites' questions can and have been interpreted differently throughout history, sometimes entirely lacking the sexual aspect prevalent in late antique and Anglo-Saxon readings. For a thorough study of these different meanings throughout history, see: Michael Carden, *Sodomy: A History of a Christian Biblical Myth* (London 2004). Like Carden, I use 'rape' in its modern definition as a convenient shorthand for the events described in Gen.19:4-9. It should, however, be noted that the events do not necessarily fit the Anglo-Saxon concept of 'rape'. For this concept, see: Corinne Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge 2001), 33-47.

[3] This use of Sodom predates Bede by several centuries. Already in 2 Pet.2:6 Sodom and Gomorrah are used to warn the godless of their impending fate. As will become apparent in chapter one, the Church Fathers repeatedly used elements of Sodom's story similarly.

[4] I arrived at this number by searching 'Sodom*' in all works ascribed to Bede in the *Library of Latin Texts*.

[5] These numbers were also generated by searching for 'Sodom*' in the *Library of Latin Texts.*

[6] For an overview of all Anglo-Latin sources written between 600 and 800 that mention 'Sodom', see table 1 at the end of this introduction.

To understand this focus, a clear understanding of the historiography is necessary. The sources studied in this thesis have attracted considerable attention, but not because of Sodom's educative potential. Instead, most research asks what acts these Anglo-Saxon authors thought of when they thought about Sodomitic behaviour and what Anglo-Saxon authors referred to when talking about 'Sodomites'.[7] Two distinct developments contributed to this focus. The first originated in the '50s from an English political and religious movement calling to re-evaluate the ban on same-sex relationships based on a re-interpretation of Biblical censures against 'homosexuals'. Derrick Bailey was a foundational figure in this movement. [8] He not only questioned the commonly held opinion that the story of Sodom, as told in Genesis, dealt with same-sex acts but also critically analysed later interpretations of this story. Following in Bailey's footsteps, John Boswell argued that Christian scripture and society had not always been intolerant of 'gay people' and that, consequently, the attitudes he encountered in modern society had less to do with the Christian religion than commonly thought.[9] To prove his theory that, before the thirteenth century, the church took an ambivalent and not necessarily negative attitude toward 'gay people', Boswell reinterpreted early medieval condemnations traditionally interpreted as referring to same-sex acts because of their reference to Sodom.[10] He argued that after John Cassian (360-435), many Christian authors 'completely ignored any sexual implications of Sodom's fate'.[11] When sexual acts were implied, 'Sodomy came to refer to any emission of semen not directed exclusively toward the procreation of a legitimate child within matrimony', not to same-sex acts perse.[12] Anglo-Saxon evidence played a substantial role in Boswell's thesis. He studied Alcuin and Boniface and even used the latter's letter to King Aethelbald of Mercia as the basis for his broad definition of Sodom's sins.[13]

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[7] Most important are the following contributions: Allen Frantzen, *Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from Beowulf to Angels in* America (Chicago 1997); R.D. Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism in the Old English Canons of Theodore', in: Carol Pasternack and Lisa Weston (eds.), *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England* (Tempe 2004) 1-34; David Clark, *Between Medieval Men: Male Friendship and Desire in Early Medieval English Literature* (London 2009); Christopher Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination* (2017), 'Introduction', https://roundedglobe.com/html/5cbebfe8-b3ea-4bb9-b1b4-eaf4234099c3/en/Sodom%20in%20the%20Anglo-Saxon%20Imagination/ (last visited 1-2-2024). As Monk's book is a digital publication, it does not contain page numbering. Whenever his book is referenced, the relevant section headings are provided instead of page numbers.

[8] Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London 1955). For a contextual understanding of Bailey's work and motivations, see: Heather R. White, *Reforming Sodom: Protestants and the Rise of Gay Rights* (Chapel Hill 2005), esp. 37-40. As the discussion of Foucault below will make clear, using 'homosexual' to refer to same-sex acts before the eighteenth century is highly problematic because neither the term nor the concept of 'homosexuality' existed. As Bailey wrote before Foucault's problematisation of this term, he uses 'homosexual' to refer to those practising same-sex acts.

[9] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay people in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago and London 1980), 1-8; For a more thorough overview of Boswell's thesis and its lasting influence, see the essays in: Matthew Kuefler (ed.), *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago 2005); Boswell consciously chose to talk about 'gay people' instead of the anachronistic 'homosexual', see: Boswell, *Christianity,* 43-44 and Matthew Kuefler, 'Homoeroticism in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Acts, identities, Cultures,' *American Historical Review* 123 (2018) 4, 1246-1266. Kuefler explains the consequences of this choice for the later reception of Boswell's work.

[10] Boswell, *Christianity*, 333-334; Though discredited nowadays, the idea that before the thirteenth century relatively little attention was paid to the criminalisation of those committing same-sex acts was more common when Boswell wrote. See, for example: Michael Goodich, *The Unmentionable Vice*: *Homosexuality in the Later Medieval Period* (Santa Barbara 1979), 3, 7 and 36.

[11] Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 98.

[12] Ibidem, 202.

[13] Ibidem, 201-204.

Around the same time as Boswell, Michel Foucault published his seminal work on the 'History of Sexuality'.[14] This started the second development that steered later historiography towards a focus on identifying the nature of Sodom's acts. Two of his ideas formed the basis of this development. Firstly, Foucault argued for a broad definition of Sodom's sin. To Foucault, medieval sodomy was 'an utterly confused category'.[15] He argued that although it could, in specific contexts and to particular people, refer to same-sex acts, most texts used the term very loosely and applied it to a whole spectrum of non-reproductive sexual acts. This confusion around Sodom was, according to Foucault, a result of the secrecy surrounding same-sex acts, especially in the context of medieval confession.[16] Secondly, Foucault famously argued that 'as defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, *sodomy was a category of forbidden acts*; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century *homosexual became a personage* … Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.'[17] Reacting to Foucault, Mike D. Jordan was among the first to test Foucault's analysis against late antique and (early) medieval sources. Although accepting Foucault's basic idea that the 'homosexual' did not exist in medieval times and that there was no direct equivalent, Jordan argued that the medieval 'Sodomite', especially after around 1000 shared 'many of the kinds of features that Foucault finds only in the nineteenth-century definition [i.e. homosexuals].' Jordan thus concludes that 'the idea that same-sex pleasure constitutes an identity of some kind Is clearly the work of medieval theology.'[18]

The first book-length study on 'homoeroticism' in Anglo-Saxon England demonstrates how this historiographical background shaped the research into the Anglo-Saxon uses of Sodom.[19] Allen

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[14] This introduction selectively focuses on the pertinent aspects of Foucault's thesis. For a summary of his thesis, see: Herman Westerink, *De lichamen en hun lusten: In het spoor van Foucaults Geschiedenis van de seksualiteit* (Nijmegen 2019). For his influence on the medieval history of sexualities in general, see: Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham and London 1999), 191-206.

[15] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York 1980), 43. Hurley's translation has received some criticism, see note 17.

[16] The influence of this etiquette becomes apparent in the number of publications using it as an unproblematic point of departure. See for example: Ruth Mazo Karras, 'The Regulation of "Sodomy" in the Latin East and West', *Speculum* 95 (2020) 4, 969-986, at 970-971; Dyan Elliott, *The Corruptor of Boys: Sodomy, Scandal and the Medieval Clergy* (Philadelphia 2020), 9-10; William Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England, 1050-1230* (Cambridge 2004)*,* 1-10. Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy* (Chicago and London 1997), 9.

[17] This translation is taken from: David M. Halperin, 'Forgetting Foucault: Acts, Identities and the History of Sexuality', *Representations* 63 (1998), 93-120, at 95. He based this translation on Hurley's translation (see note 15). Halperin and, more recently, Lynn Huffer have attracted attention to the fact that often-used English translations sometimes obscure Foucault's ideas. They attribute the common misconception that Foucault claimed no concept of sexuality existed before the nineteenth century partly to these mistranslations. See: Lynne Huffer, *Mad of Foucault: Rethinking the Foundations of Queer Theory* (New York 2009). For an overview of the influence of this quotation on starting research on the history of sexuality and its impact on the study of mainly Old English sources, see: David Clark, 'Old English Literature and Same-Sex Desire: An Overview', *Literature Compass* 6 (2009) 3, 573-584, esp. 574-576.

[18] Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, 162-164.

[19] Between the publication of Boswell's and Frantzen's book, multiple studies partly focussed on Anglo-Saxon England. Most influential is Pierre Payer's survey of sexual acts mentioned in penitentials written between the mid-sixth and mid-eleventh century. He argues against Boswell's characterisation of the penitentials and arrives at a much narrower definition of Sodom's sins: according to him, references to Sodom are a reference to 'homosexuality', see: Pierre Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials: The Development of a Sexual Code* (Toronto and London 1984), 135-136. In his overview of the development of the church's sex law, James Brundage also

Frantzen in his 1998 book *Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from "Beowulf" to "Angels in America'* explicitly positions himself against Boswell, Jordan and Foucault.[20] Using the penitentials as his main evidence, Frantzen argues that the discourse surrounding Sodom was not 'utterly confused and confusing' or cloaked in secrecy.[21] Instead, he tries to establish that references to Sodom in these sources were part of a straightforward and sometimes detailed exposition of different same-sex acts.[22] Building on this idea, Frantzen believed that 'once Sodom had been associated with same-sex sex the name of the city could be used to encode and denounce male homosexual intercourse'.[23] This does not mean that same-sex sex was **'**Sodom's identifying sin or the nexus of the city's wickedness.'[24] Instead, Frantzen saw this same-sex association in Anglo-Saxon sources as the always present 'shadow' of the city of Sodom.[25] Frantzen thus used this link as a lens through which he studied narrative Latin sources. In practice, this means that he often argues in favour of the possibility of a same-sex reading of Sodom's sins in sources that earlier interpreters like Boswell interpreted as not related to same-sex acts. Like Jordan, Frantzen also reflected on the possibility of 'Sodomite' as a kind of precursor to the modern 'homosexual'. He concluded that, although Sodomites in the context of the penitentials constitute 'some kind of group identity – that is, a category of male persons known by their sexual practices', this category was 'not the same as 'homosexual', and the identity 'Sodomite' created was 'not necessarily specific to sexual practices'.[26]

Frantzen's approach to the sin of Sodom remained influential throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, inspiring, for example, R.D. Fulk in his analysis of homoeroticism in the Old English Anglo-Saxon penitentials.**[27]** However, in 2009, David Clark criticised Frantzen's narrower definition of Sodom's sin. He claimed that 'Frantzen's agenda of positioning same-sex desire as a shadow in Anglo-Saxon England' resulted in a superficial analysis of the sources.[28] Instead of approaching the Latin literary sources through the penitentials, Clark takes an analysis of antique writers and the Church Fathers as his starting point, arguing that Sodom was more broadly defined in these works.[29] He concludes that 'Anglo-Saxon writers do not associate Sodom exclusively, or even at all in many cases,

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focuses solely on the penitentials in relation to Anglo-Saxon references to Sodom, see: James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago 1987), esp. 166-169. For a detailed overview of these studies, see: Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 129-130.

[20] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 7-10, 24, 124-129 and 132-135.

[21] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 12 and 186. Frantzen was not the first to note the surprisingly candid way in which Anglo-Saxon sources describe same-sex acts related to Sodom's sins. See, for example: Malcolm Godden, 'The Trouble with Sodom: Literary Responses to Biblical Sexuality' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester* 77 (1995) 3, 97-119, esp. 110. Godden does not, however, interact directly with Boswell or Foucault. Recently, historians working on the post-1000 period also criticise Foucault's use of 'confused'. Robert Mills, for example, believes that sodomy only seems confused from certain (modern) viewpoints or in specific contexts; in other contexts, it is not confused at all. See: Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago and London 2015), 11, 171 and 301. See also: Stephen O. Murray, *c* (Chicago 2000), 159, esp. n.127; Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400-1600* (Chicago and London 2003), 7-10.

[22] For an overview of the canons Frantzen studied, see: Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 175-178.

[23] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 184.

[24] Ibidem.

[25] Ibidem, 180-220.

[26] Ibidem, 174.

[27] R.D. Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism', 1-34.

[28] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 68

[29] Ibidem, 59-60. Clark only analyses the *Paenitentiale Umbrense* in the context of the Old English penitentials. His discussion of these penitentials does, however, not influence his interpretation of other Latin Anglo-Saxon sources.

with same-sex activity'.[30] In reaction to this statement, Christopher Monk published a book-length study on the meaning of the sin of Sodom in Anglo-Saxon England. Taking the same position as Frantzen and Fulk, he studied the sources in more detail, often adding a more linguistic approach. Monk explicitly argued against Clark's idea that most Anglo-Saxon Latin texts do not (primarily) associate homoeroticism with Sodom.[31] Despite the difference in opinion on the role of same-sex acts in Sodom's sins in Anglo-Saxon sources in general, Fulk, Clark and Monk all further develop Frantzen's first observations on the possibility that 'Sodomite', in the context of the penitentials, refers to a type of person characterised, at least in part, by a proclivity for certain sexual acts.[32]

Problems and solutions:

Given this rich historiography on the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of Sodom's story, one might question the merits of yet another research on the subject. Frantzen's reaction to Boswell and Foucault started a debate on the Anglo-Saxon conceptualisation of Sodom's sins and Sodomites, or, more precisely, the role same-sex acts played in this conceptualisation. However, partly due to the influence of Boswell and Foucault, there are blind spots in the existing historiography.

1: Source-selection

The most obvious pertains to the source selection. Due to the nature of this debate, subsequent authors all analysed the previous interpretation of a source, critiqued it, and presented an alternative interpretation. This dynamic of commenting on existing interpretations of sources might have contributed to one of the problems in the existing historiography: the somewhat random source selection. Table 1 at the end of this introduction provides an overview of the Anglo-Saxon sources mentioning Sodom and those studied by Boswell, Frantzen, Fulk, Clark and Monk.[33] Boniface's writings are a perfect example of the problems with the source selection. Because Boniface plays a significant part in Boswell's attempt to broaden the definition of Sodom's sins, subsequent authors often pay considerable attention to Boniface's use of Sodom.[34] Puzzlingly, they leave out most source material. Boniface's letter to the Mercian king Aethelbald and the companion letter to archbishop Ecgberht of York are studied. In contrast, the letter to a priest called Herefrid, in which Boniface asks him to deliver, read and explain his letter to Aethelbald, is not.[35] This while the letter contains a different version of the passage mentioning Sodom in Boniface's letter to Aethelbald, which, as the analysis in chapter three will show, sheds new light on Boniface's purpose of using a reference to Sodom. Equally strange is the omission of Boniface's *Enigmata*, which, as chapter two will argue, should be read as a response to Aldhelm's use of Sodom in his *Carmen de Virginitate.* Consequently, it points to a possible source of Boniface's use of Sodom in his letters.

Additionally, the role Latin sources take in Frantzen's and Clark's works might explain their relative lack of attention to additional Latin sources. Frantzen and Clark use Latin sources as a background to Old

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[30] Ibidem, 69.

[31] Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Introduction'.

[32] Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism', 28-34; Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 57-67; Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'The 'Sodomites' and the 'sodomitic' in penitentials'.

[33] Fulk also discusses a source titled '*De divinis officiis*', which he believes to be written by Alcuin. Although once considered an Alcuinian text, modern historians consider it to be of a later date. Therefore, this source is not used in Table 1 or the rest of this thesis. See: J. Ryan, 'Pseudo-Alcuin's Liber de divinis officiis and the Liber 'Dominus vobiscum'of St. Peter Damiani', *Mediaeval Studies* 14 (1952) 159-163.

[34] Godden, 'The Trouble with Sodom', 99; Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 197-198; Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism', 14-16; Clark, *Between Medieval Men,* 76-78.

[35] For an analysis of the letters, see chapter three.

English sources, which are their primary focus.[36] Because of this, the analysis of the Latin sources receives less attention than their interpretation of Old English sources. Clark, for example, devotes only half a page to Bede's views on Sodom's sins, reiterating Richard Kay's analysis while allocating a chapter to the unique Old-English poem 'The Phoenix'.[37] Tellingly, Clark does not seem to have studied Bede firsthand because he cites Bede through Frantzen.[38] Frantzen, in turn, almost exclusively cites Bede through Kay's notes.[39] This relative lack of attention to the Latin texts also manifests itself in the quality of the analyses - especially the use of existing English translations, which do not always reflect the actual Latin text.[40] Monk forms a positive exception to this rule. He devotes significant attention to interpreting the Latin texts and corrects existing translations.[41]

To counteract the focus on Old English sources, this thesis focuses on Latin sources written by Anglo-Saxon authors between 600-800. Within this timeframe, the main focus lies on the writings of Bede, Aldhelm, Boniface, and Alcuin since the writings of these authors make up the majority of the Anglo-Saxon mentions of Sodom's story. Compared with previous studies, this narrower chronological focus enables a more in-depth analysis of the sources. Building on Monk's legitimate criticism of the translations often used by authors studying these sources, special attention is paid to how these translations might have influenced their interpretation of the function of reference to Sodom.

2: Methodology

The problems surrounding the source selection are further aggravated by the method used to study the selected sources. Due to the main focus of the debate, the texts are analysed for clues about the author's interpretation of Sodom's sin and the possible role of same-sex acts in this definition. However, with the possible exception of the penitentials, it is often not the main aim of the text to define Sodom's sins or provide information about the Sodomites.[42] To use these texts to reconstruct the definition of Sodom's sins and thus the role of same-sex acts, it is necessary first to catalogue what actions the text mentions in relation to Sodomites, then assess whether these actions provide any information about the author's definition of Sodom's sins and Sodomites and, finally, analyse whether these acts can be connected to same-sex act or not.[43]

Multiple problems arise from this process. In line with the problematic source selection discussed in the previous section, the selection of passages mentioning Sodom within the studied sources suffers from this approach. The first two steps in the abovementioned process sometimes result in a focus on a fraction of the mentions of Sodom within a source, which can lead to an interpretation of the text that, although perhaps valid when applied to the particular fragment, loses credibility when viewed in

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[36] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 68. Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 184-185.

[37] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 74.

[38] Ibidem.

[39] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 339.

[40] For an example, see the analysis of Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate* in chapter three.

[41] Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Aldhelm and the 'crime of Sodom''.

[42] Although the penitentials do not aim to precisely define Sodom's sin as a guide for establishing penance, they aim to describe acts in a way recognisable to their first users. As Frantzen and, more recently, Erin Abraham have shown, a study of the context and content of these penances can reveal information about the way the author conceptualised these sins. See: Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 149-162. Erin Abraham, *Anticipating Sin in Medieval Society* (Amsterdam 2017), 117-143.

[43] This process is a reconstruction based on the most logical steps to make such an analysis. None of the authors describes these steps explicitly, but the second step forms the basis of Monk's implicit criticism of Clark's interpretation of Boniface's letter to Aethelbald.

light of the text as a whole.[44] Adding to this problem is the lack of a proper contextualisation of the mentions of Sodom that are being studied. Because of the narrow interest in answering whether the author related Sodom to same-sex acts, the context around the mention of Sodom and its function in relation to the rest of the text remains unclear. As chapter two will show, this impacts the validity of the analysis of the role of same-sex acts in the author's concept of Sodom's sins, because a reconstruction of the broader function of a reference to Sodom sometimes discredits interpretations which seem valid when checked only with the direct context surrounding the use of Sodom.[45] Alternatively, one of these steps in this three-step process is skipped, as is the case with Boswell's, Godden's and Clark's analysis of Boniface's letter to Aethelbald. As argued in chapter three, they mistakenly believe Boniface's description of Aethelbald's sins to reflect Boniface's ideas about Sodom's sins.[46]

Further complicating the existing analyses is a problem Karma Lochrie identified. The focus on the same-sex aspect of Sodom presumes that gender had little to do with Sodom's sin.[47] The assumption that Sodom's sins and Sodomites have a primarily sexual aspect might be influenced by today's strict separation of gender, sexuality, and other aspects of identity, such as religion. As has often been pointed out, these distinctions are modern, not medieval.[48] The same holds true for the separation between sex (the biological aspect of being male or female, and gender (the social norms assigning the predicates 'male' or 'female' to certain acts).[49] In short, reconstructing the Anglo-Saxon conceptualisation of Sodomites and their sin solely or primarily through the lens of sexual acts runs the risk of ignoring potential other non-sexual aspects of this 'identity'. This realisation has influenced research into Old-English terms related to Sodomites, such as 'bædling', but has largely failed to alter the analysis of Latin sources.[50] Although Lochrie's comments have influenced historians

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[44] The analysis of Bede's commentary on Sodom is a good example. A search for 'Sodom*' in the *Library of Latin Texts* reveals fifty mentions of Sodom in Bede's commentary on Genesis. Frantzen and Clark focus on two, see: Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 74; Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 194-195. As chapters two and three make clear, this impacts Clark's proposed interpretation of Bede's use of Sodom. Monk, who makes a similar criticism, fares significantly better with ten mentions but refrains from analysing the texts central to the second chapter of this thesis, see: Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Bede and the 'unspeakable sin''.

[45] For an example, see the criticism of Clark's analysis of Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate* in chapter three of this thesis.

[46] For a similar criticism, see: Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination,* 'Boniface: 'after the fashion of the Sodomite people''.

[47] Karma Lochrie, 'Presumptive sodomy and its exclusions', *Textual Practices* 13 (1999) 2, 295-310, at 295.

[48] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others* (New York 2017) 6-12; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy,* 11-12.

[49] Willemijn Ruberg, *History of the Body* (London 2020), 7-11.

[50] Compare, for example, Fulk's or Clark's discussion of the 'Sodomite' with their discussion of the 'bædling', see: Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism', 1-34 and Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 61-67. Fulk, for example, mainly thinks about Sodomites in terms of those who are penetrators in same-sex acts. Sodom's sin is also absent from the recent discussions of the Anglo-Saxon formation of gender. See, for example: Juliette Vuille, *Holy Harlots in Medieval English Religious Literature: Authority, Exemplarity and Femininity* (Cambridge 2021); Katherine Weikert, *Authority, Gender and Space in the Anglo-Norman World: 900-1200* (Woodbridge 2020); Dana Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Woodbridge 2010). Carol Braun Pasternack, 'Negotiating Gender in Anglo-Saxon England', in: Sharon Farmer and Carol Braun Pasternack (eds.), *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis and London 2003) 107-144. At first glance, the exception seems Allen Frantzen, 'Where the Boys Are: Children and Sex in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials', in: Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* (New York 1997) 43-66. Although Frantzen discusses Sodom's sin in the penitentials in this article, he focuses not on the gendered association with the sin (effeminacy VS a virile crime), but on the age associated with being able to commit Sodom's sin. He argues children, who still need to learn how to behave like men, cannot commit the sin.

researching Sodom's sin after the year 1000, it does not seem to have significantly impacted the analysis of Anglo-Saxonists.[51]

Given these methodological problems, it is clear that a new approach is needed, which should strive for a broader understanding of the Anglo-Saxon use and interpretation of Sodom's story by incorporating more mentions of Sodom in the analysis, better understanding of the context surrounding the mentions of Sodom and countering the problems raised by Lochrie. Recently, Geertje Mak presented an analytical concept allowing for a more context-focussed approach. She argues for the use of *geslacht* as a new lens through which historians can view sex, sexuality, and gender together. Mak points out that the meaning of the Dutch word '*geslacht*' and the German equivalent '*Geschlecht*' corresponds with the English 'physical sex' and 'the category of gender', resolving the issue of the lack of a division between biological sex and social gender in most historical sources.[52] 'Geslacht' also contains an element of procreation or sexuality because of its association with lineage or a generation. Mak argues that through this association of geslacht with lineage, generation and expressions like '*van geslacht tot geslacht*' (from generation to generation), the concept 'geslacht' acquires a temporally 'multi-layered' aspect.[53] Consequently, 'the key historical question linked to *geslacht* is how new generations of people came into being' and, perhaps more importantly, the transfer of knowledge between these generations.[54]

Central to this transfer of knowledge and the creation of a new *geslacht* is the transfer of 'practices, regulations and representation of sexuality and procreation'.[55] To fully understand the nature of this transfer, a short foray into feminist theory is necessary. Feminists like Donna Haraway and Anamarie Mol questioned the divide between nature and culture in relation to gender. They maintain that the sexualised body is not a natural given but is the product of knowledge. Moll, for example, showed how, in medicine, 'various and mutually conflicting 'versions' of 'woman'' existed. Moll realised that bodies are 'done in practice' and take shape because of these practices.[56] Because these practices and the knowledge used to interpret them can change, the way the body (that is, the result of both these practices and the application of this knowledge) is imagined can also change. Therefore, the body, which incorporates biological sex and social gender, can be historicised and studied as a product of changing evaluation of practices due to changes in knowledge.[57]

A short example illustrates this. The sixteenth-century Ambroise Paré tells of a girl who, chasing her pigs through the fields, became so hot that she developed male organs and became a boy. Afterwards, he received a new name, which confirmed that society viewed him as a man.[58] Although alien to modern readers, this account shows that this transformation was conceivable in the author's perception.[59] In this story, the sixteenth-century belief (or 'knowledge') that female bodies were

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[51] Robert Mills, for example, explicitly integrated gender in his analysis of Sodom's sin: Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*, esp. 81-132.
[52] Geertje Mak, 'Geslacht', in: Marleen Reichelt, et all. (eds.), *Living Concepts: 40 Years of Engaging Gender and History* (Hilversum 2021), 35-40, at 35.
[53] Mak, 'Geslacht', 35.
[54] Ibidem, 36.
[55] Ibidem, 37.
[56] Ibidem.
[57] Mak provides different examples of such studies using '*geslacht*', see: Ibidem, 37-38.
[58] Ambroise Paré, *Of Monsters and Marvels,* transl. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago 1983), 31-32. The interpretation of this story is inspired by Laura Gowing, *Common Bodie: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 4-5.
[59] On the use of imaginary bodies to theorise about the (ideal) body and the way actions impact gender, see: Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, and Corporeality* (London and New York 1996), viii. For an

shaped differently to male bodies because of the lower temperature of females as opposed to males is applied to interpret a 'practice', the actions of the boy, resulting in the creation or alteration of a body. The way this boy acted was not appropriate to the *geslacht* of the girl, which enabled the body to be perceived as male instead of female. A crucial part of the intergenerational transfer of 'regulations and representation of sexuality and procreation' Mak talks about is the transfer of this knowledge to interpret certain practices. Or, more concretely, the rules and regulations tying specific acts and sexual behaviour to a particular *geslacht.*

With this theoretical framework in mind, a new way of approaching the Anglo-Saxon sources mentioning Sodom becomes clear. This new approach focuses on how Sodom's story was used as an educational tool to transfer knowledge about rules and regulations needed to identify appropriate gendered and sexual behaviour. This emphasises the method, not the contents of this transfer. As will become apparent, the sources sometimes simply do not allow for a definitive answer to the question of what behaviour Sodom's story was used to transfer rules and regulations about. Because of this focus on the function of Sodom's story within a text, this approach forces an analysis of the sources in which the intended readers and the context surrounding the mention of Sodom plays a significant role. Rather than mapping the acts connected to Sodom, assessing whether they reflect the author's interpretation of Sodomites and their sins and analysing if there is a connection with same-sex acts, this approach tries to understand how an author uses Sodom's story to either effect change in the behaviour of their readers (the corrective function of Sodom) or to warn them against certain acts (the educative function of Sodom). This approach does not mean abandoning the attempts to investigate the nature of the Anglo-Saxon Sodomite. Instead, it shifts the focus to the question if and how Sodom's function as a tool to transfer knowledge impacted the development of the Anglo-Saxon Sodomite.

Applying *geslacht* to analyse Sodom's sin

Combining both solutions, the source selection and new methodology, this thesis asks how Anglo-Saxon authors writing between 600 and 800 used Sodom's story as an educational tool to transfer knowledge about rules and regulations needed to identify appropriate gendered and sexual behaviour. The idea of studying Sodom's function as a tool for the transmission of ideas from one generation (*geslacht*) to the next also means that the interrelation of sources and authors comes to the fore. The Anglo-Saxon authors studied in this thesis were not the first to use Sodom in this way; therefore, their predecessors undoubtedly influenced their use of Sodom. To analyse if and how the Anglo-Saxon authors changed the way Sodom was used to educate, the first chapter asks how the Church Fathers used by the Anglo-Saxon authors studied in chapters two and three used Sodom's story as an educational tool.

The analysis in chapter one will highlight two main methods in which the Church Fathers used Sodom's story to educate: as part of an allegory and as part of a sinful dynamic. Chapters two and three ask how Anglo-Saxon authors changed and applied these two methods. The second chapter focuses on the Sodom allegory. It argues that Bede's commentary on Genesis explicitly frames the Sodom allegory as an educational tool and changes it, further heightening its educational potential. Bede's text thus provides readers with a theoretical basis which they could apply in practice. To reconstruct how this educational tool was applied in practice, Aldhelm's *Prosa de Virginitate*, Alcuin's *Ep.294,* and his *Quaestiones in Genesim* are analysed. As Alcuin can, from Bede's and Aldhelm's point

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application of this idea in an Anglo-Saxon context, see: Colleen A. Reilly, 'Interrogating the Boundaries of Masculine Gender: A study of Early Medieval English Texts', PhD. Diss. (Purdue 1998), 8.

of view, be described as the 'next' generation, special attention is paid to how he utilises ideas found in Bede's theoretical text in combination with those he found in the texts of previous generations.

The last chapter focuses on Sodom's sinful dynamic. Again taking Bede as its point of departure, it shows how Sodom's sinful dynamic could be used as the ultimate slippery slope argument: by connecting minor sins to the Sodomites and suggesting a causal link between these minor sins and the horrific end-point, that is, the Sodomite's attempt to rape the angels, the story of Sodom's demise could be used to warn against seemingly 'lesser' or more common sins. Building on this idea, the potential of this mechanism to prevent people from committing sin, correct them if they are sinning and punish them after they sinned is analysed. To illustrate the preventive potential, using the dynamic as a warning against lesser sins, Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate* and Boniface's reaction to it in his *Enigmata* are used. The corrective potential, i.e. using the sinful dynamic to persuade sinners to stop sinning, is illustrated using Boniface's letter of admonition to the Mercian king Aethelbald and three related letters. Anglo-Saxon penitentials are studied to analyse the punitive potential of this dynamic.

Apart from the focus of chapters two and three, special attention is paid to two aspects. To potentially aid future research into the Anglo-Saxon Sodomite, chapters two and three also reflect on the way the use of Sodom described in the chapter could have contributed to the formation of the Anglo-Saxon Sodomite. Where necessary, the chapters also focus on the difference in methodology between this and previous studies to determine if the new approach outlined above is successful in acquiring better insight into the interpretation.

Table 1: an overview of the texts used in previous studies. The texts in orange are not used by any of the authors named.

Author	Text	Boswell	Frantzen	Fulk	Clark	Monk
Penitentials (seventh century)	*P. Umbrense, Capitula Dacheriana, Canones Cottoniani, Canones Basilienses, Canones Gregorii*		x	x	x	x
	P. Ps. Bedae		x	x		x
	P. Ps. Ecgberhti	x	x			x
Augustinus Hibernicus	*De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae*				x	
Bede (672-735)	*Libri quatuor in principium Genesis, In epistulas septem catholicas, In Lucae Evangelium expositio, In Marci Evangelium Expositio, In Proverbia Salominis*		x		x	x
Aldhelm (639-709)	*Carmen de Virginitate*		x	x	x	x
	Prosa de Virginitate				x	
Boniface (675-754)	*Epist. 73, 75, 74, 11*	x	x	x	x	x
	Enigmata					
	Excarpsus Cummeani (dubious attribution)					
Alcuin (735-804)	*Epist. 291, 294*	x		x	x	x
	Quaestiones in Genesim		x	x	x	x
Unknown, but of Irish origin (all eighth century)	*Collectionis canonum Hibernensis recensio A. De operibus sex dierum. Das Bibelwerk / The Reference Bible.*					

Chapter 1: Before the Anglo-Saxons

As mentioned in the introduction, this chapter aims to provide an overview of how the generation(s) preceding the Anglo-Saxon authors central to this thesis used Sodom's story as an educational tool. A glance through the sources used by Anglo-Saxon authors like Bede and the reconstructed catalogues of their libraries suggests that particularly the Church Fathers formed the backbone of Anglo-Saxon readings of any biblical story.[60] Bede might even have been the first to give special authority to Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory the Great.[61]

Given this reliance on the Church Fathers, the lack of attention to their writings in studies on Anglo-Saxon interpretations of Sodom is puzzling.[62] Allen Frantzen, for example, merely remarks in passing that 'little is found in the work of Aldhelm, Bede, Boniface and Alcuin that is not also found in commentaries … by Gregory, Augustine, Ambrose and others'.[63] Christopher Monk only briefly mentions Augustine when analysing Bede's writings and succinctly analyses the Old English translations of Orosius's and Gregory the Great's works.[64] David Clark fares somewhat better. He discusses Sodom in the works of Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory and Jerome.[65] However, his analysis is mainly based on Mark Jordan's study *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*.[66] Based on Jordan's analysis, Clark concludes that 'the most influential patristic writers' provide a 'picture of mixed associations' with Sodom.[67] Taking this as his starting point, he attempts to show that Anglo-Latin sources replicate these mixed associations: some sources do not connect Sodom's sins to same-sex acts, and some do, but also connect it to 'a range of potential sins'.[68] Recently Clark's study, sometimes in combination with Jordan, seems to have become the go-to source to substantiate claims about Sodom's use in patristic literature.[69]

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[60] For the contents of Anglo-Saxon libraries, see: Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford 2005), 31-127.

[61] Bernice Kaczynski, 'Bede's Commentaries on Luke and Mark and the Formation of a Patristic Canon', in: S. Echard and G.R. Wieland (eds.), *Anglo-Latin and its Heritage: Essays in Honour of A.G. Rigg on his 64th Birthday* (Turnhout 2001) 17-26.

[62] Apart from the examples mentioned here, Fulk and Godden also make no comment on the relation between Anglo-Latin and patristic writings, but this might be due to the relatively small size of their studies. See: Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism',1-34 and Godden, 'The Trouble With Sodom', 97-119.

[63] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 200

[64] Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Bede and the 'unspeakable sin'', 'Translations of Gregory and Orosius's.

[65] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 72-73.

[66] There are alternative studies of Sodom in antique and late antique literature published prior to Jordan's study. They are, however, rarely used, due to their limitations. These studies include: J.A. Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities: Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, Early Jewish and Early Christian Traditions* (Kampen 1990). Loader primarily focuses on pre-Christian and Greek Christian literature. Of the Latin Church Fathers, he only very briefly discusses Augustine and Jerome. Arthur Frederick Ide, *The City of Sodom & Homosexuality in Western Religious Thought to 630 CE* (Dublin 1985). Arthur Ide is primarily interested in using the church fathers to correct modern homophobic readings of the story of Sodom's destruction. Richard Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong: Essays on Inferno XV* (Lawrence 1978), 209-290. Kay is primarily interested in the sources Dante used to paint his picture of the Sodomites. As part of this analysis, he uses the commentary of the Church Fathers to interpret the Biblical texts mentioning Sodom.

[67] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 73.

[68] Ibidem, 67, 74-84.

[69] Karraz, *Doing Unto Others,* 241; Connor McCarthy (ed.), *Love, Sex & Marriage in the Middle Ages: A Sourcebook. Second Edition* (New York 2022), 11.

This reliance on Jordan to reconstruct the view of the Church Fathers on Sodom's sins is not unique.[70] Michael Carden, who wrote the first book-length study of the medieval reception of Sodom's story after Jordan, is heavily indebted to Jordan's analysis as well.[71] Surprisingly, Jordan only devotes five pages to the Church Fathers. His methods of studying their writings are based on the belief that 'views about the sense of a group of texts become convincing not through numbers so much as by self-directed reading'.[72] Therefore, Jordan offers 'a few highly visible passages from theologians that would be most authoritative for the Latin Middle Ages.'[73] Jordan's 'self-directed reading' seems to be steered by the conviction that in late antiquity and the early middle ages, the diverse and complicated tradition of different interpretations of Sodom's sin was slowly simplified until 'it became the story of the punishment of a single sin [sodomy], a sin that could be called eponymously the sin of Sodomites.'[74] 'Details, qualifications' and 'restrictions' in the reading were abolished to make place for a sexual reading of the sin of Sodom.[75] Over time, this sexual reading of the sin of Sodom suppressed alternate readings, such as inhospitality, opulence and arrogance.[76]

Like Jordan, this chapter also uses a form of self-directed reading. After all, a full study of the use of Sodom in the writings of the Church Fathers goes far beyond the purpose of this chapter. However, the purpose of this self-directed reading differs from Jordan's purpose. Whereas Jordan is primarily interested in the different sins associated with Sodom, this chapter focuses on the way Sodom's story was used to educate readers in an attempt to change their sinful behaviour or prevent them from committing these sins in the first place. The choice of passages studied in this chapter is also influenced by the passages Bede, Aldhelm, Alcuin and Boniface use in their writing studied in chapters two and three of this thesis. Therefore, this chapter highlights passages Jordan and Carden did not or only briefly analyse. Due to Jordan's importance, special attention is paid to the way the findings presented here differ from his findings.

The analysis of the selected passages in this chapter is divided into two sections, each section focussing on one particular way in which Sodom's story was used as an educational tool. The first section focuses on the way Sodom's connection to *luxuria* enabled authors to connect a sinful dynamic to Sodom, which they, in turn, used to interpret Sodom's story and use it as an educational tool. The second section highlights an allegorical interpretation of Sodom's story in Genesis 19 and shows how this interpretation could be used as an educational tool.

Sodom's sinful dynamic and *luxuria*

A quick overview of the mentions of Sodom in the works of Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory the Great reveals that all connect Sodom's sins to *luxuria*.[77] In itself, this is not a novel observation.

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[70] Examples of Jordan's influence are: Robert Mills, 'Homosexuality: Specters of Sodom', in: Ruth Evans (ed.), *Cultural History of Sexuality in The Middle Ages* (London 2012) 57-79, at 59-60. Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides, '*Luxuria* and Homosexuality in Suetonius, Augustine and Aquinas', *The Medieval Journal* 5 (2015) 1, 1-32, esp. 13-14. Eoghan Ahern, 'The Sin of Sodom in Late Antiquity', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 27 (2018) 2 209-233, esp. 209, 217 and 224. Ahern does, however, criticize Jordan's idea that Augustine was the first to associate same-sex desire with Sodom explicitly.
[71] Carden, *Sodomy,* 11.
[72] Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy,* 32-33.
[73] Ibidem, 33.
[74] Ibidem, 29.
[75] Ibidem.
[76] Ibidem, 29, 35.
[77] Ambrose, *De Abraham,* 1.3.14 (p.512): '*Sodoma enim luxuria atque lasciuia est*'; Jerome, *Commentarii in Ezechielem,* Lib.5. Ez.15:44 (p.202): '... *Sodoma uocatur et Samaria, quarum altera gentilem uitam luxuriamque*

Jordan already observes that at the time of Gregory the Great 'the interpretation of Genesis 19 has been taken up into a much larger system of moral teachings about a sin called *luxuria'*.[78] More recently, both Eoghan Ahern and Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides more thoroughly analysed how this connection is reflected in the Church Father's thinking about Sodom.[79] However, the implications of this connection to the educative potential of Sodom have until now not been analysed.[80]

To understand this potential, a short overview of the ancient moral concept of *luxuria* is necessary. *Luxuria* has always been associated with excess. To commit *luxuria* 'was to go beyond natural needs and to engage in superfluous activities that were only to do with pleasure'.[81] In this thinking, *luxuria* was both a vice in itself and the cause of a dynamic resulting in related vices. The excessive desire associated with it could manifest itself in a fixation on food and drink, which led to gluttony and drunkenness, which, in turn, could lead to lust.[82] Same-sex desire, with its connection with going against or exceeding nature, was often used as the example par excellence of the excessive lust inherent to *luxuria*. Because persons adopting a luxurious lifestyle squandered their possessions, *luxuria* also caused greed (*avaritia*) and arrogance.[83] From the start, this dynamic of vices was used to explain the fate of societies.[84] Whenever the fortunes of a polity increased, an abundance of riches would lead to *luxuria* and *avaritia.* This, in turn, resulted in a focus on leisure and shamelessly practised immoral desire, which caused an overall moral weakening and feminization of the men in the polity. This softness (mollis/*mollitia*) negatively impacted not only the morals of the population but also their military prowess. This model served not only to describe and interpret past events but also to warn societies against falling prey to the same dynamic.[85]

Applying *luxuria* to Sodom: the creation of an educational tool

The Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria was the first to apply the dynamic associated with *luxuria* to Sodom's destruction.[86] Philo's most extensive treatment of Sodom's sins is his *De Abrahamo*, a treatise probably written around 14 CE for a mixed Jewish-Hellenistic audience. The way in which Philo incorporates the *luxuria* dynamic into Sodom's fall turns the story into a blueprint for societal criticism. He strips it of its historical context: he does not mention the angels' visit to Sodom, the Sodomites' demand to 'know' the angels, Lot's offer, and his subsequent escape.[87] This makes the

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significat, altera haereticorum decipulas.' ; Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 18.19.3 (p.915): '*Vidit quoque sodomam delinquentem, sed considerauit finem ardoris luxuriae, ignem gehennae*'; For the connection of *luxuria* to Sodom in Augustine's work, see: Anagnostou-Laoutides, 'Luxuria and Homosexuality', 11-14.

[78] Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, 37.

[79] Anagnostou-Laoutides, 'Luxuria and Homosexuality', esp. 11-14; Ahern, 'The Sin of Sodom in Late Antiquity', 209-233.

[80] The only exception is Ahern's study of Philo's and Orosius's use of *luxuria* in connection with Sodom, see: Eoghan Ahern, 'Abundance, Luxuria and Sin in Late Antique Historiography', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 25 (2017) 4, 605-631, at 611-612 and 614-618.

[81] Ahern, 'Abundance, *Luxuria* and Sin', 609.

[82] For this dynamic and a more detailed explanation of its origin, see: Francesca Romana Berno, *Roman luxuria: A literary and Cultural History* (Oxford 2023), 1-16 and 18-109.

[83] Ibidem, 7.

[84] Anagnostou-Laoutides, 'Luxuria and Homosexuality', 9-10.

[85] Ahern, 'Abundance, *Luxuria,* and Sin', 609-610; Berno, *Roman Luxuria*, 6.

[86] Ahern, 'The sin of Sodom in Late Antiquity', 214.

[87] Philo of Alexandria, *On Abraham,* par.133-141 (p.114-115). For this thesis, the Greek text is not studied but the following English translation of *On Abraham*: Ellen Birnbaum and John M. Dillon, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Life of Abraham: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden 2021). The paragraphs and page numbers cited, refer to this translation. Birnbaum and Dillon provide a commentary to their translation of paragraphs 133-141 on pages 281-286. My interpretation of Philo's text is based on this commentary and on Ahern's analysis of the text in: Ahern, 'Abundance, Luxuria and Sin', 610-611.

story more easily applicable to behaviour outside this specific Biblical historical context. Philo also connects a cascade of sins to Sodom: The land surrounding Sodom produced an unlimited abundance of supplies for the inhabitants. Because of this abundance, the inhabitants 'shook off the law of nature' and indulged in gluttony, excessive drinking and excessive lust for women and men, resulting in men having intercourse with other men.[88] Due to this behaviour, 'they contrived for them a female disease (…) not only feminizing their bodies by softness and luxury, but also rendering their souls more degenerate'.[89] Lastly, Philo adds a threatening aspect to the behaviour of the Sodomites: he claims that 'they were corrupting the whole human race'. Adding that 'if Greeks and barbarians had combined together in adopting such unions, the cities would have become progressively denuded of population'.[90] To prevent this disastrous spread of the Sodomites' behaviour, God wiped Sodom off the earth.[91]

In the late fourth century, Philo's works were translated into Latin, leading to an increased interest in his biblical commentaries among Latin authors.[92] Paulus Orosius's *Historiae Adversus Paganos* shows how this popularity impacted the use of Sodom in Latin literature.[93] Orosius's explanation of the reasons for Sodom's destruction is clearly influenced by the *luxuria* dynamic.[94] Like Philo, he starts by establishing the fertility of the soil around the cities.[95] He continues to explain that '[t]his abundance of things was the cause of evil for this entire region which put these goods to bad use. For from abundance came extravagance [*luxuria*], and from extravagance came foul lusts [*libidines*], men with men working that which is unseemly without even giving thought to place, rank, or age.'[96] God subsequently punished the city as a warning to others.[97] Like Philo, Orosius creates a clear cascade of sins, ending in same-sex desire. However, he simplifies it, by reducing it to a three-stage process caused by the misuse of wealth. This misuse first led to *luxuria,* which then caused foul lusts that ultimately ended in same-sex desire. This differs in two ways from Philo. Firstly, the explicit reference to *luxuria* takes the place of Philo's references to gluttony and excessive drinking.[98] Secondly, God's punishment

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[88] Philo of Alexandria, *On Abraham*, par.135 (p.114).

[89] Ibidem, par.136 (p.114).

[90] Ibidem.

[91] Ibidem, par.137 (p.115).

[92] David T. Runia, 'Philo in the Patristic Tradition: A List of Direct References', in: Torrey Seland (ed.), *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria* (Cambridge 2014). This book is only available as an E-Book without page numbering.

[93] This work enjoyed great popularity in Anglo-Saxon England, resulting in a translation into Old English. On its insular popularity, see Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 323.

[94] Ahern also comments on this influence of the *luxuria* dynamic and Philo on Orosius: Ahern, 'Abundance, Luxuria and Sin', 615-618.

[95] Orosius, *Historiae Adversus Paganos,* 1.5.6 (p.46) [p.53]: '*Sed Segor ex his parua, illae [Sodoma, Gomorra, Adama et Seboim] aplae et magnae, quippe quibus et soli fecunditas suberat et Iordanes fluuius, per plana diffusus ac peropportune diuisus, augmentis uberitatis inpendebatur.'* Translations quoted in the main text are taken from: A.T. Fear, *Orosius: Seven Books of History against the Pagans* (Liverpool 2010), 53.

[96] Ibidem*,* 1.5.6-8 (p.46) [p.53]: '*Huic uniuersae regioni, bonis male utenti, abundantia rerum causa malorum fuit. Ex abundantia enim luxuria, ex luxuria foedae libídines adoleuere, adeo ut masculi in masculos operantes turpitudinem ne consideratis quidem locis condicionibus aetatibusque proruerent.'*

[97] Ibidem, 1.5.11.

[98] Contrary to my interpretation, Ahern concludes that unlike Philo 'Orosius seems to imply that this [homoerotic relations] was their only sin; the other immoral activities associated with luxuria have disappeared.' See: Ahern, 'Abundance, Luxuria and Sin', 616. This is not the case since Orosius clearly differentiates between luxuria and foul lusts. Even if to Orosius these foul lusts were purely same-sex oriented, the fact that he considers them to be the result of *luxuria* clearly indicates that to Orosius, *luxuria* must have meant something else than same-sex desire.

follows directly after the first description of same-sex desire. The process of feminisation following the same-sex desire in Philo's interpretation is omitted.

Contrary to Philo, Orosius also explicitly uses Sodom's cascade of sins ending in God's punishment to instruct his audience and attempt to change their behaviour.[99] Writing just after the sack of Rome in 410, Orosius encourages 'those who spew forth at Christ' to 'look at the crimes and punishment of Sodom and Rome respectively'.[100] Ending his comparison on a rather ominous note: 'Taking the demise of Sodom and Gomorrah as my example, I warn them that they can learn and understand in what ways God has punished sinners, in what ways He can punish them, and in what ways He will punish them'.[101]

Orosius's use of Sodom did not go unnoticed. Recently, Eoghan Ahern has argued that Augustine's use of Sodom was inspired by Orosius, who was his pupil.[102] In his *De Civitate Dei* Augustine uses a variation of Orosius's description of the Sodomites' same-sex acts as 'men with men practising obscenity', a phrase originating from Romans 1:26-27.[103] He describes Sodom as a region 'where sexual intercourse between males [*stupra in masculos*] had become so commonplace that it received the licence usually extended by the law to other practices.'[104] Augustine elaborates on this idea in his *De Enchiridion.* He argues that Sodom shows that sins, 'however grave and terrible when they come to be habitual, are then believed to be trivial or no sins at all'.[105] From this observation, Augustine creates a picture of a sinful dynamic similar to the one in Orosius. Like Orosius, he compares the sins in his society to the ones Sodom practised, because he laments that 'in our days many evils, if not the same ones [as those of Sodom], have come to be openly and habitually practised, so that we are afraid not only to excommunicate a lay person for them but even to degrade a cleric.'[106] He then connects this inability to adequately punish these habitual sins to a threatening sinful dynamic: 'as for habitual sins … we are

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[99] For a similar interpretation, see: Carden, *Sodom,* 125-126. Ahern correctly points out that, instead of a Christian audience, these words of warning are directed at those who had reverted to pagan practices after the sack of 410. However, Ahern's belief that the sins of these people had nothing to do with *luxuria* or decadence seems to be contradicted by Orosius's clear call to compare the sins of contemporary Roman society with those of Sodom. It seems more likely that 'those who spew forth at Christ' had not only reverted to pagan beliefs but also indulged in *luxuria*. See: Ahern, 'Abundance, Luxuria and Sin', 617-618.

[100] Orosius, *Historiae Adversus Paganos*, 1.6.1 (p.47) [p.53]: *'…qui in Christum … quantum in ipsis est sputa coniciunt.'*

[101] Ibidem*,* 1.6.6 (p.48) [p.54]: '*Quos saltem de hoc ipso exitu Sodomorum et Gomorraeorum moneo, ut discere atque intellegere queant, qualiter Deus peccatores punierit, qualiter punire possit, qualiter puniturus sit.*'

[102] Ahern, 'The Sin of Sodom in Late Antiquity', 223-224.

[103] Ibidem, 223-226, esp.226; Romans 1:26-27: '*relicto naturali usu feminae, exarserunt in desideriis suis in invicem, masculi in masculos turpitudinem operantes;* Augustine, *De Civitate Dei,* 16.30 (p.535) [p.743]: '*Post hanc promissionem liberato de Sodomis Loth et ueniente igneo imbre de caelo tota illa regio impiae ciuitatis in cinerem uersa est, ubi stupra in masculos in tantam consuetudinem conualuerant, quantam leges solent aliorum factorum praebere licentiam.*' The English translation in the main text is taken from: R.W. Dyson, *The City of God against the Pagans* (Cambridge 1998).

[104] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei,* 16.30 (p.535) [p.743]. For the Latin, see the previous note.

[105] Augustine, *Enchiridion ad Laurentium,* 21.80 (p.93) [p.88] : '*Huc accedit quod peccata quamuis magna et horrenda, cum in consuetudinem uerterint, aut parua aut nulla esse creduntur, usque adeo ut non solum non occultanda uerum etiam praedicanda ac diffamanda uideantur…*'. Translations in the main text are taken from: Boniface Ramsey, *The Augustine Catechism: The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love* (New York 1999).

[106] Ibidem, 21.80 (p.94) [p.88]: '*Unde est et illud in Genesi : 'Clamor Sodomorum et Gomorrhae multiplicatus est', quia non solum iam non apud eos puniebantur ill aflagitia, uerum etiam publice ueluti lege frequentabantur. Sic nostris temporibus ita multa mala, etsi non talia, in apertam consuetudinem iam uenerunt, ut pro his non solum excommunicare aliquem laicum non audeamus, sed nec clericum degradare.*'

often compelled to look on and tolerate them, and even to commit some of those we tolerate, and grant, O Lord, that we may not commit all of those that we are unable to forbid!'[107]

Like Orosius, Augustine uses the reference to Sodom's immorality to point to the danger of a sinful dynamic and uses this sinful dynamic to try and persuade his readers to change their behaviour. However, unlike Orosius, Augustine leaves the actual sins making up the sinful dynamic implicit. He talks somewhat vaguely about 'many evils' tolerated in contemporary Roman society and does not mention which habitual sins are tolerated and which might be committed when constructing his sinful dynamic. However, when read in combination with his reference to Sodom in his *De Civitate Dei*, it seems likely that, like Orosius, Augustine associated this dynamic with same-sex desire.

With this analysis of Orosius and Augustine, the first way the Church Fathers used Sodom to instruct their readers and educate them has become clear: they first associated Sodom with a sinful dynamic related to *luxuria* and subsequently warned their readers that, was their society to fall trap to the same sinful dynamic, God would ultimately punish them as he did with Sodom and Gomorrah. *Geslacht* is central to this use of Sodom as an educational tool, because the main consequence of this sinful dynamic is the gradual loss of rules and regulations tied to properly regulating sexual desire and procreation. After all, in both Philo's and Orosius's version of the dynamic, *luxuria* is followed by *libido*, that is, foul or uncontrolled lusts.

Re-evaluating Jordan: from a 'mixed image' to a sinful dynamic

Before turning to the second way the Church Fathers used Sodom's story as a teaching tool, a problem needs to be addressed. The interconnectedness of the sins in Philo's and Orosius's versions of this dynamic creates the possibility that the 'picture of mixed associations' with Sodom's sins in the writings of the Church Fathers Clark and Jordan see is, in fact, a coherent representation of different sins connected to each other by their association to *luxuria*, creating a sinful dynamic ending in Sodom's demise.[108] After all, Philo's and Orosius's use of the cascade of sins leading up to same-sex desire does not square with the idea that different associations with Sodom's sins were gradually pushed out by a reading focussing on (same-)sex desire because Philo and Orosius understood same-sex desire only as the end station of a sinful dynamic. If this is the case, the starting point from which Frantzen and Clark study the Anglo-Saxon Latin sources might need revisioning.

Before re-examining Jordan's theory, a short overview of the way he applies the process of simplification to the writings of the Church Fathers is necessary. Jordan argues that, whereas Jerome still uses 'the full range' of the 'prophetic use of Sodom's arrogance', the sin already 'begins to narrow around sexual … sin' in Ambrose's work, until 'alternate readings have been pushed out' in Gregory the Great's writings.[109] Augustine occupies a central place in this dynamic because Jordan believes him to be the first to explicitly describe the sin of the Sodomites as 'the desire for same-sex copulation'.[110] Thus, according to Jordan, prior to Augustine, Sodom's punishment was caused by a range of sins other than same-sex desire.

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[107] Ibidem, 21.80 (p.94) [p.88]: '… *uisitata uero, pro quibus abluendis filii dei sanguis effusus est, quamuis tam magna sint ut omnino claudi contra se faciant regnum dei, saepe uidendo omnia tolerare, saepe tolerando nonnulla etiam facere cogimur, atque utinam, o domine, non omnia quae non potuerimus prohibere faciamus!'*
[108] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 73.
[109] Ibidem, 34-35.
[110] Prior to Jordan, J. A. Loader made a similar claim: Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 136. According to Jordan Sodom's sin was 'not merely same-sex desire' in Augustine's writing. This desire was just 'a symptom of the madness of their fleshly appetites'. Instead, the root of Sodom's sin was 'the violent eruption of disordered desire itself'. See: Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, 35.

Ambrose's part in Jordan's logic has already been disputed by Carden's analysis. Carden points out that Ambrose, like Augustine after him, 'clearly indicates same-sex desire to be Sodom's crime'.[111] More specifically, Ambrose believes the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels to be the direct cause of their punishment. In answer to the question of why God punished everyone living in Sodom, including the children and elderly, Ambrose explains that 'no age was free from guilt' because those who did not have the possibility of committing the same-sex rape of the angels had the inclination. To illustrate this point, Ambrose claims that, although the elderly lacked bodily strength, their minds were full of lust (*libido*). [112] Even more importantly, Ambrose does not just interpret same-sex desire resulting in the attempted rape of the angels as the cause of Sodom's punishment, he also connects it to *luxuria*, like Orosius and Philo. As Eoghan Ahern has argued, Ambrose both associates Sodom with *luxuria* and believes *luxuria* to be the mother of '*libido'*.[113] Like Philo and Orosius, Ambrose also connects Sodom's *luxuria* to the wealth Sodom was surrounded with.[114] Therefore, when Ambrose mentions that the attempted rape was the result of the fact that the minds of everyone in Sodom were filled with *libido*, he implicitly repeats the same three phases of the sinful dynamic we encountered in Orosius: wealth leads to *luxuria,* which causes immoderate *libido* which in turn results in same-sex desire and the subsequent heavenly punishment of Sodom. As *De Abraham*, the work in which Ambrose analyses Sodom's sins and punishment, is based largely on Philo's work, the correspondence between Philo and Ambrose is hardly surprising.[115]

Jerome's role in Jordan's dynamic should also be revised.[116] Jordan, followed by Carden and Clark base their interpretation of Jerome's use of Sodom primarily on Jerome's interpretation of Ezekiel 16:44-55.[117] In this commentary, Jerome interprets a metaphor Ezekiel uses. According to Ezekiel, Sodom and Samaria are the sisters of Israel who, although sinful, are justified in comparison to Jerusalem's sins. To Jerome, Samaria symbolises 'the snares of the heretics', and Sodom 'a pagan life and *luxuria*'.[118] Jerome explains this interpretation by further detailing Sodom's sins. He starts by identifying pride as the primary or first sin.[119] The cause of this pride is 'the fullness of bread an

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[111] Carden, *Sodomy*, 145-146.

[112] Ambrose, *De Abraham*, 1.6.52 (p.537): '*Praestruitur iudicii diuini aequitas, ne forte quis diceret : quid peccauerunt pueri, ut omnes excidio inuoluerentur? (…) Nulla aetas erat culpae inmunis - ideo nullus inmunis exitio fuit - et qui possibilitatem perpetrandi criminis non habuit habuit adfectum. Effetae uires senum, sed mens plena libidinis.'* Although he provides a novel answer, Ambrose's question is part of a longer tradition of questions surrounding the faith of Sodom's children. See: Marie-Pierre Bussières, 'Quel sort pour les bébés de Sodome? La contamination du péché ou le mérite individuel chez l'Ambrosiaster', in: Rémi Gounelle, Jean-Marc Vercruysse (eds.), *La destruction de Sodome et de Gomorrhe (Gn. 18-19) dans la littérature chrétienne des premiers siècles* (Turnhout 2019) 9-29.

[113] Ahern, 'The Sin of Sodom in Late Antiquity', 212.

[114] See, for example, Ambrose's interpretation of Lot's choice to live in Sodom in: Ambrose, *De Abraham*, 1.3.13-15 (p.511-513).

[115] Ahern, 'The Sin of Sodom in Late Antiquity', 222.

[116] Like Jordan Clark, Anagnostou-Laoutides, Kay and Carden all imply Jerome did not count same-sex desire amongst the reasons of Sodom's punishment. See: Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, 33-34; Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 72; Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong,* 239; Anagnostou-Laoutides, 'Luxuria and Homosexuality', 13; Carden, *Sodomy*, 138.

[117] Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, 33; Carden, *Sodomy*, 139; Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 72.

[118] Jerome, *Commentarii in Ezechielem,* Lib. 5, 16:44 (p.202): '*… Sodoma uocatur et Samaria, quarum altera gentilem uitam luxuriamque significat, altera haereticorum decipulas.'*

[119] Ibidem, 5, 16:48-51 (p.205): *'Iste igitur qui iurat et loquitur : 'Vivo ego, dicit Dominus', describens Sodomae et filiarum eius scelera, primam superbiam posuit proprie diaboli, primumque peccatum…'*

abundance of all things'.[120] Summarising this idea, Jordan goes on to define 'Sodom's sin' as '*pride, fullness of food or drink (saturitas), the abundance of all things*' but adds to this list '*leisure (otium) and 'delicacies (deliciae)'*.[121] These all, in turn, result in 'the forgetfulness of God, thinking that present goods are permanent and never in need.'[122] Read in light of Jerome's earlier statement that pride was Sodom's first or primary sin, this conclusion seems to explain why: the Sodomites became arrogant enough to forget that God provided the earthly goods they enjoyed. In light of this conclusion, Jordan's reasons for interpreting Sodom as a reference to 'a gentile life and luxury' become clear: the Sodomites represent gentiles, because they have forgotten God and their life is connected to *luxuria* because their misuse of earthly goods was the cause of their pride which led them to forget God.

Jordan, Carden and Clark cite Jerome's 'definition' of Sodom's sins as 'pride, bloatedness, the abundance of all thing, leisure and delicacies' as evidence of the 'full range' of potential sins connected to Sodom.[123] However, as the interpretation above makes clear, this quote should not be used to substantiate the claim that Jerome still used a wide variety of interpretations of Sodom's sin, because, to Jerome, these are not alternative interpretations of Sodom's sins, but an interconnected cascade of sinful behaviour he uses to explain why Sodomites represent '*luxuria*'. This raises the question if Jerome, like Ambrose, also framed same-sex desire in the form of the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels as the endpoint of this dynamic centring on *luxuria.*

Jerome's most direct comment on the reason for Sodom's punishment is found in his commentary on Isaias 3:1-12. In these verses, Isaiah explains that the inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah will be punished because '[T]hey have proclaimed abroad their sin as Sodom, and they have not hidden it.'[124] According to Jerome, Isaiah predicts the New Testament scene of Christ's conviction when, after Pilate asked the crowd what to do with Jesus, they publicly demanded that Jesus should be crucified. Jerome explains the connection between Sodom and these Jews as follows:

> And just as the Sodomites, sinning with total freedom and having no shame whatsoever with regard to wickedness [*scelere*], said to Lot: Bring out the men so that we may lie with them [*concumbamus*], so too these people, crying out publicly, proclaimed their sin not even having any shame in blaspheming … therefore, the leaders [of the Jews] are called of Sodom, because they have Sodomitical sin.[125]

According to Jordan's cursory analysis of this text, Jerome identifies 'the feature of brazenness' as characteristic of the Sodomites. Jordan does not analyse or mention Jerome's citation of the

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[120] Ibidem, 5, 16:48-51 (p.206): '… *et euangelium refert pharisaei superbiam publicani humilitate superatam, cuius seminarium est saturitas panis et rerum omnium abundantia et otium, siue, ut Septuaginta transtulerunt, deliciarum luxuriaeque opulentia…*'

[121] Ibidem, 5, 16:48-51 (p.206): '*Superbia, saturitasa, rerum omnium abundantia, otium et deliciae, peccatum sodomiticum est.*'

[122] Ibidem, 5, 16:48-51 (p.206): '… *et propter hoc sequitur Dei obliuio, quae praesentia bona putat esse perpetua et numquam sibi necessariis indigendum…*' This sentence is a continuation of the quote in the previous footnote.

[123] Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, 33; Carden, *Sodomy*, 139; Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 72.

[124] Is.3:8-9*: 'et peccatum suum quasi Sodoma praedicaverunt, nec absconderunt: vae animae eorum, quoniam reddita sunt eis mala.*'

[125] Jerome, *Commentariorum in Esaiam,* 3:8-9 (p.51): '*Et quomodo Sodomitae cum omni libertate peccantes et ne pudorem quidem ullum habentes in scelere dixerunt ad Loth: Educ foras uiros, ut concumbamus cum eis, sic et isti publice proclamantes suum praedicauere peccatum nec ullam in blasphemando habuere uerecundiam; secunda enim post naufragium tabula est et consolatio miseriarum impietatem suam abscondere; unde et principes appellantur Sodomorum, qui sodomitica habuere peccata.*'.

Sodomites' attempted rape.[126] Michael Carden provides a more elaborate interpretation. He argues that in this passage, Jerome compares the behaviour of the chief priests who shouted their demands to crucify Jesus to Pontius Pilate to the Sodomites shouting the threats of inter-male rape. According to Carden, the only point of comparison is the mode of sinning: both shamelessly and publicly proclaim their sin.[127] Although he recognises the same-sex nature of the request in the above-cited passage, he argues that it is not only 'possible to concur with Jerome's point about public sin without reading this incident homophobically', but even maintains that 'Jerome's point only makes its full impact where Sodom's sin is primarily regarded as inhospitality and abuse of outsiders.' [128]

This interpretation is problematic. Even if the comparison between the Sodomites demanding to lie with the men [*concumbamus*] and the crowd demanding Christ to be crucified, primarily serves to draw attention to the similar mode of sinning, publicly and shamelessly voicing a sinful wish, it also invites a comparison between the actual wish or sins.[129] In other words: Jerome compares the Sodomites' public and shameless manifestation of their *scelus* (the demand to lie with the male angels) with the Jews' wish to crucify Christ. The similarity between the two sins is striking: both constitute a severe bodily threat towards a Godly person. Viewed in this light, Jerome's comparison between the crucifixion of Christ and Sodom's sin can be interpreted as a strong condemnation of same-sex desire and does add to the parallel he tries to draw. Jerome's choice of words to describe the Sodomites' request strengthens this idea. He altered the biblical text he cites to make the same-sex nature of the request clear and steer away from the older interpretations of Sodom's sin as general inhospitality. In the Vulgate Jerome rendered Genesis 19:4, the source text for his quote: '*Educ illos huc, ut cognoscamus eos'*.[130] In his commentary on Isaiah, he exchanges '*cognoscamus'*, the more accurate rendering of the Greek and Hebrew source text, for '*concumbamus'*.[131] It seems a deliberate attempt to stress the nature of Sodom's wickedness in order to compare it to the wish to crucify Christ. The choice for a singular ['*scelere'*] over a plural noun to characterise the Sodomites' crime is relevant. This points to a single sin as the direct cause of the destruction of Sodom: the Sodomites' explicit and publicly expressed wish to have intercourse with the angels. Just like Jerome believed that the high priests' publicly expressed wish to harm Jesus led to the ruin of Jerusalem, the Sodomites' attempt to harm the angels led to Sodom's destruction.

In light of the evidence discussed here, it seems that the dynamic of simplification Jordan identifies in the writings of the Church Fathers needs some revision. When the Anglo-Saxon authors read the writings of the Church Fathers, they were not confronted with a 'picture of mixed associations' with Sodom or 'a range of potential sins' connected to Sodom.[132] In fact, the passages selected for this chapter suggest that, while Anglo-Saxon authors could encounter a variety of sins connected to Sodom, such as pride, greed, illegitimate lusts and same-sex desire, these were not competing interpretations of Sodom's sins, but were connected in a sinful dynamic connected to *luxuria* which started with the misuse of earthly wealth and culminated in the attempted same-sex rape of the

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[126] Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, 33.
[127] For a comparable argument, see: Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong,* 243-244. Although sharing Carden's observation on the public nature of the sin, Kay's interpretations also add another aspect, arguing that 'for Jerome, the sin of Sodom consisted basically in a rejection of divine justice', see: ibidem, 244.
[128] Carden, *Sodomy*, 139-140.
[129] See also: Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong,* 241. Although Kay is probably correct in claiming that Is.3:8-9 'appears to compare Judah to Sodom in one respect only, namely the shameless publicity with which God's will was contravened', he concedes that there exists a medieval tradition based on Jerome in which 'the sin Isaiah imputed to Judah was analogous in all its essential features to that of Sodom.'
[130] The Vulgate version of Gen.19:4 is quoted here.
[131] On the interpretation of the Hebrew text, see: Carden, *Sodomy*, 19-22.
[132] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 73 and 207.

angels which was the ultimate cause of Sodom's punishment. This dynamic was already present in Philo's writings, returns in Jerome's interpretation of Ezekiel and influenced the educational use of Sodom's story in Orosius and Augustine. So, if the conclusions based on the selection of texts studied in this section are representative, an Anglo-Saxon author studying the writings of the authors analysed in this section, would be confronted with a rather homogenous picture of a sinful dynamic leading to Sodom's downfall. All authors connected Sodom to this sinful dynamic, used it to interpret Biblical references to Sodom's story, as Jerome and Ambrose did or used it in an attempt to instruct and educate their readers, like Orosius and Augustine.

The Sodom allegory: using Sodom's story to describe spiritual growth

The connection of Sodom to *luxuria* through this sinful dynamic might have contributed to the appearance of a new way of using Sodom which has until now received little attention: its use as an allegory.[133] In this use, Sodom is equated with a non-Christian way of living or a life filled with *luxuria*. The reference often forms part of an urgent request to the reader to flee Sodom. [134] In this allegorical use, Sodom has become dislodged from its historical and geographical context and has acquired the function of a symbol that refers to a certain non-Christian way of dealing with earthly desires or a non-Christian life in general.

Utilising this association between Sodom and a life of uncontrolled sin an elaborate allegorical interpretation of Sodom's story in Genesis 19 appeared. This interpretation used Sodom's story to describe the journey of a Christian from a life ruled by sinful desire to a state of perfect virtue. The schematic on the last page of this chapter presents the most elaborate form of this allegory. Appendix 1 contains the full descriptions of the allegory by the authors cited in the schematic. The colours in the schematic refer to the texts in Appendix 1. The text belonging to the allegorical interpretations of the different places is colour-coded using these colours. Like Sodom's sinful dynamic, this particular interpretation of Sodom's story seems to originate with Philo.[135]

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[133] The elaborate Sodom allegory presented schematically on the last page of this chapter, is not mentioned by Jordan, Loader, Kay and Clark. Carden's analysis is more complicated. He goesinto some detail about Philo's allegorical reading of Genesis 19 'as an ascent of the soul towards perfection' but does not mention it when analysing the use of Sodom by Origen, Ambrose or Gregory. (Carden, *Sodom*, 67-68) When discussing Gregory, the Great, he merely uses the *Regula Pastoralis* to argue that Gregory 'entrenches for the western tradition the sexual and homophobic associations' of Sodom's story. (Ibidem, 127.) He overlooks the fact that Gregory's use of Sodom is an application of the same allegory used by Philo, Ambrose and Origen and should thus be read against this background. Carden's comments on Origen fall in the same category: he very briefly mentions Origen's allegorical interpretation of Lot's request to travel first to Zoar before continuing to the mountains, but primarily uses this to argue that Origen disapproved of Lot's request. (Ibidem, 132-133.) In his commentary on Ambrose, Carden is, again, primarily interested in the sins Ambrose identifies with Sodom. (Ibidem, 145.)
[134] There are numerous examples of such an allegorical use. See, for example: Ambrose, *Epist. 11* (p.89); Ambrose, *De Abraham*, 1.6.55 (p.538); Ambrose, *De Fuga Saeculi*, 9.55 (p.205-206); Jerome, *Epist. 54* (p.595); Jerome, *Epist. 71* (p.2); Jerome, *Epist. 141* (p.290); Augustine, *Epist. 40* (p.163), Augustine, *Sermo 105* (Col.621). The best example of this use in Gregory's writing is his elaborate version of the Sodom allegory discussed below.
[135] As the primary focus of this chapter lies on Latin Church Fathers, it is likely that, apart from the authors mentioned here and in Appendix 1, other authors also used the elaborate allegory central to this section. It is, therefore, possible that Philo merely repeats or reworks an already existing interpretation of Genesis 19. It should also be stressed that, if other authors used the same allegory, the Origen, Ambrose, Gregory the Great and Isidore might have based their interpretations on these other authors. Further research into the use of this allegory and the changes it underwent prior to the early Middle Ages is necessary to solve these problems.

According to the allegorical interpretation, people who lived their life in service of earthly desires (or *luxuria*) started their journey living among Sodomites. To reach heaven, they should depart from Sodom and reach the protective walls of Zoar. Zoar represents a middle ground between a perfect and imperfect life. Someone living in Zoar is still influenced by earthly desires, but this only expresses itself in legitimate ways. The mountain represents the summit of perfection. People attaining this level of spiritual progress are immune to earthly desire. However, at each point of this journey, they should remember that there is no way back: when they look back at the desire-filled life they left behind, their fate will be like that of Lot's wife.

Writing around 590 Gregory the Great is the first to explicitly apply this allegory to educate readers on a desire-related topic. Connecting the metaphor to dealing with desire when married, Gregory explains that to flee Sodom is 'to reject the unlawful fires of the flesh'.[136] The mountains signify 'the purity of the continent', who 'engage in intercourse, but do not engage in the pleasures of the flesh beyond what is necessary for the procreation of children.'[137] Zoar represents people still in an intermediary state: they have 'clearly forsaken the sins of the flesh', but have not limited themselves solely to intercourse with procreative intent.[138] As the next chapter will show, this application greatly influenced the Anglo-Saxon use of the allegory. Gregory's interpretation and its subsequent popularity show that, like the sinful dynamic described in the previous section, the Sodom allegory was especially useful as a tool to teach or instruct people on issues relating the regulation of sexual desire and reproduction.

This allegorical use of Sodom as a reference to a stage in someone's spiritual development also opens the door to using 'Sodomite' to describe those who are stuck at this earlier phase of spiritual development. Tellingly, there is one piece of evidence that such a change occurs in the form of a letter from Jerome in reaction to an earlier letter by someone called Amandus. From Jerome's response it becomes clear that in this letter Amandus tells of a woman whose husband 'is an adulterer and a Sodomite' and asks Jerome whether this woman could remarry.[139] What could Amandus and Jerome have meant when they called these men a Sodomite? Both Jordan and Corden have rightly pointed out that, in lack of any further information, this question is ultimately unanswerable.[140] However, if this use of 'Sodomite' is inspired by the Sodom allegory, it could be a reference to someone who failed to leave Sodom because the 'illicit fires of the flesh' still brightly burned in him.[141]

Looking forward: the Church Fathers as a basis

As mentioned in the introduction, the analysis in this chapter serves as the starting point of chapters two and three. This starting point differs significantly from the traditional idea that the Anglo-Saxon authors were confronted with a number of inconsistent uses and interpretations of Sodom's sins in

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[136] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452) [p.172]: '*Ardentem quippe Sodomam fugere, est illicita carnis incendia declinare.*' The main text uses the following translation: George E. Demacopoulos, *The Book of Pastoral Rule* (New York 2007).

[137] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452) [p.172]: '*Altitudo vero montium, est munditia continentium. Vel certe quasi in monte sunt qui etiam carnali copulae inhaerent, sed tamen extra suscipiendae prolis admistionem debitam, nulla carnis voluptate solvuntur.*'

[138] Ibidem: '*Est vero in medio Segor civitas, quae fugientem salvet infirmum, quia videlicet cum sibi per incontinentiam miscentur conjuges, et lapsus scelerum fugiunt, et tamen venia salvantur.*'

[139] Jerome, *Epistulae*, 55.4.3 (p.492-493): '*viro adultero et sodomita*'.

[140] Jorden, *The Invention of Sodomy*, 33; Carden, *Sodom*, 140-141.

[141] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis,* 3.27 (p.452) [p.172]: '*Ardentem quippe Sodomam fugere est illicita carnis incendia declinare.*'

the writings of the Church Fathers. Instead, this chapter has argued that they inherited two relatively clear traditions of using Sodom's sins as a tool to transmit ideas about *geslacht*. Firstly, Sodom's sinful dynamic, which consisted of a cascade of interlinked sins related to *luxuria* and ended in the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels. This rape was viewed as the ultimate cause of their destruction. The educational use of this dynamic focussed primarily on societal criticism because it was used to warn that Roman society when its members continued to sin like the Sodomites, would fall prey to a similar dynamic ending in destruction. Secondly, the allegorical interpretation of Sodom's destruction and Lot's subsequent flight to the mountains via Zoar. In contrast to Sodom's sinful dynamic, the educational application of this tradition focussed more on the individual sinner and their spiritual progress through references to it in personal letters and Gregory's application of the allegory to the proper way of dealing with procreation and sexual desire within marriage.

Sodom / **Sodomites**

Philo: 'Earth-bound and low things'.[142]
Origen: 'The flames of the world and the fires of the flesh'.[143]
Ambrose: *Luxuria* and impurity.
Gregory the Great: 'Illicit fires of the flesh'.[144]
Isidore: 'illicit fires of the flesh or the desires of the world'.[145]

Lot's wife

Philo: Those who fail to progress because of a feminine mind focussed on earthly wealth.
Origen: Not a manly mind, but 'the flesh given to desire and pleasure'.[146]
Ambrose: Those who start to leave *luxuria* and impurity but look behind at their old life and fail.

Zoar

Philo: Between 'peacefulness of security' and 'the city' (Sodom).[147]
Origen: 'Between the perfect and the doomed'.[148]
Gregory the Great: Someone who has 'escaped damnable life', but has not reached 'the height of conjugal continence'.[149]
Isidore: An active life not 'free from the cares of the world', but also 'not alien to the joy of eternal salvation'.[150]

The mountain / **Lot**

Philo: 'Heavenly things'.[151]
Origen: 'The perfect' and 'the height of knowledge'.[152]
Ambrose: A total escape from *luxuria* and impurity.
Gregory the Great: 'The height of conjugal continence'.[153]
Isidore: 'The contemplation of the perfect'.[154]

Eternal damnation

Eternal salvation

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[142] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 4.46 (p.321). For this thesis, Philo's writings are studied only in translation. The following translation is used: Ralph Marcus, *Philo of Alexandria: Questions on Genesis* (London 1953).

[143] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.6 (p.180) [p.120]. The following translation is used: Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* (Washington 1981), 74-226.

[144] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452) [p.172].

[145] Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim*, 15 (p.52).

[146] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.6 (p.180) [p.120].

[147] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 4.47 (p.322).

[148] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.1 (p.162-164) [p.89].

[149] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452) [p.172].

[150] Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim*, 15 (p.52).

[151] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 4.46 (p.321).

[152] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.1 (p.162-164) [p.89].

[153] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452) [p.172].

[154] Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim*, 15 (p.52).

Chapter 2: The Sodom allegory in Bede, Aldhelm and Alcuin

As chapter one has made clear, by the time Bede, Aldhelm and Alcuin started to use Sodom's story, generations of earlier authors had used an allegorical interpretation of the story of Sodom's demise to help readers with their spiritual progress towards a life filled with heavenly contemplation. Since the origin of the allegorical interpretation, probably with the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, subsequent generations of authors used it and, in the case of Gregory the Great, added to it to better fit the use case important to him. Against this background, the question arises of how the Anglo-Saxon authors writing in Latin between 500 and 800 applied and developed this allegorical interpretation of Sodom's demise and used it to educate their readers.

As mentioned at the start of the previous chapter, the relationship between the Anlgo-Latin authors and their precursors has traditionally received only cursory attention. This might be caused by the belief that 'little is found in the work of Aldhelm, Bede, Boniface and Alcuin that is not also found in commentaries … by Gregory, Augustine, Ambrose and others.'[155] Given the importance of the Church Fathers in the thinking of authors like Bede and Bede's long quotes from their works in his own Biblical commentaries, this is a logical assumption.[156] However, this chapter argues that Anglo-Saxon authors not only continued to use the allegorical interpretation of Sodom's story for educational purposes to describe progress from a life filled with desire to a life devoted to contemplation but added new elements to it, further strengthening its educational potential.

To argue this, the chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, Bede's commentary on Genesis is analysed. This section argues that one of Bede's goals in his commentary on Sodom's story was to provide a tool other teachers could use to teach about regulating desire. To shape this tool, Bede changes his late antique sources. He emphasises different aspects of the Sodom allegory and adds gendered language. To study how this tool was applied in practice in an attempt to change someone's behaviour, the second section analyses a letter from Alcuin to one of his students. This analysis shows that Alcuin's application of Sodom's story shares similarities with Bede's approach. Apart from the similarities, Alcuin also added a new layer to this allegorical use of Sodom, because he connected spiritual regression towards Sodom with regression from adulthood back to childhood.

Whereas the sources in the first two sections contain an allegorical interpretation of Sodom's destruction, the third section focuses on Alcuin's *Quaestiones in Genesim*: a literal interpretation of Sodom's story. It shows how the use of Sodom's story to teach about regulating sexual desire in allegorical interpretations was adapted to fit a more literal interpretation of Genesis' text. It will be argued that, in line with Alcuin's letter and Bede's commentary on Genesis, the source had a clear educational purpose: it functioned as an aide memoir containing questions the first recipient had asked years ago when he was a beginning student of Alcuin's and was later used as a primer for those starting to study exegesis. Due to this function, the *Quaestiones* also provides an insight into the sources used to teach about and study Sodom's demise in York a generation after Bede. The last section analyses a source meant to stimulate the further education of already highly educated Anglo-Saxon monks and nuns: Aldhelm's *Prosa de*

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[155] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 200. For a similar observation regarding Bede specifically, see also: Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 74.
[156] On the importance of the Church Fathers to Bede's work, see note 61.

Virginitate. It shows how Aldhelm adopted the allegorical interpretation of Sodom to fit both the intricate structure of his work and its sophisticated readers.

As will become clear, the sources discussed in this chapter all have a clear educational purpose: they instruct future teachers, reprimand past students, refresh memories of past education or challenge those who devoted their lives to learning to come to new insights. Therefore, each section starts with an introduction to the author and the text, focusing specifically on how the text reflects educational practices because the texts analysed in this chapter somewhat deviate from texts traditionally analysed when studying Anglo-Saxon education.[157] Until recently, these studies focussed mainly on the transfer of knowledge, such as rhetoric, identifying centres of learning, glossaries, classroom practices, and traces of these practices in the manuscript evidence.[158] Relatively little attention has been paid to the transfer of morals from one generation to the other and the study of the Scripture, even though moral growth was considered an integral part of education.[159]

Bede: the Sodom allegory as a teaching device

Bede was educated at the monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow, which would remain his home for the remainder of his life. In his well-known *Historia*, he names Benedict Biscop, abbot Ceolfrith and a monk called Trumberht as his teachers.[160] Trumberht was educated under the direction of bishop Chad, who, in turn, was a disciple of the Irish monk Aidan. This indicates that Wearmouth-Jarrow enjoyed connections with the Roman ecclesiastical heritage of the Church Fathers and with the Irish tradition of Christian teaching and learning.[161] Bede's indebtedness to the Church Fathers becomes apparent through the *apparatus fontium* in the CCSL editions of Bede's commentaries. Gregory the Great was Bede's most important source, followed by Augustine, Jerome and Ambrose.[162] Far from slavishly copying the Church

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[157] For a historiographical overview of scholarship on Anglo-Saxon education, see: Benjamin Weber, 'A brief history of Anglo-Saxon education', *History Compass* 17 (2019) 2, 1-13. Studying the transmission of rules and regulations about sex, gender and procreation is more common in studies focussing on Late Medieval England. For example: Charissa M. Harris, *Obscene pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain* (Ithaca 2018).

[158] For example, Patrizia Lendinara, Loredena Lazzari and Maria Amalia D'Aronco (eds.), *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence: Papers Presented at the International Conference Udine* (Turnhout 2007); Rolf H. Bremmer and Kees Dekker (eds.), *Fruits of Learning: The Transfer of Encyclopaedic knowledge in the Early Middle Ages* (Leuven, Paris and Bristol 2016); Irina Dumitrescu, *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge 2018).

[159] Recent literature has focused more on the moral aspect in combination with Biblical exegesis. See for example: Christina M. Heckman, *Debating with Demons: Pedagogy and Materiality in Early English Literature* (Cambridge 2020).

[160] On Bede's education, see: Calvin B. Kendall, 'Bede and Education', in Scott DeGregorio (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Bede* (Cambridge 2010) 99-112, at 99-104.

[161] Kendall, 'Bede and Education', 103. On the Irish influence on Northumbria and Bede, see: Clare Stancliffe, 'British and Irish Contexts', in Scott DeGregorio, *The Cambridge Companion to Bede* (Cambridge 2010) 69-82 esp.78-82.

[162] Not all the *apparatus fontium* in the CCSL editions are equally reliable, see: Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library,* 35 n.25. Appendix 2 shows that the *apparatus fontium* to Jones' edition of Bede's commentary on Genesis is often not accurate. George Brown and Frederick Biggs have published a thorough two-part investigation of Bede's sources and influence. For their analysis of Bede's commentary on Genesis, see: George Hardin Brown and Frederick M. Biggs, *Bede: Part 2, Fascicles 1-4. Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture.* (Amsterdam 2018), 39-49. On the importance of Gregory, see: Scott DeGregorio, 'The Venerable Bede and Gregory the Great: exegetical connections, spiritual departures', *Early Medieval Europe* 18 (2018) 1, 43-60, at 45. DeGregorio reiterates M.L.W. Laistner's statement to the same effect in: M.L.W. Laistner, 'The Library of the Venerable Bede', in: A. Thompson (ed.), *Bede: His Life, Times and Writings: Essays in Commemoration of the Twelfth Century of his Death* (Oxford 1935) 273-266, at 248. DeGregorio checks it against Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library,* 196-204, 215-217.

Fathers, Bede added to their interpretations with his own and purposefully selected and changed passages from his sources to fit his own time and ideas.[163] These ideas were addressed to a large audience, which consisted not only of the monks in Wearmouth-Jarrow but also of people tasked with instructing others. [164] In fact, Alan Thacker has argued that especially after 720, Bede thought of his writings as part of an 'interconnected educational programme for a monastic education'.[165] In an attempt to better educate the Anglo-Saxon clergy, Bede envisioned a system in which *doctores* trained the *praedicatores*, the clergy preaching to the broader population.[166] In a letter to bishop Acca, which serves as a preface to his commentary on Genesis, Bede stresses this broad audience of somewhat experienced teachers and inexperienced readers.[167] This makes it an ideal source for studying how Sodom's story was used in such educational contexts as an aid to teaching about rules concerning *geslacht*.

This potential has been overlooked by scholars studying Bede's use of Sodom's story. Because of the traditional focus on whether Sodom's sins were same-sex in nature in Bede's mind, their interests are confined mainly to Bede's interpretation of Genesis 19:4 and 13:13.[168] This narrow focus has had two unfortunate consequences. Most importantly, Bede's goal with his commentary on Sodom's story remains obscure. It remains unclear how he envisioned the *doctores* who read this section of the commentary would use it in their instructions. Additionally, it obscures Bede's novel application of the Sodom allegory in his commentary on Gen.19:17-30. This part of the commentary goes unnoticed because Bede only refers to Sodom's sins in very general terms. Therefore, it seems of little use to those primarily interested in reconstructing Bede's definition of Sodom's sins.[169]

The Sodom allegory as a teaching tool

Before analysing his commentary, a brief explanation of Bede's methods of exegesis is necessary. As a teacher and exegete, Bede considered his task to be twofold: 'to elucidate the events recorded in the

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[163] Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, 4. On the way Bede's exegetical works fit contemporary concerns, see: Scott DeGregorio, 'Visions of Reform: Bede's Later Writings in Context', in: Peter Darby and Faith Wallis (eds.) *Bede and the Future* (London 2014) 207-232, esp. 219-232.

[164] Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, 4. In her study of the educational use of *On Genesis,* Judith McClure even calls the work 'a collection of opinions and ideas upon which a teacher would expand, as a handbook for an individual's private study.' See: Judith McClure, 'Bede's *Notes on Genesis* and the training of the Anglo-Saxon clergy', in: *Studies in Church History Subsidia 4: The Bible in the Medieval World* (Cambridge 1985) 17-30, at 23. Although her ideas on the educational function of the work still hold true, McClure somewhat underestimates the extent to which Bede changed his sources and incorporated his own ideas. See Arthur G. Holder, 'Bede and the Tradition of Patristic Exegesis', *Anglican Theological Review* 72 (1990), 399-411, at 410-411.

[165] Alan Thacker, 'Bede and the Ordering of Understanding', in: Scott DeGregorio (ed.), *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of The Venerable Bede* (Morgantown 2006) 37-64, at 52.

[166] Thacker, 'Bede and the Ordering of Understanding', 43-44. This emphasis on education is part of a broader push for reform. There has been some discussion on whether Bede only developed his ideal to reform the Anglo-Saxon Church right before his death. Thacker and, more recently, Scott DeGregorio have shown that Bede's concern for reform permeates his writings, especially after 720. For an overview of the historiography, see: DeGregorio, 'Visions of Reform', 218-219.

[167] Bede, *In Genesim*, *Praefatio* (p.1) [p.66]: '*Nec segnior in exequendo quae iubere es dignatus extiti, quin potius statim perspectis patrum uoluminibus collegi ex his ac duobus in libellis distinxi, quae rudem adhuc possent instituere lectorem, quibus eruditus ad altiorem disceret fortioremque maiorum ascendere lectionem.*' For a similar interpretation, see: Brown and Biggs, *Bede: Part 2*, 240.

[168] Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong*, 229-231. Kay also shortly references Bede's commentary on Gen.18:20. Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 194-195; Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 74; Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Bede and the 'unspeakable sin'. Monk also discusses Bede's commentary on Gen. 9:27 and Gen.14: 1-2. Because he is primarily interested in proving Bede associated Sodom primarily with same-sex desire, he does not focus on the potential educational function of these mentions of Sodom or the way Bede's exegesis is innovative.

[169] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 200. Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 74.

Bible and to discover the message that they conveyed'.[170] These tasks belonged to different modes of interpretation. To 'elucidate the events recorded', Bede focused on the text's literal sense, explaining what every detail of the text means. When the basis of the text was understood, Bede used allegorical interpretation to discover the hidden meaning of the words. [171] Through this process of interpretation, Bede could uncover four levels of meaning: historical, typological, anagogical and moral.[172] In his allegorical interpretation of Sodom, Bede focuses on the anagogical and moral level. On the anagogical level, Bede explains different ways in which the manner and time of Sodom's punishment prefigure the Last Judgment and how the behaviour of the Sodomites and Lot prefigure the faith of the damned and just during the Last Judgment.[173]

The moral level is of more interest to this thesis because it is at this level that Bede uses the Sodom allegory. When compared to the previous generation, i.e. the writings of the Church Fathers, the most obvious difference is the function of the allegorical interpretation.[174] In contrast to his predecessors, Bede explicitly presents it as a teaching tool which can be used by his readers to instruct others about regulating desire. Bede starts by concisely explaining the allegory in his commentary to Gen.19:22b: 'And just as Sodom in flames makes known allegorically the flames of the vices, and the mountain which Lot is ordered to climb, the summit of the virtues, so Zoar signifies a certain less perfect mode of the good way of life, which, although it is still a long way from the height of those leading a perfect life, is at any rate separated from the contagion of the wicked.'[175] Following this explanation, Bede provides two examples of how the allegory might be applied to warn about the dangers of desire. Like Gregory, Bede applies the allegory to instruct his readers on how to deal with sexual desire. However, he locates sexual desire correctly regulated by marriage in Zoar instead of at the summit of the mountain, as Gregory does.[176] Further deviating from his late antique examples, Bede's second example does not focus on lust or vice in

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[170] Calvin B. Kendall, 'The Responsibility of *Auctoritas*: Method and Meaning in Bede's Commentary on Genesis', in: Scott DeGregorio (ed.), *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of The Venerable Bede* (Morgantown 2006) 102-120, at 101-102.

[171] Kendall, 'The Responsibility of *Auctoritas*', 103-106.

[172] Although Bede knew of the four levels of allegory, he did not strictly separate them or use these terms in his commentary on Genesis. See: Ibidem, 106-119; Charles W. Jones, 'Some Introductory Remarks on Bede's Commentary on Genesis', *Sacris Erudiri* 19 (1969), 115-198, at 140-151.

[173] Bede's anagogical exegesis focuses on two main points.
1. The interaction between the wicked and the just living closely together: Gen. 14:13A (Before the Last Judgment the wicked are sometimes saved from temporal earthly dangers, because they live close to the just); Gen.19:14 (The persecution of the wicked cannot destroy God's elect. Although the just must try to correct the wicked, they cannot change the number of those predestined for salvation.); Gen.19:17 (After all the elect have left the world, the wicked will be thrown into the eternal fire).
2. The nature of the punishment of the wicked: Gen.19:17 and Gen.19:23-25a (The flames of the vices with which the wicked burn during their earthly life prefigure the eternal flames); Gen. 19:23-25a (Those who secretly embrace vices, will be publicly punished in the Last Judgment); Gen.19:23-25a (The type of punishment the wicked have to endure corresponds to their type of crime).

[174] For a comparison between the wording of Ambrose, Gregory, Isidore and Origen on the one hand and Bede's wording of the allegory, see Appendix 2, note 512. For a more complete overview of the Church Fathers', see Appendix 1.

[175] Bede, *In Genesim,* 19:22b (p.225) [p.303-304]: '*Sicut autem sodoma ardens flammas uitiorum et mons ad quem ascendere loth iubetur uirtutum culmen insinuat, ita Segor quemdam bonae conuersationis modum minus perfectum designat - qui etsi a celsitudine perfectorum adhuc longe abest, iam tamen a contagio sceleratorum secretus est.*' Segor is the Septuagint form of Zoar. For consistency, the Septuagint 'Segor' is always translated as Zoar in the text of this thesis.

[176] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:22b (p.225) [p.303]: '*Verbi gratia, qui coniugalem recte seruat uitam, a fornicationis quidem flamma sulphurea euasit, nec tamen montem continentiae conscendit.*' Cf. Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.17. In line with Lapidge's criticism of the *apparatus fontium*, the parallel between Bede and Gregory's interpretation of Gen.19:22 is not noticed by C.W. Jones, the most recent editor of Bede's commentary on Genesis.

general but on plundering and avarice. Sodom signifies people guided by avarice, Zoar people who are accustomed to giving to the poor but have 'not yet been able to give up everything', and the mountains stand for those who have given up everything.[177] Strengthening the case that Bede explicitly frames the allegory as a tool to teach about regulating desire, he ends this section of his commentary with 'and other examples of this kind', suggesting that the two examples he just mentioned are meant as an aid for readers wanting to use the allegory in their teaching.[178]

Apart from the function, the importance of the allegory to Bede's interpretation sets him apart from his direct predecessors.[179] The introductory commentary on the Sodom allegory cited above forms the conclusion of the first part of a three-part section of Bede's moral interpretation of Sodom's story in which the allegory plays a central role. This section starts at Gen. 19:17 and continues until Gen. 19:31-32. Each part roughly corresponds with one of the three parts in the Sodom allegory: Sodom (Gen. 19:17-Gen. 19:22b), the journey from Sodom via Zoar to the mountain (Gen. 19:22b-19:30), and the mountain itself (Gen. 19:31-32). Each part ends with a shortened version of the overview of the allegory introduced in Gen. 19.22b. Figure 1 provides a schematic overview of this structure. The relevant parts of the texts in Figure 1 are printed in Appendix 2. Appendix 2 also contains an in-depth analysis of the sources Bede used, correcting Jones' sometimes inaccurate *aparatus fontium*.[180]

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[177] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:22b (p.225) [p.304]: '*Qui a rapinis atque auaritia manum mentemque auerit, ac de rebus habitis pauperibus dare consueuit, necdum tamen omnem relinquere potuit, de incendio quidem Sodomorum effugit, moenia parua ciuitatis in qua periculum interitus euaderet intrauit, sed necdum arcem uirtutis in qua iam perfectus emineret ascendit, et cetera huiusmodi.*'

[178] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:22b (p.225) [p.304]: '*… et cetera huiusmodi.*'

[179] In the commentary of Origen, Isidore, Ambrose and Gregory, the allegory is of relatively little importance and is only mentioned once or twice in small portions of the text. Philo's elaborate analysis of the allegory forms the exception. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Philo's work could not have directly inspired Bede, because it was unknown to him. For the texts of Gregory, Origen, Isidore, Ambrose and Philo, see Appendix 1.

[180] On the problems with the *aparatus fontium* of Jones' editions of Bede's exegetical works, see note 162.

Figure 1: This figure provides a graphical presentation of Bede's interpretation of the Sodom allegory. Bede's text can be divided into three parts, each beginning or ending with a summary of the allegory. These summaries are labelled A-C. Each part is associated with a text, shown in the orange-lined squares. The blue-filled squares reference a place, person or event in Sodom's story. The blue-lined squares contain Bede's allegorical interpretation of this place, person or event. These are explained below.
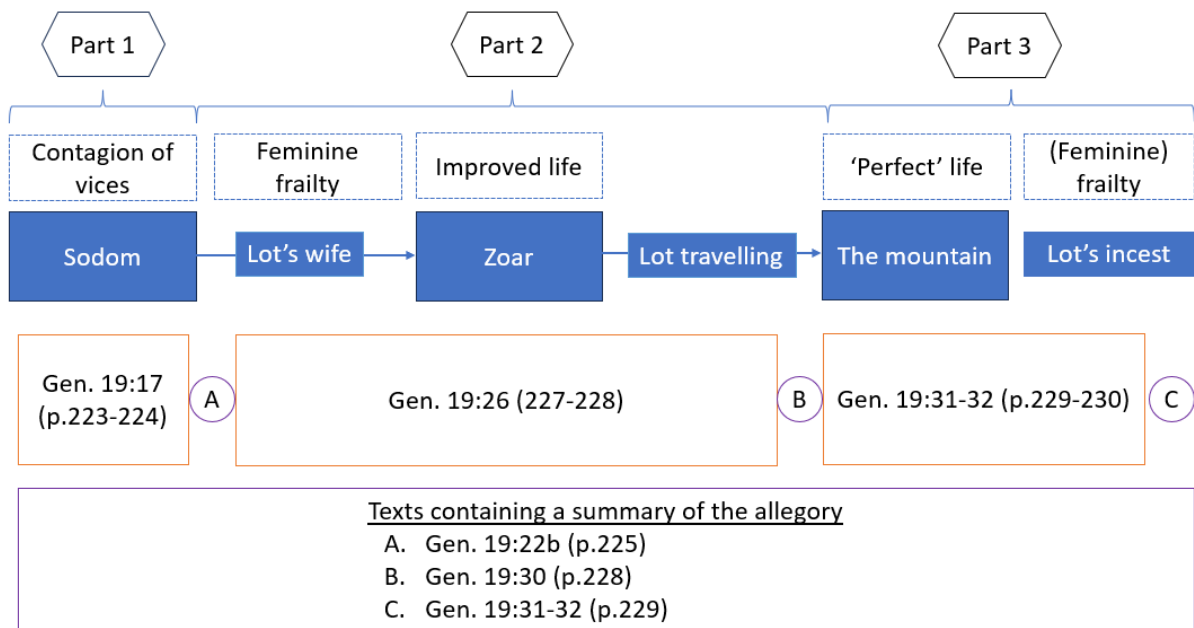
This structure shows the importance of the allegory to Bede's interpretation of Sodom's story. Bede's decision to foreground the allegory in his interpretation and explicitly frame it as a teaching device fits a broader trend in Anglo-Saxon educational literature: the use of 'physical and spatial metaphors' to 'discuss the 'movements' of the soul'.[181] Christina Heckman argues that 'in early English literature, conceptual *topoi* align with literal places'.[182] With this in mind, the attractiveness of the Sodom allegory to Bede as a tool for teaching becomes clear. It enables the teacher to explain spiritual progress using a spatial metaphor and makes it possible to connect concepts like 'contemplation', 'desire' and ways of resisting desire to actual, albeit Biblical, places. Bede's elaborate commentary on the different stages of spiritual progress in the allegory also allowed him to emphasise existing and add new elements to it, further strengthening its educational potential. In the remainder of this section, the different stages are analysed to identify these changes.

Avoiding the 'contagion of vices'

The main point of the first part of Bede's commentary on the allegory (Gen. 19:17-22b) is establishing that 'when the Lord restrains us from imitating Lot's wife, he really shows that the burning of the city, toward which she had cast back her eyes, expresses the flames of the vices, which we can and must avoid.'[183]. To avoid these flames, Bede advises readers to avoid being in the vicinity of sinners as much as possible, 'lest by their example we wander away from the path of our righteousness'.[184] They should, therefore, 'ascend more quickly to the height of a lofty way of life'.[185] This fits Bede's earlier description of the 'flames of

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[181] Heckman, *Debating with Demons: Pedagogy and Materiality in Early English Literature*, 4-5.
[182] Ibidem, 8.
[183] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:17 (p.224) [p.302]: *'Dum ergo nos Dominus uxorem Loth imitari prohibet, ostendit profecto quod incendium ciuitatis, ad quod oculos reduxerat, flammas uitiorum, quas uitare et ualemus et debemus, exprimit.'*
[184] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:17 (p.224) [p.303]: *'Neque omnimodis in uicinia peccantium, quantum possibile est, manare consentiamus, ne illorum exemplo a nostrae uia rectitudinis aberremus, iuxta illud psalmistae de beato uiro,* Et in uia peccatorum non stetit*, sed ad fastigium arduae conuersationis conscendere ocius curemus.'*
[185] Ibidem.

vices' associated with Sodom as 'contagious'.[186] Although the idea that Sodom's vices are contagious and the explicit instruction to flee the vicinity of sinners is not unique to Bede's commentary on Sodom, the focus he puts on it is.[187] Bede is the first to integrate it into the elaborate version of the Sodom allegory.

This idea of Sodom's vices as contagious also influenced Bede's explanation of Zoar's function in the Sodom analogy. Whereas Gregory stressed that people who reached Zoar, the imperfect but good-enough way of living, were safe from the heavenly fire burning the sinners, Bede re-interprets Zoar as the place where people are 'separated from the contagion of the wicked'.[188] Even more important, it seems to inform Bede's unique commentary on the attempted rape of the angels in Gen.19:4-5.[189] Bede's commentary does not mention the attempted rape of the angels at all. Instead, he frames the incident as part of a custom: 'All males from childhood to old age used to engage shamelessly in indecent practices with males, so much so that they did not try to hide their crimes even **from strangers and foreigners**, but rather by using force they **strove to make them like themselves** in their wicked deeds and to involve them in their crimes.'[190] The wish to make the strangers 'like themselves' and 'involve them in their crimes' fits Bede's focus on their vice as contagious and sinners associated with Sodom as dangerous in his allegorical reading of Sodom's punishment. So, in Bede's allegorical interpretation of Sodom, Sodom does not just signify vice but a place whose inhabitants actively strive to contaminate virtuous Christians. Leaving this place became a priority for the righteous.

Fighting feminine frailty: adding gendered language to the Sodom allegory

The people who, like Lot's wife, attempt but fail to leave the grip of vices take centre stage in part two of Bede's explanation of the Sodom allegory (Gen.19:22b-19:30).[191] In this part, Bede introduces a gendered

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[186] Bede, *In Genesim,* 19:16 (p.224) [p.302]: '*Verum potius, inminente iudicio, fidelibus haec exhortatio datur, ut coeptis bonis ac salubribus insistant ne, uitiorum quae relinquere contagia repetentes.*'

[187] From the Church Fathers, Ambrose and Augustine put the most focus on Sodom's vices as contagious and the inhabitants as dangerous. Although Bede's use of Sodom to call explicitly on people to leave the vicinity of sinners is more explicit than his precursors, the idea of Sodom as a dangerous region because its vices are contagious and the idea that the habits of the inhabitants threaten the righteous Christian (Lot) is not new. Ambrose mentions both aspects For example: Ambrose, *De Fuga Saeculi,* 9.55 (p.205-206) and Ambrose, *De Abraham*, 1.6.55 (p.538). Augustine also reads Sodom's destruction as an example of the dangers of vices Christians should avoid and fight (For example: Augustine, *Sermo* 306.6 (p.214)) and uses Sodom's story to explain that the righteous always suffer when living near the unrighteous because they see all their sins (Augustine, *Sermo* 167 (p.355)). In his *apparatus fontium* Jones encourages readers to compare Bede's interpretation to Augustine's *Contra Faustum*, 22.41. As in Augustine's sermons, this passage deals with the agony living among sinners causes the righteous. It does not mention a duty to flee their company. For a further comparison between these texts and Bede's interpretation, see Appendix 2, esp. note 512.

[188] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:22 (p.225) [p.304]:'*… ita Segor quemdam bonae conuersationis modum minus perfectum designat – qui etsi a celsitudine perfectorum adhuc longe abest, iam tamen a contagio sceleratorum secretus est.*' For a comparison with Gregory, see Appendix 2, esp. note 513.

[189] Contrary to Clark's and Frantzen's assessment that Bede echoes the Church Fathers, Monk already pointed out the unicity of Bede's commentary of the attempted rape of the angels. See: Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Bede and the 'unspeakable sin''.

[190] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:4-5 (p.222) [p.300]: '*…cum absque respectu pudoris alicuius omnes a puerili aetate usque ad ultimam sanectutem masculi in masculos turpitudinem uperari solebant, adeo ut ne hospitibus quidem ac peregrinis sua scelera abscondere, set et hos uim inferendo suis similes facere sceleribus atque suis facinoribus implicare contenderent.*'

[191] For an overview of late antique non-Anglo-Saxon interpretations of Lot's wife, see: Josey Bridges Synder, *Looking Back at Lot's Wife: A Reception-Critical Character Study* (PhD Emory University 2016), 154-224. In existing historiography, little attention has been paid to Lot's wife in Latin Anglo-Saxon texts. There are, however, studies of Lot's wife in Old English literature. These do not focus on her function within the Sodom allegory but mainly on how

approach to the allegory. He explains that, on a literal level, 'Lot's wife looked back, out of the fear of feminine frailty of the sudden outcry of those who were perishing and the sound of the flames from heaven.'[192] This 'feminine frailty' takes centre stage in Bede's allegorical interpretation of the event: Lot's wife 'exhibits in this weakness the allegorical figure of those who, having renounced the world once and for all and undertaken the arduous path of the virtue, suddenly return with an unstable and as it were womanly heart to those worldly desires that they had given up'.[193] Bede contrasts this 'feminine frailty' to Lot, who 'signifies those who truly renounce the world' because he 'gave up everything that he possessed to be destroyed along with the sinners'.[194] So, to Bede, trying but failing to escape the 'contagion of vice' signals a weakness comparable to the innate frailty of women. In contrast, Lot's successful and quick flight from Sodom characterises a genuine Christian attitude. This 'feminine frailty' is also referenced in the third part of Bede's commentary on the Sodom allegory (Gen.19:31-32). When he tries to explain how it is possible that Lot, after climbing to 'the summit of the mountain', was not 'placed in the highest citadel of the virtues' but committed incest.[195] Bede argues it allegorically shows 'that it often happens that those who had overcome some temptations of vices by the splendour of heavenly grace, weakly succumb to others in turn through the indolence of their own frailty.'[196] Although not explicitly connected to femininity, this mention of frailty is reminiscent of the 'feminine frailty' Bede mentioned when describing those who fail to reach Zoar or the mountain.

By associating the inability to fight the 'contagion of vices' explicitly with 'feminine frailty' and a 'womanly heart', Bede introduces a gendered aspect to the Sodom analogy. Those failing to leave or those reverting to Sodom have a 'womanly heart'. They give in to the life of uncontrolled vice that Sodom and its inhabitants symbolise. In contrast, those manfully fighting off these desires reach the mountains and, with angelic help, resist temptation. This is not the only instance in which Bede uses gendered language to describe spiritual progress. He repeats the idea in his homily on feeding the five thousand (John. 6.1-14): 'The five thousand men who ate make known [or set forth] the perfection of those who are refreshed by

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commentaries on her transformation into a salt statue reflect Anglo-Saxon gender norms. See: Robin Waugh, *The Genre of Medieval Patience Literature* (New York 2012), 78-104. On the Latin sources for Old English commentaries on Lot's wife, particularly *Genesis A*, see: Charles D. Wright, 'The Fate of Lot's Wife: A 'Canterbury School' Gloss in Genesis A', in: Leonard Neidorf, Rafael J. Pascual and tom Shippey (eds.)*, Old English Philology: Studies in Honour of R.D. Fulk* (Cambridge 2016) 292-310.

[192] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:26 (p. 227) [p.306]: '*Et quidem uxor metu femineae fragilitatis ad clamorem pereuntium repentinum, et fragorem flammarum caelo de lapsarum, retro respexit.*' Bede is not the first to use a gendered language to describe the difference between the choice of Lot and his wife. Origen claims Lot represents a rational and virile mind, while his wife symbolises those who seek pleasure. However, instead of focusing on Lot's virility and rationality, Bede refocuses his interpretation on the femininity of Lot's wife and those making choices comparable to hers. The contrast Bede creates between feminine frailty and a womanly heart on the one hand and the *vir perfectus* on the other is not found in Origen. See: Origen, *In Genesim Homilia*, 5.2 and Appendix 2, note 514. Philo also used gendered language to contrast Lot and his wife in his interpretation of the Sodom allegory. However, any direct influence on Bede is impossible in light of the diffusion of the partial Latin translation of Philo's *Questions on Genesis*. See: Françoise Petit, *L'Ancienne Version Latine des Questions sur la Genèse de Philon D'Alexandrie* (Berlin 1973),14.

[193] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:26 (p.227) [p.306]: '*Sed eorum tamen tenet in hac infirmitate figuram qui, semel mundo renuntiantes ac uirtutum iter arduum inchoantes, repente ad ea quae reliquerant mundi desideria, instabili et uelut muliebri corde recurrunt.*'

[194] Bede, *In Genesim,* 19:26 (p.227) [p.306]: '*sicut e contra Loth qui sua quae possiderat omnia cum peccatoribus peritura reliquit, illos qui uere mundo abrenuntiant, neque eow abrenuntiasse penitent, insinuat.*'

[195] Bede, *In Genesim,* 19:31-32 (p.229) [p.308]: '*Ecce enim beatus Loth putidas quidem Sodomorum flammas euasit, Segor aeque peccatricis ciuitatis ruinam uitauit, montis uerticem ascendit ; sed ubi eum in sublimi uirtutum arce positum rebaris, ibi nocte inebriatum et a filiabus suis repente foedatum conspicis.*'

[196] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:31-32 (p.229) [p.308]: '*quia sepe contingit ut qui per inlustrationem gratiae celestis alia uitiorum temptamenta deuicerant, denuo per inertiam propriae infirmitatis aliis eneruiter succumbant.*'

the word of life. The scriptures use the word men to refer figuratively to the more perfect, whom feminine weakness does not corrupt. That is what the Apostle desires them to be like, to whom he says: 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, do manfully, and be strengthened' [1 Cor. 16:13].'[197]

Bede's reference to perfection in this homily and his use of 'womanly heart' in his version of the Sodom analogy connect him to a late antique tradition of using gendered language to describe spiritual progression. This tradition must first be explained to understand Bede's use of gendered language. Central to this tradition is Ephesians 4:13, in which Christians, male and female, are called to strive towards becoming a *vir perfectus.* This entailed a life of contemplation close to Christ. In the commentaries of the Church Fathers, becoming a *vir perfectus* means a return to the prelapsarian state of humanity: humans as the *imago Dei.*[198] This idea of progression towards a more perfect state of life echoes Bede's exhortations to leave Sodom behind and climb the mountain.

Like Bede, the Church Fathers describe the progress towards this goal in gendered terms.[199] Augustine's explanation is especially relevant to Bede's exegesis. He argues that the human mind consists of two activities: a female activity (*scientia*), which 'has charge of all temporal and material matters' and a male activity (*sapientia*), which focuses on 'contemplation of the eternal'.[200] In the prelapsarian order, the female activity was a helper of the male activity: its focus on temporal matters allowed 'the mind to multitask so that the male action (*sapientia*)' could 'continue uninterrupted the contemplation of the eternal'.[201] If the feminine activity became dominant, the mind would focus on earthly matters to the detriment of contemplation. In her analysis of Augustine's ideas about the *vir perfectus*, Rhonda McDaniel points out that to Augustine, 'the most power-focused and ambitious men would also be the most "female" because the domination of *scientia* in their focus on temporal status and wealth distracts *sapientia* from focussing upon God'.[202] McDaniel also shows that Bede was familiar with Augustine's interpretation.[203] Bede's equation of those looking back at their life of vices (Sodom) with a womanly heart should also be read against this background. Instead of climbing the mountain (truly renouncing the world) and using the female activity of the mind to aid in the contemplation of the eternal, the sinner who looked back at their old life let the female activity (the focus on temporal and material matters) dominate the male activity (their desire for and attempt at contemplation). Looking back like Lot's wife was the result of a failure of the male activity of the mind to control the earthly-focused female activity. As Bede would put it, this resulted in a person whose actions were governed by a 'womanly heart'.

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[197] Bede, *Homeliarum Evangelii,* Lib. 2, Homilia 2*,* (p.197): *Quinque milia uiri qui manducauerunt perfectionem eorum qui uerbo uitae reficiuntur insinuant. Virorum quippe nomine solent in scripturis perfectiores quique figurari quos feminea mollities nulla corrumpit quales esse cupit eos quibus dicit apostolus: 'Vigilate state in fide uiriliter agite et confortamini'.* Translation from: Gopa Roy, 'A Virgin Acts manfully: Ælfric's Life of St Eugenia and the Latin Versions', *Leeds Studies in English* 23 (1992), 1-27, at 6. Focussing on Bede's influence on later authors, Roy argues that Bede's interpretation influenced one of Ælfric of Eynsham's sermons.

[198] Rhonda L. McDaniel, *The Third Gender and Ælfric's Lives of Saints* (Kalamazoo 2018), 8. McDaniel argues that the *vir perfectus* corresponds neither to the current male or female gender but to a prelapsarian metagender which, according to the Church Fathers, is attainable through contemplation. It is important to stress that, following McDaniel, I talk about gender, not biological sex. It would be a mistake to interpret the Church Fathers, Bede, or other Anglo-Saxon authors like Aldhelm, to talk about a change in physical appearance. In fact, all authors mentioned explicitly argue against what they call cross-dressing.

[199] McDaniel provides a detailed description of how this idea was applied in the writings of multiple Church Fathers, see: McDaniel, *The Third Gender*, 1-68.

[200] Ibidem, 35.

[201] Ibidem.

[202] Ibidem, 36.

[203] Ibidem*,* 63, n.151, 77-78*.*

Augustine's theory of male and female activity only forms part of the theoretical background against which Bede's gendered reading of the Sodom analogy should be read. It explains his reference to a 'womanly heart' and his mention of the word 'men' to refer figuratively to the more perfect Christians. However, Bede's juxtaposition of feminine weakness with male strength, both in his reference to 'feminine frailty' in his commentary on Genesis and in the 'feminine weakness' he mentions in his homily on feeding the five thousand, also betrays influence from a different tradition. The basis of this tradition lies in (late) antique secular and Christian normative texts but is best summarised by Isidore of Seville.[204] According to Isidore, a man is called 'man' (*vir*) because he has greater power (*vis*) than a woman. Women, on the other hand, are characterised by softness (*mollities*). However, a man can become 'soft' (*mollis*) if he 'disgraces the vigour of his sex with his enervated body'.[205] This 'softness' is the innate frailty of women Bede associates with Lot's wife.

Whereas Isidore associates masculinity chiefly with the power of a man to control a woman sexually, Anglo-Saxon authors like Bede used it to create a Christianised version of the pre-existing Anglo-Saxon norms on how to behave like a man, which linked masculinity to sexual and military prowess.[206] These new norms used the old importance of military prowess but applied it to the internal struggle of a Christian trying to fight vice.[207] It took strength to fight this internal struggle against temptation to progress towards the spiritual ideal. Following Isidore, this strength was connected to masculinity. The temptations, on the other hand, especially temptations connected to *luxuria*, were associated with femininity, softness and becoming soft.[208] Bede's references to feminine frailty and weakness should be read against this background.[209] His commentary on the feeding of the five thousand shows that, to Bede,

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[204] For this tradition and the language used to describe gender in late antique text, see: Craig Williams, 'The language of gender: Lexical semantics and the Latin vocabulary of unmanly men', in: Mark Masterson, Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and James Robson (eds.), *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World* (London and New York 2015) 461-481.

[205] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae,* 11.2.17-19 [p.242]: '*Vir nuncuptaus, quia maior in eo vis est quam in feminis: unde et virtus nomen accepit; sive quod vi agat feminam. Mulier vero a mollitie, tamquam mollier, detracta littera vel mutata, appellata est mulier. Utrique enim fortitudine et inbecillitate corporum separantur.*' ; Ibidem, 10.M.179-180 [p.224]: '*Mollis, quod vigorem sexus enerviati corpore dedecoret, et quasi mulier emolliatur.'* No page number is referenced because the edition does not contain page numbering. Translation taken from: Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach and Oliver Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge 2006), 224. For a recent short overview of the (early) medieval reception of Isidore's ideas, see: Leah DeVun, *The Shape of Sex: Nonbinary Gender from Genesis to the Renaissance* (New York 2021), 151-154.

[206] On this conflict between new and old concepts of masculinity in Anglo-Saxon writings, see: Pasternack, 'Negotiating Gender in Anglo-Saxon England', 107-144; Emma Pettit, 'Holiness and Masculinity in Aldhelm's *Opus Geminatum De Virginitate*', in: P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (eds.), *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Cardiff 2004) 8-23, at 8-9. This conflict and its solution are not unique to Anglo-Saxon England. The importance of spiritual instead of physical warfare in formulating a Christianised ideal of masculinity should be read against the background of a broader tradition centred around the *miles Christi* motif, see: Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge 2011), 71-111, esp. 83-85. For the application of Smith's ideas in an Anglo-Saxon context, see: Jacek Olesiejko, 'The Tension between Heroic Masculinity and the Christian Self in the Old English *Andreas*', *Anglica Wratislaviensia* 56 (2018), 87-107. The conflict described by Pasternack also echoes the earlier conflict between the traditional Roman and Christian views on masculinity, see: Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity and Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago 2001), 206-214. For an overview of medieval masculinity studies up to 2018, see: Jacqueline Murray, 'Masculinity and Male Sexuality in the Middle Ages', *Oxford Bibliographies* (2018), https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780195396584/obo-9780195396584-0251.xml. (last visited 10-03-2024).

[207] Pasternack, 'Negotiating Gender', 11-12.

[208] For the tradition of gendering perceived threats to a Christian way of living feminine, see: Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch,* 209-210.

[209] Throughout his commentaries, Bede associates softness with a danger to a Christian way of living. In his commentary on 1 Petr. 5, Bede, for example, explains that the devil softens the Christian strength. Bede, *In Epistulas*

a failure to attain the status of a *vir perfectus*, and thus a failure of the male activities of the mind to dominate the female activities, can be caused by the corruption of feminine weakness. This weakness indicates that the person lacks the (spiritual) power (*vis*) associated with a man.

The analysis of Bede's explanation of the Sodom allegory has revealed that Bede added three elements to the Sodom allegory: he put greater emphasis on the vices of Sodom and its inhabitants being contagious, he added gendered language to the explanation of the allegory, and he explicitly framed it as an educational tool. The next chapter will show that Bede's emphasis on the contagion of Sodom's vices fits Bede's focus on the inherent sinful dynamic associated with Sodom's sins. His addition of gendered language is more challenging to explain. The educational function he added might provide a clue. It seems possible that adding gendered descriptions to the behaviour Bede describes could strengthen the effectiveness of Sodom's story to reshape someone's behaviour by pointing to the expectations of ideal masculinity. To follow one of Bede's examples for the use of the Sodom allegory, someone who did not give to the poor but was plagued by avarice had allowed the female activities of his mind to take precedence over the male activities instead of aiding them because a feminine weakness weakened him. He was, therefore, in mind more female than male and certainly miles away from the *vir perfectus* contemplating heavenly matters on the allegorical mountain.

Alcuin's letters: gender and age

As an educational tool, Bede's commentary remains somewhat theoretic: he explains the Sodom allegory and gives two examples of subjects it might be applied to, but the actual application to a particular situation falls on the reader. A generation after Bede, Alcuin of York actually applied Sodom's flames of vices in a very similar way in a far more practical document: a letter Alcuin wrote when he was in Tours (786-804) to one of his students (from now on referred to as *Ep*.294).[210] Some background information is necessary to understand the intellectual milieu in which Alcuin wrote *Ep. 294*. Born around 740 near York, Alcuin enjoyed an upbringing in an ecclesiastical context. While studying at the school of York, he was influenced by Bede's life and work to such an extent that Bede provided him with 'a standard by which he could measure himself'.[211] In fact, he considered Bede as 'the latest in a succession of Fathers of the Church'.[212] Bede's writings were very likely on the curriculum of the School of York, which Alcuin attended and later taught at.[213] Spreading his ideas across the Channel, Alcuin joined Charlemagne's court and

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Septem Catholicas, Lib. 2, 1 Petr. 5 (p.258): '*Offert oculis formas inlices et faciles uoluptates, ut uisu destruat castitatem; aures per canora musica temptat, ut soni dulcioris auditu soluat et molliat christianum uigorem…*'. Another example is: Bede, *In Lucae Euangelium Expositio* Lib.2, Cap.7 (p.161): '*Non ergo caelesti, inquit, sed terreno regno militant hi qui pro Deo perpeti aspera fugiunt sed solis exterioribus dediti praesentis uitae mollitiem et delectationem quaerunt*'. Thus, Bede believes that people who seek softness and pleasure in this life do not fight for the heavenly kingdom.

[210] The number 294 is in reference to the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* edition, which has been used for this thesis: Ernst Dümmler (ed.), *Epistolae Karolini Aevi, Tomus II* (Berlin 1895), 451-452. Although the best edition available, it has to be used critically because Donald Bullough has argued that Dümmler 'ruthlessly normalized' the spelling of *ep.*294 in an attempt to improve on the manuscript tradition which, in many cases, retains the original spelling. See: Donald A. Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation* (Leiden and Boston 2004)*,* 35-102, esp. 74 n.176. Bullough also provides an excellent overview of the early transmission history of Alcuin's letters.

[211] Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*, 227-228. Douglas Dales, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought* (Cambridge 2013), 19-23; 227-228, n.299.

[212] Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*, 227. For a complete overview of Bede's importance to and influence on Alcuin, see: Ibidem, 227-235; Dales, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought*, 19-27.

[213] The Cathedral School during Alcuin's youth and Alcuin's education: Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation,* 169-176; 236-238; Dales, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought*, 28-33. Alcuin as a teacher: Bullough, *Alcuin:*

served as a master from 782 onwards.[214] Alcuin's activities as a teacher and his admiration for Bede make him an ideal author to study the extent to which the use of Sodom's punishment as an educational tool a generation after Bede corresponds with Bede's use of this Biblical event.

The (un)usefulness of identifying the acts associated with Sodom in *Ep.294*

Ep.294 has suffered a fate comparable to Bede's work: authors focussing on Sodom only analyse a small part of the letter. As with Bede, the focus is on identifying the sexual behaviour associated with Sodom. Central to these studies is a passage from Stephen Allott's partial English translation of *Ep.294*.[215] In this passage, Alcuin rhetorically asks: 'What is this that I hear about you, my son, not from one person whispering in a corner but from crowds of people laughing at the story that you are still addicted to the filthy practices of boys and have never been willing to give up what you should never have done.'[216] This sentence, together with a mention in another part of the letter of the recipient's soul burning in the flames of Sodom, has sparked a debate on the exact meaning of the 'filthy practices of boys'.[217] These practices seem somehow associated with Sodom.[218] For that reason, historians analysing the letter prioritise establishing the exact nature of the activities and their connection with Sodom. Before attempting a new interpretation of the letter which looks beyond the sexual interpretation of the reference to Sodom, the question needs to be asked if the proposed sexual interpretations are valid. After all, these interpretations would influence an analysis of the educational use of Sodom in the letter.

The same-sex interpretation of *Ep.294* originates with Boswell. He interprets the 'filthy practices' homo-erotically. According to him, *Ep.294* displays 'no shock or outrage, simply annoyance' about the behaviour, strengthening Boswell's argument that same-sex desire was not perceived as a serious sin in early medieval Europe.[219] Frantzen rightly argues that Alcuin's reference to the recipient's soul heading for Sodom's flames indicates shock and outrage. However, not doubting the same-sex nature of the 'filthy practices', Frantzen argues it shows the negative attitude towards same-sex acts. His conviction that the letter deals with same-sex acts seems to be based on his idea that the descriptor 'filthy practices' echoes

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Achievement and Reputation, 304-308; Dales, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought*, 36-38. For an overview of the authors known to Alcuin when still at York, see: Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation,* 274-282.

[214] Alcuin returned to York for three years between 790 and 793. On these dates and Alcuin's travels between the Continent and Northumbria, see: Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*, 331-419.

[215] Allott's translation is only cited in this thesis to understand the historiographical debate. All authors studied, except Monk, use his translation. As with the other translations of primary sources used in this thesis, the page number corresponding to Allot's translation is provided in square brackets whenever this translation is used. When the Latin is given, the translation is my own. Stephen Allott, *Alcuin of York: his life and letters* (York 1974).

[216] Alcuin, *Ep.*294, p.451 [p.127], lin. 31-33: '*Quid est, fili, quod de te audio, non uno quolibet in angulo susurrante, sed plurimis publice cum risu narrantibus: quod adhuc puerilibus deservias inmunditiis, et quae numquam facere debuisses, numquam dimittere voluisses.*' Allot provides a somewhat free translation of Alcuin's Latin. See note 234.

[217] For the reference to Sodom, see: Alcuin, *Ep.*294, p.452, lin. 6: '*Converte, obsecro, in te animum tuum, et dic cum propheta: 'Quis dabit capiti meo aquam et fontem lacrimarum oculis meis, ut plangam die ac nocte' non Ierusalem Babilonio igne usturam, sed animam Sodomitanis flammis arsuram.*' Allott does not translate this part of the letter.

[218] For this apparent connection between Sodom and the 'filthy practices', see: Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 199; Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Alcuin: 'the sin against nature''; Clark, *Between Medieval Men,* 81. Boswell also studied this letter but does not mention the reference to Sodom's flames, presumably because he studies *Ep.294* in Allott's partial translation, which does not contain the reference to Sodom. See: Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality,* 191. For Allott's translation, see: Allott, *Alcuin of York*, 451.

[219] Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality,* 191.

penitentials describing a set of same-sex acts between boys.[220] Recently, Monk slightly modified this interpretation. He believes the recipient of the letter was probably not guilty of same-sex acts but of solitary masturbation.[221] Monk suggests that Alcuin feared that 'the lesser sin of solitary masturbation' might lead to one of the more serious sexual sins associated with this group of 'filthy practices' and, therefore, 'to the judgment of the "flames of Sodom"'.[222] However, contrary to Frantzen's and Monk's beliefs, Irish or Anglo-Saxon penitentials do not contain any list of 'sexual sins associated with boys in a monastic setting'. Some penitentials contain some canons dealing with sex acts committed by boys. However, penitentials do not consistently mention the same acts. They sometimes do not even refer to masturbation or non-same-sex acts between boys.[223] Therefore, there is no evidence that the acts alluded to in the letter are associated with same-sex acts.

Monk's identification of the 'filthy practices' as masturbation is also problematic. He follows Clark's analysis of *Ep.*294. Clark argues that Boswell is right in suggesting that people publicly laughing at the story 'hardly suggests moral outrage' but wrong to assume the laughed-about sin is same-sex in nature because other Anglo-Saxon sources suggest same-sex desire was no laughing matter and nothing in the letter indicates that it deals with same-sex acts.[224] Instead, Clark compares *Ep.*294 to *Ep.*126*,* a letter Alcuin wrote to another student warning him 'of the fires of hell which await him if he cannot curb the sins of desire' and connecting his sins to his youthful spirit.[225] Clark believes the sins of desire mentioned in *Ep.*126 are masturbation because the text suggests the sins are done privately and 'Alcuin sees the sin as something one expects boys to indulge in, but which they are equally expected to grow out of'.[226] Clark concludes that the 'filthy practices' of *Ep.294* can also be interpreted as a reference to masturbation because of the parallels between both letters.[227] This interpretation is broadly accepted.[228] However, these parallels are not convincing. Of the factors supporting Clark's identification of the 'filthy practices' as masturbation, i.e. the mention of (sexual) desire, youth and the privacy in which the act is committed, only the reference to youth returns in the letter mentioning Sodom. Ep. 294 might even suggest a somewhat more public sin because crowds of people know and laugh about it.[229] Even more problematic, the letter's wording suggests Alcuin does not have a particular sin in mind but a set of sins. Instead of

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[220] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 199. It remains unclear to what penitentials or texts Frantzen refers. On this question, see note 223**.** Frantzen's interpretation is still used, see for example: Elliot, *Corruptor of Boys*, 54 and n.109.

[221] Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination,* Alcuin: 'the sin against nature'.

[222] Ibidem.

[223] Monk refers to Frantzen for proof of his theory. Frantzen's sources are, however, unclear; he merely states: 'the conjunction of Sodom and this accusation of 'the filthy practices of boys'- acts described in the penitentials – shows not only that Alcuin deplored same-sex intercourse but that such behaviour might be expected of boys (monastic boys in particular, it would seem), but not of older men.' (Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 199). If Frantzen and Monk have an actual list in mind, the mid-seventh-century *Paenitentiale Cummeani* is the best candidate. This penitential contains a group of canons about children of various ages headed 'on the playing of boys'. However, these canons deal with a wide range of subjects. Amongst them are indeed same-sex acts (10.2-10.9, 10.15) and mutual (not solitary) masturbation (canons 10.6-10.7), but also 'transgressing the regulations of the elders' (10.1), boys striking each other (10.21), theft (10.10-1.12) and non-same-sex sex acts (10.17).

[224] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 81. For the reference to laughing people in *Ep.*249, see: Alcuin, *Ep. 294*, p.451, lin. 32: '*Quid est, fili, quod de te audio, non uno quolibet in angulo susurrante, sed plurimis publice cum risu narrantibus…'*

[225] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 81.

[226] Ibidem, 82.

[227] Ibidem. Clark more recently re-iterated his ideas in: David Clark, 'Discourses of Masturbation: The (non)solitary Pleasure of the (Medieval) Text', *Men and Masculinities* 20 (2017) 4, 453-481, at 460.

[228] See, for example: Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation,* 42 n.95; Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination,* Alcuin: 'the sin against nature'.

[229] Alcuin, *Ep. 294*, p.451, lin. 32. For the Latin text, see note 224.

discussing a specific act, he talks more generally in the plural about the recipient doing 'certain things' not suiting his dignity and committing 'most shameful deeds'.[230] Although a sexual interpretation of these shameful deeds is possible, identifying them as same-sex sins, as Frantzen and Boswell do, is also problematic because their interpretations lack evidence, as has been shown earlier.

Sodom's fire and spiritual regression

Based on this analysis, it seems unproductive to ask what exact (sexual) acts Alcuin had in mind when writing about 'filthy practices' and the 'flames of Sodom'. A more fruitful approach to understanding Ep.294 begins with the realisation that its central theme is the recipient's spiritual progression or, rather, regression. Alcuin introduces this idea in the first sentences by reminding the recipient of his former spiritual progress: 'I once bore, nurtured [and] raised you, and, with God's grace, led you to perfect manhood [*perfectum virum*] diligently educated in the arts, enlightened by the sun of wisdom, especially adorned with morals; in such a way that almost all of Britain sings your praise.[231] When, halfway through the letter, Alcuin starts reprimanding the recipient, he purposefully suggests that their spiritual progress has been reversed. Instead of singing his praise, people laugh at the recipient.[232] Reversing his praise from the first sentences, Alcuin asks in a list of questions what happened to the positive qualities he mentioned when describing how he helped the recipient become a *vir perfectus*.[233]

This theme of spiritual regression is the background against which the 'filthy practices of boys' should be read. To aid this reading, a more literal translation of the context than the one Allott provides is necessary: '[you] 'still/again serve [*deservias*] moral impurities typical of children [*puerilibus inmunditiis*, Allott: 'filthy practices of boys'] and have never been willing to give up what you should never have done.'[234] Alcuin's mention of 'impurities typical of children' adds the layer of age or stage of life to the language of spiritual regression. This addition perfectly fits the theme of spiritual regression: from his position as *vir perfectus* the recipient has regressed to childhood.

To fully understand this added layer, a better understanding of Alcuin's ideas about the development of humans throughout different life stages (*gradus aetatis*) is necessary.[235] In his writings, Alcuin associates

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[230] Alcuin, *Ep. 294*, p.451, lin. 27-29: '*Urguet enim me paternitatis affectus fari, quod pennigero rumore narrante didici, quia quaedam agis, quae nec tuae conveniant dignitati, nec meae placeant dilectioni…*'; Alcuin, *Ep. 294*, p. 452, lin. 7-8: '*Quod respondebis tunc aequissimo iudici tuo, si nunc non corrigis foedissima facta tua?*'

[231] Alcuin, *Ep. 294*, p.452, lin. 18-20: '*Olim te genui, nutrivi, alui, et ad perfectum virum usque Deo donante perduxi, artibus studiose eruditum, sapientiae sole inluminatum, moribus adprime ornatum; ita ut tuam laudem tota pene decantat Brittania, et latior est fama nominis tui, quam notitia faciei tuae.*'

[232] Alcuin, *Ep. 294*, p.451, lin.32. For the Latin text, see note 224.

[233] Alcuin, *Ep. 294* p.451, lin. 33 - p.452, lin.3: '*Ubi est nobilissima eruditio tua? Ubi est clarissima in scripturis sacris industria tua? Ubi morum excellentia? Ubi animi fortitudo? Ubi timor gehennae? Ubi spes gloriae? Quomodo illa perpetrare non herrescis, quae aliis prohibere debuisse?*'

[234] Alcuin, *Ep.* 294, p.451, lin.31-32: '*Quid est, fili, quod de te audio, non uno quolibet in angulo susurrante, sed plurimis publice cum risu narrantibus: quod adhuc puerilibus deservias inmunditiis, et quae numquam facere debuisses, numquam dimittere voluisses.*' *Inmunditia* can have connotations of uncleanness or dirtiness in general, or specifically the sin of lust. However, the DMLBS also lists moral impurity and the somewhat archaic turpitude as options. Alcuin used *inmunditia* in this sense in another letter written between 801 and 802 (Ep. 245, p. 394, lin. 32). Within the context of the *gradus aetatis* describing stages of moral development, I believe it is more correct to translate 'moral impurities' instead of the more general 'dirtiness' or 'filth'. As mentioned, the sins Alcuin talks about might have been sexual in nature. If so, *inmunditia* could refer to both moral and sexual impurities. My translation of '*et quae numquam facere debuisses, numquam dimittere voluisses*' is taken from Allott, *Alcuin of York*, 183.

[235] Traditionally, historians believed the idiom belonging to the late antique system of distinctions describing the *gradus aetatis* lost its specificity in the early Middle Ages when terms like *iuuentus, adolescentia* and *pueritia* were often applied imprecisely. Recently, Darren Barber successfully challenged this idea in a study of Alcuin's writings, see: Darren Barber, 'Alcuin and the Student Life Cycle', in: Thijs Porck and Harriet Soper (eds.), *Early Medieval*

the life stages 'with particular stages of educational and moral development.'[236] Darren Barber has shown that Alcuin distinguishes between four stages of life: childhood (including *infantia* and *pueritia*), young adulthood (*adolescentia*), a middle age (*iuuentus*) and old adulthood.[237] Alcuin views the middle age (*iuuentus)* as the perfect age. He associates this age with 'flourishing strength, good works and teaching'.[238] During this age someone can become a *perfectus vir*. *Adolescentia*, on the other hand, is a stage 'fraught with vices' and a time of 'moral danger'.[239] Therefore, transitioning from adolescentia to iuuentus was crucial in a person's moral development. During this time, the developing Christian attained the (spiritual) strength to resist moral dangers.[240] Sometimes Alcuin somewhat simplifies this system. For example, he used the more general *pueritia* to refer to the hazards of *adolescentia*.[241]

With this in mind, Alcuin's reference to the moral impurities of children in *Ep.* 294 can be read as adding to the overall picture of spiritual regression he paints. Instead of leading the perfect and moral life of a *vir perfectus,* the recipient of *Ep.*294 had regressed into a morality associated with an earlier, less perfect stage of life (*adolescentia*). It was a stage that was reserved for children. This stage was characterised by the inability to resist temptation because of a lack of (spiritual) strength to resist moral dangers. Hence, Alcuin asks the recipient of *Ep.*294: 'Where is the strength of your spirit?'[242] This lack of strength is also expressed in the verb Alcuin uses when making his accusation: the recipient serves (*deservire*) the impurities associated with children. He seems to be subject to these impurities, unable to resist them rather than actively choosing them. Although Alcuin might have had certain specific acts in mind when writing *Ep.*294, his main goal in describing the recipient's behaviour as '*puerilibus inmunditiis'* was most likely not to point to a particular kind of sin, but more generally to further highlight the regression of the recipient's morality by making clever use of the expectations of morality connected to different life stages. Alcuin signalled to the recipient that he had, in a way, failed to become a full-grown man and was more like a powerless child.

This idea of regression from a spiritual highpoint associated with a lack of strength and failed masculinity is reminiscent of Bede's analysis of those who, like Lot's wife, started leaving Sodom but lacked the spiritual strength to focus their mind on contemplation. Bede's use of Sodom and the Sodomites in his version of the Sodom allegory sheds light on why Alcuin chose to allude to Sodom's flames in *Ep.*294. As explained above, Bede associates Sodom with the 'contagion of vices' which a true Christian should flee but which some people try and, through a lack of spiritual strength, fail to flee. This is perfectly applicable to the recipient of *Ep.294.* Rather than somehow prompted by the type of acts the recipient was involved in, Alcuin's use of Sodom's flames can be read against this background. Not the behaviour of the Sodomites but their lack of (spiritual) power to fight the temptation of vices is the most obvious point of comparison between the Sodomites burning in the flames and the recipient's impending doom. The recipient's soul was about to be devoured by Sodom's flames because he lacked the spiritual strength to fight the moral impurities normally associated with weak children.

English Life Courses: Cultural-Historical Perspectives (Leiden 2022) 90-116. My analysis is based on Barber's study. For a broader overview of the divisions of the life cycle in early medieval England, see: Thijs Porck, *Old Age in Early Medieval England: A Cultural History* (Woodbridge 2019), 16-51, esp. the tables on 50-51.

[236] Barber, 'Alcuin and the Student Life Cycle', 91.

[237] Ibidem.

[238] Ibidem, 105.

[239] Ibidem.

[240] Ibidem.

[241] Ibidem, 108. For an example of this use, see: Alcuin, *Ep. 42*, p.85, lin. 21-22: *'Vos fragiles infantiae meae annos materno fovistis affectu; et lascivum puericiae tempus pia sustinuistis patientia...'*

[242] Alcuin, *Ep.294*, p.452, lin.2: '*Ubi animi fortitudo?*'

Alcuin's use of Sodom in *Ep.* 294 shows how an interpretation of Sodom's punishment comparable to one in a more theoretical text, like Bede's commentary on Sodom, functioned in a practical text aimed at changing how someone deals with sinful desire. Although comparable to Bede's use of Sodom, there is one remarkable difference between Bede and Alcuin. Although both associate those unable to give up the 'contagion of vices' (Sodom's flames) with failed masculinity, Bede only uses gendered language to describe spiritual regression from the status of *vir perfectus*, whereas Alcuin uses the *gradus aetatis*. Instead of the corruption of feminine weakness, Alcuin associates the lapsed Christian living allegorically in Sodom with a child who lacks spiritual strength and is not yet a man.

Alcuin: a literal interpretation of Sodom

Until now, this chapter has explored the educational use of a figural interpretation of Sodom's punishment. However, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, in Anglo-Saxon England literal texual interpretation, the exegesis traditionally associated with the Antiochene School of biblical exegesis, was also influential.[243] Alcuin's *Quaestiones in Genesim* fit this tradition.[244] Possibly written before 790, it contains Alcuin's most elaborative comments on Sodom's punishment.[245] The work was influential: it survives in over fifty manuscripts, seventeen from the ninth century, and influenced later Carolingian exegetes such as Hrabanus Maurus, Claudius of Turin and Haimo of Auxerre.[246]

The usefulness of the *Quaestiones* as a source

Relatively little attention has been paid to the *Quaestiones* in scholarship on the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of Sodom's sins. The reason is simple: Alcuin's remarks on the nature of Sodom's crimes are clear. He believes the Sodomites were guilty of practising unnatural desire with men.[247] Because traditional scholarship focuses almost exclusively on establishing the importance of same-sex sins in the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of Sodom's sins, the relatively straightforward nature of the *Quaestiones*' claim has caused debate to focus primarily on other, more ambiguous texts.[248] Due to this relative lack of attention, the usefulness of the *Quaestiones* in reconstructing Anglo-Saxon thought on Sodom has been overlooked. An overview of the exact function of this work is necessary to establish its usefulness as a source.

Although the educational function of the work has long been recognised, its exact aim and target audience are a matter of debate. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe believes Alcuin aimed it at the highly educated. On the other hand, Fox argues that Alcuin intended the work to be used as a primer for students attempting a historical interpretation of Genesis for the first time. Fox bases his theory primarily

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[243] For a description of the characteristics of this type of interpretation and its popularity in Anglo-Saxon England, see Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (Cambridge 1994), 21, 243-249.

[244] Michael Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete: The Evidence of the *Quaestiones in Genesim*' in: Celia Chazelle and Burton von Name Edwards (eds.), *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era* (Turnhout 2003) 39-60, at 41.

[245] *Quaestiones in Genesim* is also known as *Interrogationes et Responsiones in Genesim* or *Interrogationes Sigewulfi in Genesim*. There is no recent critical edition (see below and Appendix 3). For this thesis, the *Patrologia Latina* edition is used: J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 100, col. 515-566. The exact date of the composition of this work is unknown. Fox, following a 1991 article by Donald Bullough, suggests a date of composition around 796, see: Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete', 40, n.6. However, more recently, Bullough indicated he is inclined to date the work before 790. Unfortunately, he did not elaborate on his reasons for believing so, see: Bullough, Alcuin: *Achievement and Reputation*, 261, 361.

[246] Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete', 43, 51.

[247] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, no. 191. See Appendix 3 for the text and a source analysis of the *Quaestiones*.

[248] See, for example, Clark's interpretation: Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 83-84.

on the manuscript context in which the work was transmitted in the ninth century.[249] Although valid for studying the later uses of the text, the best source for establishing Alcuin's original purpose is the introductory letter preserved alongside the work.[250]

The letter is directed to Sigewulf, originally a student of Alcuin's at York who eventually became abbot of Ferrières.[251] In the letter, Alcuin says the book contains questions Sigewulf used to ask him.[252] He collected them 'because the memory often loses what it ought to preserve'.[253] So, the work functioned as an aide-memoire to Sigewulf because it contained exegesis on subjects about which Sigewulf had once asked questions, probably during his study at York.[254] The *Quaestiones* was, therefore, originally neither a primer for students nor a book aimed to educate the highly educated further. It was initially a product of Sigewulf's previous education aimed at solidifying previously taught knowledge and custom-tailored to his specific interests and questions.[255] The work also had a contemplative function because Alcuin wrote it so that 'the traveller, wearied by the journey, might have that with which he may refresh himself, while the hand is not burdened by the weight of carrying it.'[256] With these questions and answers, the wearied traveller could refresh himself spiritually.

Based on these functions, the *Quaestiones* can reveal two things about the Anglo-Saxon study of Sodom's story. Firstly, the themes associated with Sodom in an educational context. It seems safe to assume Sigewulf had only asked questions on subjects he found interesting. Therefore, the *Quaestiones* give an insight into which themes of Sodom's story were the most important to Sigewulf. These interests may, in turn, be influenced by his education at York. [257] Secondly, the sources used to study Sodom's story in an educational setting. The *Quaestiones* contain the answers Alcuin originally gave Sigewulf when he first asked the questions. After all, he meant the work to function like an aide-memoire, not to teach Sigewulf something he had never heard about. Therefore, the sources used to answer the questions might reflect the sources Sigewullf used to consult on Sodom's story when he was still studying at York.[258]

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[249] Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'The Use of Bede's Writings on Genesis in Alcuin's *Interrogationes*', *Sacris Erudiri* 23 (1978), 463-483, at. 480: 'Alcuin writes not for the *rudis* but for the *eruditus*. This is clear from his introduction to Sigewulf, where he indicates that his aim is not a primer for the uninitiated, but an aid for the memory of the learned.' Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete', 51: 'Alcuin, I believe, intended his text to function mainly as a primer for the literal interpretation of Genesis'.

[250] This letter is printed as *Ep.*80 in Dümmler's MGH edition of Alcuin's letters. Allott translates this letter in its entirety: Allott, *Alcuin of York*, 138.

[251] On Sigewulf (sometimes alternatively written as Sigwulf or Sigulf), see: Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*, 328; Allott, *Alcuin of York*, 138.

[252] Alcuin, *Ep.80*, p.122, lin. 20-22: '*quia te sacrae lectionis studiosissimum esse novi, paucas interrogationes de libro Geneseos, quas, ut revordor, per vices a me exquisisti, pariter congregatas tuo nomini dicavi, ut habeas, unde tuam potuisses memoriam recreare, quae saepe perdit quod servare debet, nisi in theseuro litterarum reconditum teneat.*'

[253] Ibidem: '*… quae saepe perdit quod servare debet…*'

[254] On this function to stimulate memory in relation to Alcuin's other writings on memory, see: Dale, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought*, 155, esp. n.14.

[255] Bullough also emphasises the custom-tailored nature of the work, arguing that Alcuin sometimes changed the patristic sources he used for his answers because 'they were not tackling questions put quite in the way that Sigewulf does'. See: Donald Bullough, 'Alcuin and the Kingdom of Heaven: Liturgy, Theology and the Carolingian Age', in: Donald Bullough, *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester 1991) 161-240, at 188.

[256] Alcuin, *Ep.80*, p.122, lin.24-27: '*Et quia pondera librorum nobiscum portari nequent, ideo aliquoties breviati studendum est, ut sit levi pondere pretiosa sapientiae margareta, ut habeat fessus ex itenere viator, quo se recreat, licet ex pondere portantis manus non gravetur.*'

[257] This observation is comparable to Douglas Dale's interpretation of the *Quaestiones*. See: Dales, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought*, 156.

[258] Donald Bullough also ties the sources Alcuin used to his time in York, because he uses the *Quaestiones* to aid in his reconstruction of Alcuin's library at York. See: Bullough, *Achievement and Reputation*, 261.

Alcuin's sources for studying Sodom's story

The editorial state of the *Quaestiones* is an obstacle to studying its sources. The theories on Alcuin's sources for the *Quaestiones* have been shaped by the fact that, to date, no modern edition of the work has appeared. Historians are forced to use Migne's reprint of the 1777 edition by Frobenius Forster.[259] Apart from the lack of a critical apparatus, the most significant disadvantage of this edition is the lack of an *apparatus fontium*.[260] Frobenius merely notes that the first part of the work primarily uses Jerome's writings, whereas the second part depends more on Gregory the Great and Augustine. Based on this view, the work has often been considered highly derivative. Recently, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Michael Fox have refuted these claims, showing Alcuin's originality and the wide variety of sources he used.[261] Unfortunately, these corrections to Frobenius' arguments mainly focus on questions 1-83. Both O'Brien O'Keefe and Fox argue that, from that point onwards, Alcuin almost exclusively uses Jerome's *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Libro Geneseos* and Augustine's *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum,* whilst generally following the order of events in Genesis.[262]

The analysis of the sources of questions 178-191 in Appendix 3 reveals this is not the case. Alcuin uses a wide variety of sources (Table 2, at the end of this chapter).[263] Interestingly, Origen's homily on Lot's departure from Sodom features prominently among Alcuin's sources. Origen is also the most likely candidate for being Bede's source for the idea of the Sodom allegory, his description of Lot's wife's behaviour in gendered terms, and parts of his treatment of Lot's incest with his daughters.[264] There are more similarities between Bede's and Alcuin's sources. Although Alcuin rarely used Bede's commentary as a source, more than half of the thirteen questions about Sodom use the same source Bede used.[265] Alcuin, however, copies the sources more literally, whereas Bede often only uses the ideas conveyed in the sources as inspiration.[266] Due to this overlap, there are many similarities between Bede's and Alcuin's exegesis. Table 2 and Appendix 3 show that eight of the questions deal with themes found in Bede.[267]

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[259] For an overview of the editorial history of the *Quaestiones*, see: Michael Gorman, 'Alcuin before Migne', *Revue Bénédictine* 112 (2002) n.1-2, 101-130. George Mac Lean improved upon parts of this edition for his parallel edition of the Latin *Quaestiones* and Ælfric's Old English 'translation'. However, as Ælfric only translated some of Alcuin's questions, many questions from the Latin version are missing in Mac Lean's edition, see: George Edwin Mac Lean, *Ælfric's Anglo-Saxon Version of Alcuini Interrogationes Sigewulfi Presbyteri in Genesin* (Halle 1883), 13-14. At some point, Michael Fox was preparing a new edition of the *Quaestiones* but, to my knowledge, this edition was never published. Michael Gorman, 'From Isidore to Claudius of Turin: The Works of Ambrose on Genesis in the Early Middle Ages', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 44 (1999), 121-138, at 127, n.34.

[260] In his edition of Ælfric's translation Mac Lean attempted to identify some of the sources in his partial edition of the original Latin work; however, his analysis is far from complete.

[261] O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'The Use of Bede's Writings on Genesis in Alcuin's *Interrogationes*', 463-480. For a complete overview of the historiography surrounding Alcuin's use of sources in the *Quaestiones*, see: Ibidem, 463 n.2. Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete', 45-51.

[262] Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete', 49. O'Brien O'Keefe does not provide a precise break-off point but states more generally that this change occurs 'towards the end' when Alcuin perhaps 'lost his original impetus and instead, was in a hurry to finish what he had started.' See: O'Brien O'Keefe, 'The use of Bede's writings', 469.

[263] Appendix 3 contains the texts of the questions with a detailed source analysis.

[264] For the influence of Origen on Bede, see: Appendix 2.

[265] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, nos. 179, 180, 184, 187, 188, 189, 190. See Appendix 3 for Alcuin's and Origen's text and a comparison between both sources.

[266] The difference becomes apparent when the source texts of Bede and Alcuin cited in the footnotes of Appendix 2 and 3 are compared with Bede's and Alcuin's own texts cited in the main text of Appendix 2 and 3. Compare, for example, Appendix 2, note 510 with Appendix 3 note 526.

[267] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, nos. 178, 179, 180, 182, 186, 187, 188 and 190. For the Latin text, see Appendix 3.

Four questions in Alcuin's text focus on themes not found in Bede's text, showing Sigewulf's and Alcuin's interests were not confined to subjects found in Bede's commentary.[268]

Most intriguingly, the answers to questions 184 and 189 contradict Bede's exegesis even though Alcuin used the same source as Bede.[269] These contradictions are caused by changes Bede made to his sources. Question 184, like its source, Jerome, calls Lot's decision to move from Zoar to the mountain an act of disbelief, sowing the seeds of the incest central to question 189. For his allegorical explanation of Sodom to work, Bede must interpret Lot's move from Zoar to the mountains as something positive. After all, Zoar represents a less perfect mode of living than a life in the mountains. This change might also explain the difference between Alcuin's and Bede's interpretation of the subject of question 189. Following Origen, Alcuin doubts Lot's daughters are to blame for the incest on the mountain. Part of his explanation is the fact that Lot's daughters thought the whole human race was killed in the disaster. This was Jerome's reason for suggesting Lot's decision to travel from Zoar to the mountain lay the basis for the incest with his daughters. Although it remains somewhat speculative, it seems reasonable that Bede would adapt his interpretation of the guilt of Lot's daughters to reflect his changes to Jerome.

With the theory in mind that the sources of the *Quaestiones* reveal at least some of the sources used in Alcuin's school at York to study Sodom's story, two conclusions about the use of Sodom in an educational context a generation after Bede can be drawn. Most importantly, the sources Bede used when writing his commentary were still among the most influential sources used to study Sodom's story. Within the list of sources, the prominence of Origen is especially notable, because previous scholarship primarily focussed on Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, and Ambrose when explaining Anglo-Saxon attitudes to Sodom's story. Secondly, Bede's interpretation of Sodom's story was not the only explanation studied. In fact, by continuing to study the sources Bede used, some of his changes to his source material must have become apparent. The older interpretations of Sodom's story continued to co-exist with Bede's allegorical interpretation of Sodom discussed in the first section.

Alcuin's use of Sodom's story to provide examples of (il)legitimate ways of dealing with desire

As mentioned earlier, apart from analysing the sources used to study Sodom's story, the *Quaestiones* can also be used to analyse the themes connected to Sodom's story in an educational setting. Table 2 shows that the questions do not follow the chronological order of events in the Bible.[270] Instead, the questions seem to be organised thematically. Questions 178-182 mainly focus on how God communicates with humans and vice versa.[271] The main focus of questions 183-188 is explaining whom God punished in Sodom's story and why. This leaves questions 189-191. The themes of 189 and 190 are similar: Lot's sexual relations with his daughters on the mountain. The place of question 191 seems odd: Alcuin had already dealt with the punishment of the Sodomites, the reason for the punishment, and how the type of sins determined the kind of punishment. Why revert back to this subject?

The order of questions 189-191 reveals that Alcuin creates a spectrum of Biblical figures implicitly exemplifying different ways of dealing with desire and the moral judgments connected to these ways. Question 184 contains the first reference to this theme. Contradicting Bede, Alcuin claims Lot's

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[268] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, nos. 181, 183, 186 and 191. For the Latin text, see Appendix 3.

[269] See Appendix 3, *Quaestiones* nos. 184 and 189. In Appendix 3 the corresponding passages in Bede and Alcuin's and Bede's sources (Jerome and Origen) are also printed.

[270] The editorial state of the *Quaestiones* could be at fault. However, a comparison between all digitally available ninth-century manuscripts shows that the questions appear in the same order in every single manuscript. See Appendix 3.

[271] For the text of *Quaestiones* 178-182 with a source analysis, see Appendix 3.

unfaithfulness, which caused him to flee from Zoar to the mountains, was the basis of the incest central to questions 189 and 190.[272] Question 189 introduces the other participants in that crime: Lot's daughters. They mistakenly thought they were the only humans alive and, therefore, felt compelled to drug Lot and have intercourse with him to save humankind from extinction. They realised it was sinful to make their father drunk and have intercourse with him but argued that clinging on to their chastity but destroying humankind was a more impious offence.[273] Alcuin stresses that lust was not involved in this decision and suggests that without lust being a factor, the daughters cannot be considered guilty of incest.[274] Again contradicting Bede, Alcuin absolves the daughters from blame. Question 190 sets up a comparison between Lot and his daughters. Lot drank so much that he could not regulate his sexual desire and was 'burned by the flame of women'.[275] Like his daughters, he committed the sexual act unwillingly, but he should have known better and, therefore, was to blame. Alcuin concludes that Lot was not as perfect as Abraham. However, he was also not as sinful as the Sodomites because he was deceived. Therefore, he 'was somewhat in between sinners and the just'.[276]

Implicitly continuing question 190's comparison of Lot with his daughters, Abraham and the Sodomites, question 191 focuses on the exact nature of the Sodomites' sinfulness. Alcuin argues that the sodomites were punished by fire because they practised 'unnatural lust with men'.[277] He introduces the people living in Noah's time to his spectrum of Biblical figures dealing with desire by comparing their crimes to the Sodomites' crimes. They were punished by a gentler element (water) instead of a more severe element (fire) because they practised 'natural lust with women' instead of 'unnatural lust with men'.[278] Further differentiating the two, Alcuin points out that the Sodomites' homeland is forever sterile, whereas the land of Noah's people flourished again.[279] Therefore, the people living in Noah's time are presented as less sinful than the Sodomites because they failed to regulate their 'natural lust' but did not sink into unnatural lust. So, question 190 divides the broad category of sinners with whom Lot was compared in question 189 into two further categories: those willingly giving in to natural lust and those willingly giving in to unnatural lust.

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[272] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, no. 184: '*Et hanc occasionem infidelitatis, etiam in filias coitus principium dedisse certum est.*'

[273] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, no.189: '*[Nescierunt] quod Sodomiticis igne vastatis multum adhuc spatium integrum resideret in mundo suspicatae sunt, tale aliquid factum, quale in temporibus Noe audierant, et ob reparandam mortalium posteritatem solas se esse cum parente servatas. Recuperandi igitur humani generis desiderium sumunt, atque instaurandi saeculi ex sese dandum opinantur exordium. Et quanquam grave eis crimen [videatur] furari concubitum patris, gravior tamen eis impietas videbatur, si humanae, ut putabant, posteritatis spem servata castitate delessent.*'

[274] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, no.189: '*Propter hoc ergo consilium ineunt, minore, ut arbitror, culpa [spe tamen] argumentoque majore, patris moestitiam vel rigorem vino molliunt et resolvunt: singulis ingressae noctibus, singulae suscipiunt ab ignorante conceptum; ultra non repetunt, nec requirunt. Ubi hinc libidinis culpa, ibi incesti crimen arguitur; quomodo dabitur in vitio, quod non iteratur in facto?*'

[275] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, no.190: '*Nam in crimine ebrietas decipit, quem Sodoma non decepit. Uritur ille flamma mulierum, quem flamma sulphurea non ussit.*'

[276] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, no.190: '*Erat ergo Lot arte, non voluntate deceptus; ideo medius quidam [Ms., quidem] inter peccatores et justos: quippe qui ex Abrahae cognatione [Ms., stirpe] descenderat, in Sodomis tamen habitaverit. Nam et hoc quod evadit e Sodomis, sicut Scriptura indicat, magis ad honorem Abrahae, quam ad meritum pertinet Lot.*'

[277] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, no.191: '*hoc vero contra naturam libidinis peccatum cum viris, acrioris elementi vindicatur incendio...*'

[278] Alcuin, *Quaestiones*, no. 191: '*hoc vero contra naturam libidinis peccatum cum viris, acrioris elementi vindicatur incendio: et illic terra aquis abluta revirescit; hic flammis cremata aeterna sterilitate arescit.*'

[279] This focus on the everlasting nature of the punishment ties in with the idea in question 183 that the children of Sodom were punished to eradicate any trace of their parents' sins and prevent them from occurring again.

To make this last comparison, Alcuin had to change sources. For questions 188 and 189 he predominantly used Origen. Origen, however, does not go into detail about the Sodomites' exact crimes and does not juxtapose natural and unnatural sexual sins. *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae,* a seventh-century Irish work ascribed to the Irish Augustine, does.[280] Alcuin also used it in his first eighty-nine questions.[281] Like Alcuin's *Quaestiones*, the primary purpose of the work is to provide a historical, not an allegorical interpretation.[282] Central to the work is the attempt to show that miracles should not be considered as somehow contradicting or subverting the created order of things, because God uses the natural order to perform miracles.[283] Due to this aim, the primary interest of *De Mirabilibus'* description of Sodom's punishment is not establishing a difference in dealing with sexual desire between the Sodomites and the people of the flood but explaining why God's punishment differed and how this difference can be explained using the natural order of things.[284] To suit his purpose, Alcuin could not just copy the text, like he did with Origen, but had to change the wording and leave parts out. He did, however, retain the main points of *De Mirabilibus*: using the difference between natural and unnatural lust to explain the different modes of punishment and the juxtaposition of the sterility of Sodom after its punishment with the eventual fertility of the earth after the flood.

To sum up, through the way the questions are structured, Alcuin sketches different ways of dealing with desire and lust and provides each with a distinct moral judgment. The Sodomites are the most reprehensible: their desire was against nature with men, sterile, and wilfully acted upon. The people of Noah's time were also willingly sinful, but to a lesser extent, because they did not regulate their natural lusts properly. Lot also acted sinfully, but again to a lesser extent, because he lost control of his desires due to his intoxication with alcohol. He, however, chose to get drunk, so he is accountable for this loss of control. His daughters did act wilfully, not out of desire but out of a duty to preserve humanity. They are, therefore, imperfect but not guilty of a sexual sin (incest in this case). Abraham, in conclusion, stands on the opposite end of the spectrum to the Sodomites: he was completely righteous.

The interpretation of *Quaestiones* 189-191 presented here has a potential flaw: Alcuin never explicitly states that these questions deal with the same theme and present a spectrum of different ways to regulate desire. Each question merely focuses on actors who deal with desire in their own way. Apart from the fact that the questions clearly deal with the same subject, succeed one another, naturally leading to a comparison between the questions, and sometimes refer to each other, there is no explicit evidence Alcuin and Sigewulf read the questions and answers this way. There is, however, another contemporary source with a very similar use of the Sodom story: the probably eighth-century Old English

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[280] Katherine Willis, 'Mythologizing thought *sine ambiguitate* in the Irish Augustine's *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae', Medium Ævum* 85 (2016) 2, 187-207. Michael Gorman argues against an Irish origin for *De Mirabilibus*, see: Michael Gorman, 'The Myth of Hiberno-Latin Biblical Exegesis', *Revue Bénédictine* 110 (2000), 42-85, at 79-85. In this article, Groman vehemently criticises Bernhard Bischoff's influential *Wendepunkte* article in which Bischoff argues for a distinct Irish tradition of Biblical exegesis of which *De Mirabilibus* was a part, see: Bernhard Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter' *Sacris Erudiri* 6 (1954), 189-279, esp. 273. For a complete overview of the debate in which Gorman's article participates and a rebuttal of his points, see: Martin McNamara, *The Bible in the Early Irish Church* (Leiden 2022), IX-X and 6-17.

[281] For the use of *De Mirabilibus* in the first eighty-nine questions, see: Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete', 45. In his commentary on question 191, David Clark fails to identify a source for the answer. He lists multiple possibilities but concludes that none contain the comparison between the flood and Sodom central to Alcuin's response. Clark is seemingly unaware of *De Mirabilibus* and Alcuin's earlier use of the work. See: Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 83-84.

[282] On the exegesis in *De Mirabilibus*, see: Willis, 'Mythologizing thought *sine ambiguitate',* 189.

[283] Ibidem, 'Mythologizing though*t'*, 200-202.

[284] For the relevant text in *De mirabilibus*, see Appendix 3, note 546.

prose version of Genesis called *Genesis A*.[285] Like the *Quaestiones,* this text focuses on a literal interpretation of Genesis.[286] In his analysis of *Genesis A*, David Clark argues that the poet 'has emphasised elements of his biblical source to foreground a pattern whereby the normative and divinely sanctioned procreative union of Abraham and Sarah can be contrasted with several forms of unsanctioned exogamic and endogamic relations'.[287] Central to these relations are the sexual sins of the people before the flood, the Sodomites, Lot's incest, and Abraham's relationship with Sarah.[288] Like Alcuin, the poet of *Genesis A* structured his story to draw attention to how these people dealt with procreation and sexual desire. Like Alcuin, he used them to illustrate various ways to deal with sexual desire.[289]

Again, a comparison with Bede is insightful. Alcuin's approach to using Sodom's story in the *Quaestiones* differs from Bede's interpretation. Alcuin does not use gendered language or other elements of the Sodom allegory.[290] However, the theme connected to Sodom's story is comparable. As argued in the first section, Bede used the story as a tool to educate on the regulation of desire. The places in the journey towards perfection Bede outlines all relate to different ways of dealing with desire. As mentioned earlier, one of Bede's examples for applying the allegory is dealing with sexual desire and the place married people have within the spectrum of possible ways to deal with sexual desire. Quaestiones 189-191 explore the same theme but use the choices of Biblical figures as examples of how to deal with sexual desire and procreation. Because the *Quaestiones* reflect the interests of those surrounding Alcuin at York, this analysis shows that, a generation after Bede, Sodom's story was still used to study the ways one could regulate desire even though details of the interpretation of Sodom's punishment deviated from Bede's *In Genesim*. The fact that the same interpretation returns in the Old English *Genesis A* further highlights the importance of the educational use of Sodom's story to teach about regulating desire.

Aldhelm: using Sodom to educate the Anglo-Saxon intellectuals

Up to this point, the writings discussed resulted from educational efforts aimed not at the intellectual elite but at those still acquiring more fundamental knowledge. As will become apparent, Aldhelm's *De Virginitate* is suitable for analysing how Sodom's story was used as a teaching device in literature aimed at the intellectual elite. Together with Bede, Aldhelm is often considered one of the most influential Anglo-Saxon authors.[291] Although he lived roughly contemporary to Bede, his oeuvre is very different: no biblical commentaries he wrote survive, and he used a far more verbose writing style, using long

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[285] R.D. Fulk believes the poem is of either Mercian or Northumbrian origin. He dates it around 750 if Mercian, or at the latest 825, if Northumbrian, see: R.D. Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (Philadelphia 1992), 349. Both Leonard Neidorf and A.N. Doane emphasise a seventh-century date of composition, see: Leonard Neidorf, 'Lexical Evidence for the Relative Chronology of Old English Poetry' *Journal of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature* 20 (2013), 7-48, esp. 35-40; A.N. Doane, *Genesis A: A New Edition, Revised* (Tempe 2013), 37-41.

[286] Charles D. Wright, 'Genesis A ad litteram', in Michael Fox and Manish Sharma (eds.), *Old English Literature and the Old Testament* (Toronto 2012), 121-71.

[287] Clark, *Between Medieval Men,* 127.

[288] Ibidem, 123.

[289] Ibidem.

[290] These two omissions might partly be explained by the figural nature of Bede's exegesis of Sodom's story, making it a less valuable source because Alcuin explicitly states he aims to provide a literal, not a figural interpretation. Alcuin, *Ep.80*, p.122, lin. 29-30: '*Hae etiam maxime historicae sunt et simplici responsione contentae, illae vero maioris inquisitionis et longiorem habere indigent tractatum*'. See also: Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete', 41, 43.

[291] According to Michael Lapidge, he was even regarded as a bigger authority than Bede, see: Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Cambridge 1979), 3.

sentences and many obscure words.[292] His education influenced this style. Aldhelm started his scholarly career as a student of an Irish schoolmaster. [293] After this primary education, he went to the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian. Upon arriving in Canterbury in 669 and 670, respectively, Theodore and Hadrian brought books containing 'new' knowledge and idioms from Latin, Greek, and North African sources.[294] There is evidence that Aldhelm used these new books to source some of his more obscure words.[295]

Aldhelm is perhaps best known for the earlier mentioned treatise *De Virginitate*, which he first wrote in prose and later put into verse, making it an *opus geminatum*.[296] Although opinions on the exact purpose of the work differ, the educational and instructional goal is widely accepted.[297] The educational aspect of the work becomes clear from Aldhelm's introduction to the work in which he addresses the nuns of Barking.[298] As Aldhelm's introduction makes clear, he considers these recipients to be learned. Their education is a central theme of the first four introductory chapters. Aldhelm praises the nuns' studies of Holy Scripture and the 'extremely rich verbal eloquence and innocent expression of sophistication' of their letters.**[299]** Aldhelm follows this praise with two metaphors focussing on how the nuns could acquire more profound knowledge.[300] After these introductory words, Aldhelm writes sixteen chapters on the concept of virginity. A list of stories about both Biblical and early Christian male and female virgins follows

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[292] Aldhelm's style is sometimes also called the 'hermeneutic style'. The most elaborate analysis of Aldhelm's prose style and its origins is: Michael Winterbottom, 'Aldhelm's prose style and its origins', *Anglo-Saxon England* 6 (1977), 39-76. For a critical view on Winterbottom's claim that Aldhelm's style was not particularly influenced by Irish Latinity, see: G.T. Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Ending of Late Antiquity* (Turnhout 2015), 235-236.

[293] There is some debate on whether an Irish master taught Aldhelm. For an overview, see: Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, 2, 31-41; Michael Lapidge, 'The Career of Aldhelm', *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007), 15-69, at 22-30; Barbara Yorke, 'Aldhelm's Irish and British connections', in: Katherine Barker and Nicholas Brooks (eds.), *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric* (Oxford 2010) 164-180, at 169-175.

[294] Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury,* 38-63. Unfortunately, none of the manuscripts Theodore and Hadrian brought to Canterbury have survived. However, Lapidge has tentatively reconstructed the extent of their library: Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 175-178.

[295] Michael Lapidge, 'Aldhelm and the 'Épinal-Erfurt Glossary', in: Katherine Barker and Nicholas Brooks (eds.), *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric* (Oxford 2010) 129-163, at 147-152**.**

[296] The most thorough description of the date, intended audience, transmission history, and reception of the work is Scott Gwara, *Aldhelmi Malmesbiriensis Prosa de Virginitate: Cum Glosa Latina atque Anglosaxonica. Praefatio Indices: Praefatio Indices*, CCSL 124 (Turnhout 2001), esp. 1-73.

[297] For an overview of this historiographical debate, see Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, 65 n.1, 77 n.48, 141 n.111.

[298] Scott Gwara argued Aldhelm wrote his work 'for the abbesses of double monasteries throughout Wessex', see: Gwara, *Aldhelmi Malmesbiriensis Prosa de Virginitate: Praefatio Indices*, 47-53. The work was undoubtedly read throughout Wessex. However, Dempsey argues that Aldhelm's precise wording suggests he directed the work to the nuns at Barking directly when writing these introductory chapters, see: Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, 66 n.3.

[299] Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, c.2, lin. 1-6, quote from lin.4-6 (p.31-32) [p.59]: '*… uberrimamque uerborum facundiam ac uirginalem urbanitatis disertitudinem magnopere admirarer, en, inquam, ineffabili gratulatur trepudio ille superi…*' Unless indicated otherwise, the English translation is taken from: Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 59-135.

[300] The first metaphor compares the studious nuns to busy bees. On this comparison see: Augustine Casiday, 'St Aldhelm's bees (*De uirginitate prosa cc.Iv-VI*): some observations on a literary tradition', *Anglo-Saxon England* 33 (2004), 1-22, esp. 1-8. The second metaphor compares nuns acquiring knowledge to the activities of various athletes. This attracted considerable attention from ninth- and tenth-century readers glossing the text, see: Mark Griffith, 'Old English poetic diction not in Old English verse or prose – and the curious case of Aldhelm's five athletes' *Anglo-Saxon England* 49 (2014), 99-131, esp. 108-131.

these chapters.[301] These stories emphasise the physical aspect of virginity and the sometimes violent struggle to maintain virginity.[302]

Both the prose and the verse version of *De Virginitate* reference Sodom. The verse version will be analysed in the next chapter, as it sheds light on the development of the Sodomite as a person. In the prose version of *De Virginitate* Aldhelm references Sodom when he compares the martyr Malchus of Syria to 'the woman perishing at Sodom', that is, Lot's wife.[303] Malchus's story exemplifies Aldhelm's statement that anyone who, 'compelled by force to relinquish … the privilege of purity', commits suicide, shall 'rejoice triumphantly' in heaven.[304] To make this point, Aldhelm changed his source, Jerome's *Vita Malchi monachi captivi*.[305] After abandoning his monastery to go home, Jerome's Malchus is captured by Saracens and forced to marry, but he stays chaste and ultimately escapes and returns to a monastery. Aldhelm's Malchus, after being captured and enslaved, is forced at swordpoint to abandon his chastity but, refusing, prefers 'to die transfixed cruelly by the sword'.[306] The reference to Sodom and Lot's wife is also unique to Aldhelm.

In contrast to the relative lack of attention to Sodom in Bede's work, this passage, especially the reference to Sodom, has recently attracted significant attention from scholars interested in ideas of femininity and masculinity in Aldhelm's writings. These scholars interpret Aldhelm's reference to Sodom as evidence that, according to Aldhelm, the Saracens forced same-sex activities onto Malchus. They connect this threat to Aldhelm's feminine portrayal of Malchus. Clark already wondered whether the description of Malchus's enslavement and the reference to Sodom might suggest he was forced into same-sex sex before he chose to die.[307] Further exploring this idea, Tereli Askwith argues that after his disobedience, Aldhelm genders Malchus feminine and the language becomes passive. She interprets the sword by which Malchus was threatened as an image of a phallus forced on the passive Malchus.[308] Following a comparable line of thought, Katherine Barker characterises the story as 'an evil Saracen who is proposing to violate a male Christian slave from behind' and associates Malchus with passivity and femininity.[309]

The gendered aspect of these interpretations is highly problematic. Although there is no doubt Aldhelm's Malchus was sexually threatened, the context provides no direct evidence that this concerned same-sex

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[301] For possible reasons behind Aldhelm's choice of saints, see: Juliet Mullins, 'Aldhelm's Choice of Saints for his Prose *de Virginitate*', in: Stuart McWilliams (ed.), *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis* (Cambridge 2013) 33-53, for Malchus see esp. 36-37.

[302] On Aldhelm's views on virginity, see: Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, 65-110.

[303] Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, c.31, lin.31 (p.397) [p.91]: '… *qui Sodomitanum peruentis feminae dispendium minime pertimesceret…*'.

[304] Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, c.31, lin.1-2 (p.387-389) [p.90]: '*Magna est igitur puritatis praerogatiua, quam qui amittere per uim compellitur, si ob hoc humanum exosus consortium communi uita sponte caruerit, apud CXLIV milia uirginale carmen canentia in caelesti contubernio gloriosus gratulabitur…*'. For an interpretation of and context to Aldhelm's defence of suicide, see: Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury,* 82-90, 112-119.

[305] For an introduction, edition, and translation of this work, see: Christa Gray, *Jerome, Vita Malchi: Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford 2015), esp. 1-77. On the knowledge of this source in Anglo-Saxon England and Aldhelm's changes to it, see: Katherine Scarfe, 'Worcester sauce: Malchus in Anglo-Saxon England', in: Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard (eds.), *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge: Volume II* (Toronto 2005) 212-231, esp. 212-216.

[306] Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, c.31, lin.37-38 (397-399) [p.91]: '… *malluit mucrone transfossus crudeliter occumbere quam pudicitiae iura profando uitam defendere…*'.

[307] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 76.

[308] Tereli Askwith, *Aldhelm's De Virginitate: From Patristic Background to Anglo-Saxon Audience* (Ph.D. Swansea University, 2009), 278-280. 73-75.

[309] Katherine Barker, 'Aldhelm and the Byzantine World: Serica, Saba and Saraceni', in: Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider, *The Anglo-Saxons: The World through their Eyes* (Oxford 2014) 111-129, at 121-124.

acts.[310] Reading the repeated references to the stabbing sword as the penetrative threat of the phallus on a passive, feminine Malchus completely ignores the actual goal or morale of the story clearly stated by Aldhelm, illustrating that when confronted with a threat to one's virginity, choosing to commit suicide is honourable and shall be rewarded in heaven. Far from taking away Malchus's capacity to act and subjecting him to a penetrative movement, the threat to Malchus's life, in combination with the order to abandon his chastity, enables him to commit suicide justifiably and trade his life as a 'base slave' for a place in heaven to 'rejoice triumphantly in the celestial society among the 144.000 singing the virginal song'.[311] In fact, Malchus's actions fit the Christianized ideals of masculinity outlined above. Instead of fighting back and showing the military prowess traditionally associated with masculinity, Aldhelm acts as a *miles Christi*, resisting vice in a non-violent way.[312] Fighting and resisting vice, even if it meant choosing to lose your life, showed the spiritual strength associated with masculinity.

Another critical part of these recent theories, the idea that the reference to Sodom hints at same-sex sex, is more complex. To understand the function of the reference, it is necessary to recognise that it is part of an explanation why it was 'a very appropriate turn of events' that Malchus was being 'commanded to serve (as) a submissive slave'.[313] The complexity of this passage has long been recognised.[314] A possible solution to its complexity is the insight that Aldhelm utilises what Dempsey calls the 'stop-go effect': he uses numerous similes to explain multiple facets of one idea.[315] Viewed through this lens, Aldhelm's explanation can be structured as follows:

- [Introduction:] '… he was commanded to serve (as) a submissive slave, by a very appropriate turn of events, seeing that'
1. [Repetition 1:]
    a. he who was seeking a forbidden journey homewards
    b. was in bondage as a base slave,
2. [Repetition 2:]
    a. (and) he who in no way feared that loss of the woman perishing at Sodom,
    b. suffered painfully the handicap of a protracted slavery and the loathsome servitude of a master.
3. [Repetition 3:]
    a. And, while, glancing backwards, he was guiding the handle of the plough without care,
    b. the harrow pointlessly shattered among the sods of the furrowed earth;
- [Conclusion:] and, when, in the same place, he was forced at the point of a sword into abandoning the glories of the chastity he longed for…'[316]

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[310] Possibly apart from the reference to Sodom, which might be construed as a reference to same-sex sex. However, as will become clear below, the reference to Sodom clearly has a different function.

[311] Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate,* c.31, lin.28 (p.395) [p.91]: '…*seruilis berna famulari iubetur*…'. Ibidem, c.31, lin.3 (p.389) [p.90]: '…*apud CXLIV milia uirginale carmen canentia in caelesti contubernio gloriosus gratulabitur*…'.

[312] For Malchus as a *miles Christi*, see: Verity Fisher, 'Muscular Sanctity? Masculine Christian Ideals in Anglo-Saxon Latin Texts', *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 5 (2009), 21-34, at 32. Fisher argues Malchus was following Aldhelm's ideal to fight vice and defend oneself 'with muscular energy'.

[313] Aldhelm, Prosa *de Virginitate*, c.31, lin.28 (p.395) [p.91]: '… *captus ut seruilis berna famulari iubetur, iusto ualde iudicio*…'.

[314] Dempsey calls it an 'obscure passage', see: Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, 82. Patrizia Lendinara calls the passage 'awkward' and the result of Aldhelm's reworking of the biblical passages 'not a happy one'. See: Patrizia Lendinara, 'Aldhelm, occa and its Old English Glosses', *Mediaevistik* 7 (1994), 143-153, at 144.

[315] Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, 66, 70.

[316] When discussing this passage in the remainder of this chapter, the numbers and letters given to the sentences in this structure are referenced for ease of reading.
- [Introduction]: '…*captus ut seruilis berna famulari iubetur, iuso ualde iudicio, ut,*

This structure can help to interpret the purpose of Aldhelm's reference to Sodom in Repetition 2. Each repetition consists of two parts: a and b. An implicit causal relation connects these two parts. This is most clear for Repetitions 1 and 3. Because Malchus journeyed homewards, he was captured by the Saracens, leading to his enslavement. Because he looked back while ploughing, the harrow shattered among the sods. This structure aids the analysis of the meaning of the reference to Sodom in 2a because a comparison between Repetitions 1a-3a shows that each part repeats different aspects of the same idea. The meaning of Repetition 1a is straightforward: the 'forbidden journey homewards' refers to Malchus's illicit attempt to flee his monastery.[317] The meaning of Repetition 3a is more obscure. It has been interpreted as a sexual motif in same-sex readings of this text.[318] However, the first association of the nuns, whom Aldhelm praised for their knowledge of the Scripture, would more likely have been Luke 9:62, in which Jesus tells someone who promises to follow Him but only after saying goodbye to his family that 'no one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.'[319] This perfectly fits the context of Malchus's story because he started his homeward journey out of concern for his family.[320] Repetition 3a, therefore, supplements the idea presented in 1a by focussing on Malchus's motifs for his illicit journey. Because each repetition repeats the same idea, repetition 2a's meaning has to be connected to Malchus's forbidden journey. Viewed through this lens, the meaning of the reference to Sodom in repetition 2a is relatively easy to decipher: Malchus did not fear the loss of the woman at Sodom because he did precisely the same thing as Lot's wife: illicitly turning back to his old life, without fearing the consequences.

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1. [Repetition 1] :
    a. *qui interdictum repetebat postliminium,*
    b. *Seruiret ut uile mancipium,*
2. [Repetition 2] :
    a. *quatenus, qui Sodomitanum peruentis feminae dispendium minime pertimesceret,*
    b. *prolixae seruitutis detrimentum et inuisum heri famulatum atrociter sentiret*
3. [Repetition 3] :
    a. *et, dum aratri stibam postergum respiciens neglegenter regeret,*
    b. *ruptis sulcorum glebulis iugerum occa nugaciter deperiret*
- [Conclusion] : *cumque ibidem optate castitatis insignibus, quae in genitali solo seruauerat, carere stricta machera extorqueretur…'*

Texts cited from: Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, c.31, lin.28-37 (p.397) [p.91].

[317] In Aldhelm's source, Jerome's *Vita S. Malchi,* his abbot explicitly forbids him to go and pleads with him to stay. See: Jerome, *Vita S. Malchi*, ch.3 (p.80).

[318] Askwith reads the harrow as masculine and the shattered earth as feminine, claiming the motif has 'sexual overtones' illustrating not only Malchus's passivity but also that 'any latent sexuality has been shattered'. See: Askwith, *Aldhelm's de Virginitate*, 279. Katherine Barker interprets the image as a reference to anal penetrative same-sex sex. See: Barker, 'Aldhelm and the Byzantine World', 121.

[319] Luke 9:62: '*Ait ad illum Iesus nemo mittens manum suam in aratrum et aspiciens retro aptus est regno Dei*'. Patrizia Lendinara argues that Aldhelm used the *Vita Malchi* as inspiration for this passage. In the *Vita S. Malchi* Malchus's abbot uses the image to implore him not to turn home: '*obsecrabat, ne … me perderem ec aratrum tenens post tergum respicerem*' (source: Jerome, *Vita S. Malchi*, col. 57). See: Lendinara, 'Aldhelm, occa and its Old English Glosses', 144-145. Dempsey suggests Athanasius' Life of Anthony as a source because, like Aldhelm, it combines 'the message of Luke 9:62 with that of Genesis 19:26', which describes Lot's wife looking back. Dempsey makes this comment as part of an attempt to show Aldhelm did use Evagrius' translation of Athanasius. Although both texts do indeed combine Luke 9:62 and a reference to Lot's wife, this combination is far from unique. Origen, Isidore and Bede for example reference the fate of Lot's wife when discussing Luke 9:62. See: Origen [trans. Rufinus], *Homiliae in Genesim*, 5.2 (p.166-168); Bede, *In Lucae Euangelium Expositio*, lib. 3, cap.9, (p.342); Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim,* (p.51).

[320] Aldhelm names family matters as one of the reasons for Malchus's desire to return home: Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, c.31, lin.24-25 (p.393): '*… sed cum ob cognatae propinquitatis curam accepto conuersationis feruore paulatim tepesceret…'*

Like repetitions 1a-3a, repetitions 1b-3b also repeat similar ideas. They echo the introduction, in which Aldhelm tells his readers Malchus was 'commanded to serve (as) a submissive slave'. Compared to repetition 1b, repetition 2b adds an emphasis on the enslavement being protracted. As mentioned, each repetition's a- and b-parts have a causal relation. This begs the question: in what way does mentioning Lot's wife add anything to the result Aldhelm describes in 2b? The new emphasis on enslavement being protracted connects Malchus to the way Lot's wife is described in a uniquely Anglo-Saxon tradition. Old English literature, particularly the earlier mentioned *Genesis A* and the Biblical commentaries related to the Canterbury School of Theodore, focus on Lot's statue after she looked back as 'an object with a particular message' which exists forever.[321] In these sources, she represents 'patience, because she makes manifest … both suffering and a near-immortal existence'.[322] This patience is 'distinct from that of saints' because it is born from an involuntary inability to act.[323] With this in mind, the connection between repetition 2a and 2b becomes clear. Because Malchus did not fear the loss of Lot's wife, he acted the same way as she did and suffered a comparable loss: he lost his ability to act freely and suffered 'protracted' slavery, just like her ability to act was forcefully removed forever.

Repetition 3b seems to deviate from the common theme of slavery in 1b and 2b by not mentioning Malchus's servitude. After copying repetition 3a from Luke 9:62, Aldhelm innovates and adds the image of the harrow effectively destroying the previously neatly furrowed earth to show the consequence of this careless ploughing: Malchus's previous progress in serving God (that is, ploughing the field) was threatened by his lapse in faith.[324] Aldhelm immediately follows this image with the conclusion showing the real-life consequence to which this image refers. Because of his illicit flight, Malchus was almost forced to abandon the chastity he had managed to preserve. As has become apparent from the analysis in this and the previous chapter, the idea that by looking back at one's old life, one threatens to lose the spiritual progress made when abandoning this life is central to the Sodom allegory. Repetition 3b, therefore, elaborates on the theme of 2b. Malchus not only resembles Lot's wife in his inability to act but also displays the loss of spiritual progress allegorically associated with those who, like Lot, look back at their old life.

This motif of the reversal of spiritual progress also permeates Aldhelm's introduction of Malchus at the start of chapter 31. Aldhelm begins the story with one long sentence, starting with Malchus's spiritual high point: to reach the heavenly kingdom, Malchus defiantly turned his back on worldly desire in the form of a 'carnal union' orchestrated by his parents.[325] He travelled away to a monastery. In other words, he left the allegorical Sodom and journeyed to the mountains. However, halfway through the sentence, Aldhelm goes on to describe the 'cooling' of this passion, which causes Malchus to decide to go home.[326] His capture and enslavement follow this decision. With the interpretation of repetitions 2b and 3b in mind, this capture and enslavement are indeed 'a very appropriate turn of events', as Aldhelm tried to explain. Because Malchus turned back to his old life, he became like Lot's wife, who did the same. Both in a literal sense, because his protracted enslavement limited his ability to act, just as the disobedience of Lot's wife caused her to suffer for a long time, and in a figural sense because, like others who return to

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[321] Waugh, *The Genre of Medieval Patience Literature*, 82. For the relative unicity of this tradition, see: Wright, 'The Fate of Lot's Wife', 296-304.

[322] Waugh, *The Genre of Medieval Patience Literature*, 82.

[323] Ibidem.

[324] For a similar interpretation of this image, see: Lendinara, 'Aldhelm, occa and its Old English Glosses', 144.

[325] Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, c.31, lin.20-22 (p.393) [p.91]: *'Unde Malchus, cum paternae seueritatis uiolentia simulque materna grauitate, qui successurae posteritati consulebant, ad carnale consortium cogeretur…'*

[326] Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, c.31, lin.20-27 (p.393-395) [p.91]: *'Unde Malchus … castitatis obentu et regni caelestis causa contempnere decreuit ; sed cum ob cognatae propinquitatis curam accepto conuersationis feruore paulatim tepesceret et torrido coenubialis uitae rigore, instinctu strofosi hostis discessurus, sensim refrigesceret…'*

their old life and are figuratively compared to Lot's wife, Malchus's spiritual progress was threatened. As in Alcuin's letter, the reference to Sodom's story is not used to establish the nature of a particular act but to create a narrative of spiritual growth and regression.

A last question presents itself. Does Aldhelm, like Bede and Alcuin, portray this spiritual regression using gendered language? As mentioned above, Malchus's choice to die when faced with the threat of losing his *pudicitia* gave him back agency and conformed with the expected masculine behaviour within the Anglo-Saxon framework of Christianised gender. However, before he made this choice, he had chosen earthly matters above the monastery and contemplating God. In Augustine's terms, his male spirit had failed to control his feminine, more earth-centred, spirit, taking him further from the perfect man.[327] There is evidence that later readers of Aldhelm thought of Malchus as feminine when he was enslaved after following the example of Lot's wife. Aldhelm uses the word '*berna*' to describe Malchus's enslavement. Rendered 'slave' by Lapidge, later glosses to the text show that some readers interpreted '*berna*' differently. Two glosses in a collection known as the Cleopatra Glossaries (c.930), derived from two different sources, gloss it with a form of 'Þeówen', which translates as a 'female slave'.[328] At least one of these sources was possibly composed in the eighth century.[329] Two tenth- to mid-eleventh-century glossaries, related to each other but seemingly independent from the source of the Cleopatra entries, gloss it as 'Þyften', which also translates as 'female slave'. However, both glossaries also give *seruus* as an option.[330] This suggests that to some readers, the word used to describe Malchus when he became like Lot's wife carried notions of femininity.

From exegesis to an effective educational tool

In light of the analysis presented above, the conventional idea that 'little is found' in the Anglo-Latin literature mentioning Sodom that cannot also be found in previous generations' literature can be examined critically. The link with the literature of the Church Fathers is undeniably strong: the allegorical interpretation they laid out in their works played a crucial role in applying Sodom's story to teach about regulating worldly desires. Slightly amending the traditional idea, it has become clear that, at least with regard to the Sodom allegory, little is found in the writings of Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Isidore and Origen that cannot be found in the Anglo-Latin literature.

However, like the generations before them, the Anglo-Latin authors did not just copy the allegory as they found it. In the most elaborate Anglo-Latin application of the allegory, Bede added to its function and contents. Heightening the allegory's educative potential, Bede emphasized the dangers of dwelling in Sodom and added a gendered layer to the threat of spiritual regression towards Sodom by connecting it to the ideal of achieving the status of *vir perfectus*. In light of the other Anglo-Latin applications of this allegory, Bede's addition to the allegory's function is perhaps even more important. Whereas the Church Fathers had used it to teach their readers something, i.e. Gregory's use of the allegory to teach about the correct ways of regulating sexual desire within marriage, Bede explicitly framed the allegory as a teaching

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[327] See the discussion of gender in Bede's use of the Sodom allegory above.

[328] Cleopatra-I, B-120 (p.199): '*Bernam: Þeówen*' and Cleopatra-III, 1574 (p.547): '*Bernas: Þeówenna*'. Both the Leiden and older English glossaries are of little help in interpreting 'berna'; the Leiden family omits the word and the Épinal and both Erfurt glossaries gloss it as a bird, see the online edition of these glossaries: Michael Herren, David Porter, Hans Sauer (eds), *The Épinal-Erfurt Glossary*, https://epinal-erfurt.artsci.utoronto.ca/index.php/edition/ (last visited: 16-06-2024).

[329] Wolfgang Kittlick, *Die Glossen der Hs. British Library, Cotton Cleopatra A. III: Phonologie, Morphologie, Wortgeographie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), 29-48.

[330] Gwara, *Aldhelmi Malmesbiriensis Prosa de Virginitate: Textus*, 394, annotation to line 29.

tool. He instructed his readers on how to use the allegory to teach others, even providing them with examples of how to apply it to teach against avarice and the regulation of sexual desire.

The other Anglo-Latin applications of the allegory are comparable to Bede: the sources serve a clear educational or corrective purpose and, especially in Alcuin's case, connect the stages of spiritual progress from a life governed by worldly desire to a life filled with heavenly contemplation to gender- or age-related terms. This is, of course, not to say that there is a universal Anglo-Latin application of the allegory. Although sharing a message similar to Bede's and Alcuin's, the intricate structure Aldhelm used to tell this message is unique. The same holds true for the literal interpretation Alcuin likely taught his students while at York: it clearly shares the same concerns for teaching correct and incorrect ways of dealing with sexual desire and procreation as Alcuin's letter and Bede's proposed use of the Sodom allegory, but does this in a truly unique non-allegorical way by cleverly combining interpretations of Sodom's story from previous generations.

From the analysis in this chapter, one element is conspicuously absent: the actual sins of the Sodomites themselves. Apparently, the sources studied in this chapter display no particular interest in establishing the precise sins the Sodomites committed. Given the function of Sodom within the allegory, this is understandable. To ensure the wide applicability of the allegory to describe anyone's spiritual progress, the sinful attitude Sodom symbolises had to be broad enough to cover a wide array of desire-related sins. Therefore, none of the texts studied in this chapter intends to define the Sodomites' precise sins. In fact, as the analysis of Alcuin's Ep.294 and Aldhelm's *Prosa de Virginitate* showed, trying to interpret references to Sodom as references to particular acts has led to misinterpretations.

This is not to say that the authors studied in this chapter did not, on other occasions, display an interest in the actual sins of Sodom's inhabitants. As the next chapter will show, Anglo-Latin authors like Bede, Aldhelm, and Boniface also followed the Church Father's use of Sodom's sinful dynamic in which the specific sins of Sodom were used for educatory purposes. As will become clear, these two distinct uses of Sodom's story to teach are not entirely independent of each other: the gender-related language Bede and Alcuin introduced into the allegory also plays an important part in this sinful dynamic and the use of 'Sodomite' to describe Anglo-Saxon sinners failing to travel from Sodom to the mountain.

Table 2: an overview of the themes and sources Alcuin used in the *Quaestiones in Genesim*.[331]

Question	Theme	Subject of question	Sources	Comparison with Bede
178	Humans speaking to God / receiving his message.	Abraham addressed the three men in the singular as 'Lord'.	1. Augustine, *Quaestiones*, n.33. 2. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob,* 28.1.3.	Similar themes.
179	Humans speaking to God / receiving his message.	Nature of the outcry of Sodom to God and God's response.	1. Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis* 3.31. 2. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob*, 19.25.47.	Similar themes, perhaps the same source.

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[331] Appendix 3 provides the data and analysis behind this tabel.

180	Humans speaking to God / receiving his message.	The reason Abraham told God he was nothing but 'dust and ashes' after receiving many promises from God.	Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob*, 3.31.60.	Similar themes, perhaps the same source.
181	Humans speaking to God / receiving his message.	God's promise to save Sodom if ten righteous could be found within the city should not be understood generally and does not extend to other places.	Augustine, *Quaestiones*, 40.	No similarities. Alcuin's exegesis adds to Bede's commentary.
182	Humans speaking to God / receiving his message.	The reason why Abraham and Lot used the singular 'Lord' when speaking to the three men and fed them as if they were human.	1. Augustine, Quaestiones, 37. 2. Origen [trans. Rufinus], *Homiliae in Genesim*, 5.1.	Similar themes.
183	Sodom's punishment: Sodom's children.	God's punishment of the children in Sodom was just.	Ambrosiaster, *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, n.13.	No similarities. Alcuin's exegesis adds to Bede's commentary.
184	Sodom's punishment: why and how Lot was saved.	Lot's unfaithfulness caused him to request to flee to Zoar and, subsequently, escape to the mountains. This unfaithfulness ultimately contributed to the incest with his daughters.	Jerome, *Quaestiones*, Gen.19 :30.	Alcuin contradicts Bede.
185	Sodom's punishment: why and how Lot was saved.	The angels were a test of Lot's charity; because of his offer of hospitality, he was saved.	Origen [trans. Rufinus], *Homiliae in Genesim*, 5.1.	Partially similar themes.
186	Sodom's punishment: why and how the Sodomites were punished.	Sodom was punished by fire from the sky because their cries had ascended to heaven.	-	No similarities. Alcuin's exegesis adds to Bede's commentary.
187	Sodom's punishment: why and how the Sodomites were punished.	Sodom was punished with sulphuric fire because of their foul lust.	1. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 4.38. 2. Cf. Bede, *In Genesim*, 4.19	Similar themes.
188	Sodom's punishment: why and how Lot's wife was punished.	Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt as instruction for the righteous.	1. Cf. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 16.30.535. 2. Cf. Bede, *In*	Similar themes, perhaps the same source.

			Genesim, Lib. 4 Gen. 19:26.	
189	Dealing with desire and sexual sins: Lot's daughters.	The behaviour of Lot's daughters making their father drunk and having intercourse with him is defensible, because the daughters believed that they were the last humans alive.	Origen [trans. Rufinus], *Homiliae in Genesim*, 5.4.	Similar themes, with one difference. Bede: Lot's daughters are to blame. Alcuin: Lot's daughters are not guilty of incest.
190	Dealing with desire and sexual sins: Lot.	Lot's drunkenness and unconscious participation in the incest show he is morally between the sinners and the righteous.	1. Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 22.44. 2. Origen [trans. Rufinus], *Homiliae in Genesim,* 5.2.	Partially similar themes.
191	Dealing with desire and sexual sins: the Sodomites and the people living in Noah's time.	The people in the days of Noah were punished by water because they practised natural lust with women. The Sodomites were punished by fire because they practised unnatural lust with men.	Cf. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae, 1.10.*	No similarities. Alcuin's exegesis adds to Bede's commentary.

Chapter 3: Unspeakable sin and Sodom's sinful dynamic

As chapter one has shown, Anglo-Saxon authors not only inherited the allegorical interpretation of Sodom's demise from previous generations but also inherited an explanation for the reason behind God's punishment of Sodom. This explanation took the form of a sinful dynamic, which started with wealth-related sins and ended in the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels. As argued in chapter one, the Church Fathers, particularly Orosius and Augustine, used this dynamic as an educational or instructive tool to warn their society that they were in danger of falling prey to the same sinful dynamic as the Sodomites which would ultimately lead to their destruction. Whereas the precise sins of the Sodomites play a small role in the allegorical interpretation discussed in the previous chapter, their sins play an important role in this educational use. After all, the author needs to compare the societies' sins to those of the Sodomites in order for the warning to be effective.

This chapter analyses how the seventh- and eighth-century Anglo-Latin authors used this dynamic as a teaching tool, especially in relation to *geslacht.* To achieve this, the chapter is divided into four sections. The first section uses Bede's biblical commentaries to establish how Anglo-Latin authors applied and altered the sinful dynamic they encountered in the Chruch Fathers' literature. The other sections each deal with one aspect of using this dynamic to educate readers on the correct regulation of their desires: section two shows how the Sodomitical dynamic could be used to prevent or dissuade people from committing certain desire-related sins and section three shows how the dynamic could be used to try to stop people who were failing to regulate their desires properly. In conclusion, the last section analyses the potential impact of this sinful dynamic's educative and corrective use on the punishment of people who did not heed the preventative or corrective advice. It thus reveals the punitive potential this dynamic created.

Bede: Using the readers' expectations about the Sodomites' unspeakable sin

To establish how Bede's interpretation of the reasons behind Sodom's demise relates to the Church Fathers' use of the sinful dynamic, an overview of the sins Bede connects to the Sodomites is necessary. Bede first introduces Sodom's story as a cautionary tale. Sodom was once 'watered like the paradise of the Lord' but now serves as an example of those who are going to act with impiety in order that we, having absolutely certain tokens of the perdition of the wicked, might the more vigilantly flee from their eternal torments.'[332] In his commentary on Gen. 10:30-32, Bede further specifies these impious acts. He explains that Ham's descendants, among whom he counts the Sodomites, 'with unrestrained wantonness … delight only to be whirled about in wicked earthly desires.'[333] This corresponds with the use of Sodom in the allegory studied in the previous chapter. Bede further adds to the description of the impiety characteristic of the Sodomites

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[332] Bede, *In Genesim*, Gen. 2:10a (p.48) [p.114]: *'Sicut etiam euersis eisdem Sodomorum ciuitatibus, quae quondam ut paradisus Domini inrigabantur exemplum eorum qui impie acturi sunt posuit ut, uestigia perditionis malorum certissima in mundo habentes, uigilantius aeterna eorum tormenta fugeremus.'*

[333] Bede, *In Genesim*, Gen. 10:30-32 (p.151) [p.226] *'Et hoc in "campo," quia neque montem contemplationis, qua superna inquirant, ascendunt reprobi, neque tranquillitatem intellectualium adeunt insularum, per quam labentis seculi curas altiori animi libertate transcendant; sed in concupiscentiis tantum terrestribus effrenata gaudent petulantia circumferri.'*

in his commentary to Gen. 13:13: 'Holy Scripture praises the fertility of the land [Sodom], and at the same time calls attention to the impiety of the inhabitants [the Sodomites], in order that they may be understood to be deserving of greater condemnation because they turned the greatest gifts of God not to the fruit of piety but to the increase of licentiousness [*luxuria*].'[334] Bede goes on to specify the nature of this *luxuria*: 'And by what sins the men of Sodom were subjugated, aside from the one unspeakable sin [*illo infando*] which Scripture mentions in the sequel [Gen.19:4-5], the prophet Ezekiel sufficiently explains, speaking to Jerusalem: "Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom your sister, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance, and the idleness of her and of her daughters; and they did not put forth their hand to the needy and to the poor. And they were lifted up and committed abominations before me."'[335]

As will become apparent, the Sodomites' 'unmentionable sin' plays an essential part in Bede's application of Sodom's sinful dynamic and his related educational use of Sodom.[336] Therefore, a clear understanding of this sin is necessary before analysing its relation to the other sins Bede connects to Sodom's demise. The 'scriptural sequel' which, according to Bede, mentions the unspeakable sin is Gen. 19:4-5. As argued in the previous chapter, Bede's commentary on these verses does not focus on the individual event, the attempted rape of the angels, but frames this event as a common occurrence which was part of a custom: 'all males from childhood to old age used to engage shamelessly in indecent practices with males [*masculi in masculos turpitudines*], so much so that they did not try to hide their crimes [...] but rather by using force they strove to make them like themselves in their wicked deeds and to involve them in their crimes'.[337] As Monk notes in his analysis of this text, Bede comes close to speaking the unspeakable because, given the context, the reader will understand the 'strangers and foreigners' to be the angels in Gen.19:4-5.[338] To these readers, the derailed sexual desires should not come as a surprise since Bede, in his characterisation of Ham's progeny, stressed that they 'with unrestrained wantonness ... delight only to be whirled about in wicked earthly desire'.[339] In his first reference to the 'unmentionable sin', Bede's commentary on Gen.9:27B, he even uses this Sodomitic sin as an example that among Ham's posterity the Sodomites were the worst sinners.[340] In short, Bede presents the 'unspeakable sin' as the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels stemming from habitual and normalised same-sex desire, which, in turn, was caused by the failure to regulate desires characteristic of Ham's descendants properly.

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[334] Bede, *In Genesim*, 13:13 (p.178) [p.256]: '*Fertilitatem terrae laudat, simul et incolarum notat impietatem, ut eo maiori damnatione digni esse intellegantur, quod maxima Dei munera non ad fructum pietatis sed ad incrementum uertere luxuriae.*'

[335] Bede, *In Genesim,* 13:13 (p.178-179) [p.256]: '*Quibus autem peccatis Sodomitae fuerint subiugati, excepto illo infando quod in sequentibus scriptura commemorat. Iezechiel propheta sufficienter exponit, loquens ad Hierusalem, Ecce haec fuit iniquitas Sodomae sororis tuae, superbia, saturitas panis, et abundantia, et otium ipsius et filiarum eius; et manum egeno et pauperi non porrigebant, et eleuatae sunt, et fecerunt abbominationes coram me.*'

[336] The idea that Bede refers to his commentary on Gen.14:4-5 is commonly accepted. See, for example: Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong*, 229; Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 194-195; Clark, *Between Medieval Men,* 74.

[337] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:4-5 (p.222) [p.300]: '*...cum absque respectu pudoris alicuius omnes a puerili aetate usque ad ultimam sanectutem masculi in masculos turpitudinem uperari solebant, adeo ut ne hospitibus quidem ac peregrinis sua scelera abscondere, set et hos uim inferendo suis similes facere sceleribus atque suis facinoribus implicare contenderent.*'

[338] Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination,* 'Bede and the 'unspeakable sin''.

[339] Bede, *In Genesim*, Gen. 10:30-32 (p.151) [p.226]: 'Et hoc in "campo," quia neque montem contemplationis, qua superna inquirant, ascendunt reprobi, neque tranquillitatem intellectualium adeunt insularum, per quam labentis seculi curas altiori animi libertate transcendant; sed in concupiscentiis tantum terrestribus effrenata gaudent petulantia circumferri.'

[340] Bede, *In Genesim*, 9:27B (p.139): '*Praeuidebat enim pariter in spiritu quod progenies Chanaan amplius multo quam cetera stirps filiorum Cham esset peccatura, ideoque digna futura quae uel maledictione periret uel seruitio subacta gemeret. Quod Sodomorum maxime qui de genere Chanaan exiere uel scelere nefando uel horrenda ultione probatum est ostensum...*'

To understand Bede's innovative use of Sodom's sin, it is essential to know how it deviated from its predecessors. The idea of the Sodomites habitually practising same-sex desire is not unique to Bede. In his *De Civitate Dei,* Augustine, for example, describes Sodom as a place 'where sexual intercourse between males had become so commonplace that it received the license usually extended by the law to other practices'.[341] In Orosius's and Philo's application of the Sodomites' sinful dynamic, these habitual same-sex acts form the end-station of the sinful dynamic. Bede, however, adds two unique characteristics. Firstly, Bede characterises the same-sex act as a transformative act and the Sodomites as actively looking to transform their 'guests'. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Bede explicitly frames the Sodomites' wish to have sex with the angels as a wish to 'make them [the angels] like themselves [the Sodomites]'.[342] Following this logic, it seems that by having same-sex intercourse, even when forced, one could become a Sodomite. Secondly, Bede is the first who relies on his audience to readily associate one '*infando'* with the Sodomites without the need for further elaboration on his part. The clearest example of this is Bede's commentary on Gen.9:27B, in which he tries to explain why Noah cursed Canaan while Ham had sinned. Bede claims that this was due to God's foresight that the offspring of Canaan would sin much more than the other sons of Ham. This idea is unique to Bede, so he cannot look to the Church Fathers for arguments to support his thesis. Instead, he supports this theory by pointing to the Sodomites' unspeakable sin and their subsequent punishment.[343] This argument only works when his audience knows what sin Bede is discussing. After all, if the readers had no idea what sin Bede referred to, they would not get Bede's explanation.

There is no such expectation whenever the Church Fathers refer to Sodom's sin(s).[344] They usually use plural forms to describe Sodom's sins, such as *scelera* in the context of general sinfulness. When they use a singular form to refer to a Sodomitic sin, it is always in the direct context of the story of the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels or is accompanied by a description of this sin.[345] The only exception is a letter

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[341] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 16.30 (p.535) [p.743]: '*Post hanc promissionem liberato de Sodomis Loth et ueniente igneo imbre de caelo tota illa regio impiae ciuitatis in cinerem uersa est, ubi stupra in masculos in tantam consuetudinem conualuerant, quantam leges solent aliorum factorum praebere licentiam.*'

[342] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:4-5 (p.222) [p.300]: '*…set et hos uim inferendo suis similes facere sceleribus atque suis facinoribus implicare contenderent.*'

[343] Bede, *In Genesim*, 9:27B (p.139): '*Praeuidebat enim pariter in spiritu quod progenies Chanaan amplius multo quam cetera stirps filiorum Cham esset peccatura, ideoque digna futura quae uel maledictione periret uel seruitio subacta gemeret. Quod Sodomorum maxime qui de genere Chanaan exiere uel scelere nefando uel horrenda ultione probatum est ostensum…*'

[344] Apart from a letter by Gregory the Great discussed below, there is one other early text with a clear expectation that the reader would associate one nefarious crime with Sodom without further explanation. This is an early Irish text known as *De iectione eclesie graduum ab ospicio* and often transmitted alongside the better-known *Collectionis canonum Hibernensis*. Although impossible to date precisely, Bieler estimates that the text was written before the middle of the seventh century. The mention of Sodom is part of a discussion of the importance of hospitality, something earlier commentators often associated with Sodom's story: '*Abraham et Loth de sua benignitate in acceptione hospitum sapiens animaduertat quae bona acceperunt; Sodoma uero quam penam meruerat de iectione eorum et opere nefando similiter sciat.*' (Source: *De iectione eclesie graduum ab ospicio,* c.1 (p.172).) Clearly, the compiler felt the need to mention the 'abominable act' the Sodomites committed as an additional reason for their punishment, even though it does not fit the context of inhospitality. Like Bede, the author also expected his readers to know which act was meant. On this text, see: Ludwig Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials* (Dublin 1963), 8-9; 20-26, with an edition and translation at 172-174. On the early association of Sodom with inhospitality, see: Carden, *Sodomy,* 139-146, 154.

[345] Examples of such uses are: Augustine, *Contra Mendacium*, 9.20 (p.493): '*Nonne ita illud scelus, quod Sodomitae hospitibus illius uiri iusti facere conabantur, horremus, uit quidquid fieret ne hoc fieret, arbitremur fuisse faciendum?*'; Jerome, *Commentariorum in Esaiam,* Lib. 2. Ez.3:8-9 (p.51): '*Agnitio que uultus eorum respondit eis, id est sua recepere peccata siue, ut LXX transtulerunt, CONFVSIO VVLTVS EORVM RESTITIT EIS, id est ante oculos suos propria semper habuere delicta. Et quomodo Sodomitae cum omni libertate peccantes et ne pudorem quidem ullum habentes in scelere dixerunt ad Loth: Educ foras uiros, ut concumbamus cum eis, sic et isti publice proclamantes*

from Gregory the Great to a subordinate cleric concerning a priest accused of idolatry and of being 'tainted by the crime of the Sodomite'.[346] What this crime entailed remains unclear; however, Gregory, like Bede, clearly expected the recipient of the letter to know what the typical crime of 'the Sodomite' was. The Irish penitentials (Table 1, Appendix 4)[347] show that this expectation had become commonplace at the time of Bede (at least in an insular context).[348] Sodom is referenced in the context of canons sentencing sexual acts.[349] As Table 1 in Appendix 4 shows, its purpose is to clarify certain aspects of the sin central to the canon. The precise function of the references to Sodom depends on the canon's context. In some penitentials, the reference was intended to provide information on the identity of the partner with whom the sexual act was committed. In others, it sheds light on the act and how it was perpetrated.[350] Like Bede and Gregory, the compilers of the penitentials expected their readers to associate the Sodomites with a sin or way of sinning that needed no further elaboration and could be used to further specify specific sexual sins.

Bede was not only aware that his audience would associate one particularly heinous crime with the Sodomites known as the 'unspeakable crime', he cleverly made use of it, as an analysis of his often overlooked commentary on Luke 17:27-28 makes clear.[351] In Luke 17:26-28 Jesus, describing the day of his second coming, explains that before this event, it would be the same as in Lot's and Noah's days: 'People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building', until, in the case of Sodom, Lot left, and their world was suddenly destroyed.[352] In his interpretation of Luke 17:26, Bede, following an

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suum praedicauere peccatum nec ullam in blasphemando habuere uerecundiam; secunda enim post naufragium tabula est et consolatio miseriarum impietatem suam abscondere; unde et principes appellantur Sodomorum, qui sodomitica habuere peccata.' For an analysis of this text, see chapter one; Origen [trans. Rufinus], *In Epistulam Pauli ad Romanos explanationum libri XV*, lib. 5, cap. 6, (p.120): *'Et uidit Deus terram, et erat corrupta ualde, quia corruperat omnis caro uiam suam super terram'. Quis ergo est ita stolidus qui in his omnibus neget abundasse peccatum? Uel certe cum de Sodomitis dicitur a Deo: 'descendi ut uiderem si secundum clamorem Sodomitarum consummantur iniquitates eorum', uel cum circumsteterunt domum Loth, impudicitiae suae scelus etiam in angelos molientes?'*

[346] Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistularum*, Lib.10, Epist. 2 (p.827): '*Quorundam siquidem relatione perlatum est quia sisinnius regitanae ciuitatis presbyter, quod auditu ipso intolerabile nimis est, idolorum uenerator ac cultor sit, adeo ut in domo sua quoddam idolum positum habere praesumeret; sed et, quod non dissimile nefas est, Sodomitae illum scelere maculatum.*' For an interpretation of this letter, see chapter one.

[347] Because this chapter uses multiple tables referenced throughout all sections, all tables have been moved to Appendix 4.

[348] Of these penitentials, the *Paenitentiale Cummeani* was certainly known in Anglo-Saxon England because the compiler of the Anglo-Saxon *P. Umbrense* uses it as a source (see the last section of this chapter). There has historically been some debate about the usefulness of Penitentials in establishing common practices and ideas. For this debate and a convincing argument in favour of the usefulness of penitentials in reconstructing commonly held ideas about specific sins, see: Abraham, *Anticipating Sin,* 10; Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600-1200* (Cambridge 2014), 1-10. Although convenient, the terms 'Irish' and 'Anglo-Saxon' penitentials can be slightly misleading: the penitentials in Table 1 are all associated with an Irish sphere of cultural influence, but the *Paenitentiale S. Columbani* was compiled on the Continent.

[349] For an overview of canons in penitentials dealing with sex acts, see: Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials,* esp. 19-57; Brundage*, Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 598-599.

[350] The precise difference between these two contexts is irrelevant to this thesis. For an in-depth explanation of the difference between both contexts, see my bachelor thesis: Sjaak Fonville, *Sodomieten in vroegmiddeleeuwse Latijnse boeteboeken* (Bachelor thesis, Utrecht 2021), 23-35.

[351] For a discussion of this commentary and Bede's use of sources in this commentary, see: Arthur G. Holder, 'Bede and the New Testament', in: Scott DeGregorio, *The Cambridge Companion to Bede* (Cambridge 2010) 142-155, esp. 147-149. Remarkably, this mention of Sodom and the unspeakable sin has escaped the attention of all previous treatments of Bede's use of this sin.

[352] Luke 17:26-28: '*Et sicut factum est in diebus Noe, ita erit et in diebus Filii hominis : edebant et bibebant: uxores ducebant et dabantur ad nuptias, usque in diem, qua intravit Noe in arcam: et venit diluvium, et perdidit omnes. Similiter sicut factum est in diebus Lot: edebant et bibebant, emebant et vendebant, plantabant et aedificabant: qua*

interpretation by Ambrose, argues that the acts Jesus mentions (buying, selling, planting, etc.) are not inherently sinful but were the cause of the flood and Sodom's demise because they were practised immoderately.[353] When readers followed Bede's lead and interpreted Jesus' words as a list of Sodom's sins, they would have noticed that the one unmentionable sin they usually associated with Sodom's demise was missing. Bede anticipates this reaction and uses it to make a point. Using a reference to Augustine's *De Enchiridion,* Bede argues that Jesus purposefully omitted this notorious sin to show that sins which some people would say are small or non-existent are, in fact, enough to warrant a punishment of Sodomitical proportion when they are excessively committed.[354] Bede apparently realised that associating seemingly lesser wealth-related sins with Sodom's destruction enabled him to use the moral reprehension his readers usually associated with Sodom's characteristic unspeakable sin to warn against excessively focusing on wealth-related activities. A comparable use of the readers' expectations surrounding Sodom's story is not found in the literature of the Church Fathers, presumably because they did not expect their readers to immediately associate one 'unspeakable sin' with Sodom's demise.

It should be noted that the function of the Sodomites' 'unspeakable sin' presented here is at odds with the commonly held idea that writers referring to an unmentionable or unspeakable crime chose this term to circumvent describing same-sex desire and to keep the still unknowing people from finding out the same-sex nature of Sodom's crimes.[355] This traditional link of the unspeakability of the Sodomites' crime with an author's reluctance to describe same-sex sins stems from analyses of high medieval sources influenced by the Foucauldian idea of a 'nearly universal reticence in talking about' sodomy in the Middle Ages combined with the 'extreme discretion of the texts' that do deal with it.[356] This is clearly not applicable to Bede's commentary because he both graphically describes the same-sex desire and the Sodomites' wish to rape strangers and counts on his readers to immediately think of this 'unspeakable crime' when thinking of Sodom's sins. Nevertheless, this interpretation made its way into the study of early medieval Anglo-Saxon texts through Michael Jordan's study of the early medieval use of Sodom, especially his claim that references to Sodom in the penitentials were meant to circumvent sexually explicit descriptions and thus reveal the sin in question to those who already knew the meaning of the

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die autem exiit Lot a Sodomis, pluit ignem et sulphur de caelo, et omnes perdidit.' For the interpretation of later Anglo-Saxon authors of this text and a commentary on Bede's use of the flood in his interpretation, see: Daniel Anlezark, *Water and Fire: The myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester 2006), esp. 31-33, 158-163.
[353] Bede, *In Lucae Euangelium Expositio. 5.17* (Lk. 17:26-28) (p.317-318) [emphasis mine]: [Lk.17:26-27:] '*Non hic […] coniugia uel alimenta damnatur cum, in his in his successionis in illis naturae sint posita subsidia, sed, iuxta quod apostolus ait, "Omnia mihi licent sed non omnia expediunt", immoderatus potius licitorum usus arguitur. Neque enim quia haec agebant sed quia his se totos dedendo Dei iudicia contemnebant aqua uel igne perierunt. […] [Lk.17:28:] Praetermisso dominus illo maximo et infando Sodomorum scelere sola ea quae leuia uel nulla putari poterant ddelicta commemorat ut intellegas illicita quali poena feriantur, si licita et ea sine quibus haec uita non ducitur immoderatius acta igne et sulphore puniuntur. Merito ergo beatus Augustinus uisis noxiae consuetudinis illecebris ac iusto dolore commotus exclamat: 'Vae peccatis hominum quae sola inusitata inhorrescimus usitata uero pro quibus abluendis filii Dei sanguis effusus est quamuis tam magna sint ut omnino claudi contra se faciant regnum Dei saepe uidendo omnia tolerare saepe tolerando non nulla etiam facere cogimur. Atque utinam, O domine, non omnia quae non potuerimus prohibere faciamus'*. Bede's source for interpreting Jesus' list of acts as a condemnation of an immoderate lifestyle is: Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam,* Lib.8, cap.37, lin.400-407 (p.310). Bede's quote from Augustine is taken from: Augustine, *Enchiridion ad Laurentium*, 21,80 (p.94).
[354] Bede's quote from Augustine is taken from: Augustine, *Enchiridion ad Laurentium*, 21,80 (p.94). For the Latin text: see the previous note.
[355] For a detailed description and somewhat critical reflection on this tradition, see: Victoria Blud, *The Unspeakable, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge 2017), esp. 64-70 in relation to Sodom.
[356] The quotations from Foucault are taken from: Ibidem, 66.

reference and to conceal it from those who did not know. [357] Although his interpretation of the penitentials has long since been refuted, the idea that Anglo-Saxon authors used Sodom and the unspeakable sin in this manner remained.[358]

The 'unspeakable sin' as the potential endpoint of a sinful dynamic

Now that Bede's concept of the unspeakable sin is clear, its relation to the other sins Bede mentions in his commentary on Genesis 13:13 can be examined. In the historiography, Kay has provided the most influential interpretation of Bede's commentary on Gen 13:13, the passage containing both Ezekiel's list of Sodomitical sins and the reference to the Sodomites' unmentionable sin. He claims that Bede attached 'no special significance to the sexual aspect of Sodom's crimes' but included them in his general definition of Sodomites as impious, like the sins Ezekiel already mentioned.[359] Following Kay, Clark believes that Bede's commentary on Sodom's sins presents a 'picture of mixed associations […] poised between associations of inhospitality [Ezekiel's list] and unspeakable same-sex sin'.[360] As already discussed in chapter one, Clark largely bases his conclusion on Jordan's highly problematic interpretations of the Church Fathers' exegesis of the reasons for Sodom's destruction. Furthermore, Kay's suggestion is at odds with the use of *illo infando* outlined above. Bede's commentary on Luke 17:26-28 and Gen 9:27b clearly shows that Bede expected that, at least to his readers, Sodom's unspeakable sin was not just one of the examples of the Sodomites' impiety but the first thing that came to mind when they thought of Sodom's crimes. If Kay's and Clark's interpretation is invalid, the question remains how Bede's emphasis on the unmentionable crime as the Sodomites' primary sin and the ultimate reason for their destruction can be combined with his more general statements about the other Sodomitical sins.

Frantzen and Monk note the same inconsistency in Kay's argument, although they do not refer to Bede's commentary on Luke. However, they struggle to square this observation with Bede's use of the story of Sodom 'as a general warning to Christians to avoid' the flames of all vices and with Bede's allusion to the other non-same-sex sins of Sodom.[361] Bede's clever use of the unspeakable sin in his commentary on Luke

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[357] Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*, 41-42. This idea stems from Jordan's theory that 'the category "sodomy" has been vitiated from its invention by fundamental confusions and contradictions' and is grounded in his problematic analysis of the Church Fathers (for a discussion, see chapter one of this thesis).

[358] For a refutation of his characterisation of the penitentials, see: Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 135. As an example of his lasting influence, see: Blud, *The Unspeakable*, esp. 65,69; Eliot cites Bede as an example in his paragraph on the unspeakable sin titled 'the birth of a euphemism', see: Elliot, *The Corruptor of Boys*, 117-118. Although critical of Jordan, Frantzen also sees Bede's mention of the unspeakable sin as 'one of the earliest indications in the English tradition that the sin of the Sodomites is dangerous to mention' and suggests that 'his reticence might have resulted partly from a sense of decorum', although he also allows for 'a belief that his audience knew what the unspeakable sin was and did not need elaboration'. See: Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 194-195.

[359] Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong*, 231. According to Kay, this impiety consisted of the Sodomites taking more than their fair share of God's creation by abusing their 'material prosperity' and failing to share it with their (angelic) guests. Kay further downplays the role of same-sex desire by arguing that Bede's main problem with the Sodomites' same-sex behaviour is not necessarily the same-sex nature of it but the fact they forced it on their guests and practised it openly. (See: Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong*, 231). Clark follows Kay's theory: Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 74. For a critical evaluation and rejection of Kay's theory, see: Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Bede and the 'unspeakable sin''.

[360] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 74.

[361] This struggle is clearest in Frantzen's commentary. He agrees that 'it is difficult to agree entirely with Kay's assessment', but ultimately concedes that Kay may be right after all, 'since Bede described the fiery destruction of Sodom "as a prefiguration of the penalty that is inflicted at the Last Judgment on 'all the impious'. Used Monk is more adamant in his criticism of Kay. He successfully argues that Bede 'progressively reveals and underscores the

17:26-28 suggests that there might be a strategy behind Bede's decision to connect sins other than the unspeakable sin to Sodom's destruction. In light of the Church Fathers' tradition of creating a sinful dynamic ending in the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels by connecting a cascade of *luxuria*-related sins to the Sodomites' demise, it is worth considering whether Bede does the same thing by connecting more general sins to the unspeakable sin people readily associate with Sodom's punishment.

An analysis of the context of Bede's commentary on Gen.13:13 is needed to understand the relation between Sodom's unmentionable sin and these other sins. In line with Orosius's, Philo's and Ambrose's use of the sinful dynamic, Bede starts his commentary on Gen.13:13 by claiming that the Sodomites actively chose to increase their *luxuria* by misusing the wealth their surroundings provided them with.[362] Bede cites Ezekiel's wealth-related list of Sodomitic sins and the 'unmentionable sin' as examples of these increased sins. This Sodomitic lifestyle of actively adding to their sins by choosing *luxuria* is also central to Bede's commentary on Gen. 14:1-2b, the defeat of Sodom's king by four other kings. Bede explains that the Sodomites were captured and later rescued by Abram 'so that […] they might abandon their errors and learn to serve God'. However, the Sodomites were unwilling to be reformed from their wickedness either by him [Lot], or by divine censures, or by gifts'. Instead, they 'heaped up daily the crimes of their former depravity with new outrages [flagitiis]'. In the end, 'it remained for them to be damned forever by heavenly wrath.'[363] In his analysis of the text, Monk has shown that there is a semantic link between this passage and Bede's commentary on Genesis 19:23-25 (Sodom's destruction): both mention the Sodomites' *flagitiis*, the heaping up of crime and damnation by heavenly wrath. He argues that, through this connection, Bede presents the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels as the last straw, causing God to initiate the heavenly wrath alluded to earlier.[364] With this in mind, it becomes clear that Bede presents the Sodomites' attempt to force their habitual same-sex desire onto the angels and make the angels like themselves as the endpoint in a dynamic of ever-growing *luxuria* Bede first notices in Gen.13.13.[365]

With this dynamic in mind, a possible interpretation of the function of Sodom's unmentionable sin in relation to the more general sins Ezekiel listed in Gen.13:13 emerges. In theory, the dynamic Bede outlines can potentially be used as a compelling 'slippery slope' argument. By including seemingly minor

'outrages' of inter-male sex, which are epitomised in the Sodomites' attempted male rape'. However, he has to concede that 'Bede understood […] the destruction of Sodom in broader terms too' and also 'alluded to general sins of the nation as a whole'. Although Monk maintains that Bede's 'emphasis is specifically directed', the relation between these general sins and Bede's 'directed' emphasis remains unclear. See: Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Bede and the 'unspeakable sin'; Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 194.

[362] Bede, *In Genesim*, 13:13 (p.178): '*Fertilitatem terrae laudat, simul et incolarum notat impietatem, ut eo maiori damnatione digni esse intellegantur, quod maxima Dei munera non ad fructum pietatis sed ad incrementum uertere luxuriae.*' It seems extremely unlikely Bede would have had access to Philo's commentary. Although Bede knew and used Ambrose's commentaries, Orosius's text comes the closest to the idea that the Sodomites put the wealth of their land to bad use by using it to increase their licentiousness: Orosius, *Historiae adversos paganos,* 1.5.6-8, 11 (p.46): '*Huic uniuersae regioni, bonis male utenti, abundantia rerum causa malorum fuit. Ex abundantia enim luxuria, ex luxuria foedae libídines adoleuere, adeo ut "masculi in masculos operantes turpitudinem" ne considerati quidem locis condicionibus aetatibus que proruerent.*'

[363] Bede, *In Genesim*, 14:1-2b (p.183) [p.260-261]: '*Verum quia nec ipsi, nec correptionibus diuinis, nec donis a sua iniquitate uoluere corrigi, quin potius priscae scelera prauitatis recentibus cotidie accumulauerunt flagitiis, restabat ut ira celesti perpetuo damnarentur.*'

[364] Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Bede and the "unspeakable sin"'.

[365] Although I agree with Monk's analysis that to Bede the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels forms the epitome of their same-sex sins, my analysis fundamentally differs from his. Monk claims Bede 'progressively reveals and underscores the "outrages" of inter-male sex' (Source: ibidem.) I argue that he does not necessarily progressively reveals the same-sex sins but follows the Sodomites' increase of *luxuria* to the point where they commit these sins. Monk does not link his analysis of this dynamic to the use of *luxuria* in the Church Fathers. He deems the wealth-related sins Bede mentions in his commentary on Gen.13:13 to be part of the 'general sins' of Sodom, which lie outside Bede's focus on the Sodomites' same-sex sins.

sins in the early stages of Sodom's sinful dynamic, they become the prelude to the horrendous crime the readers associate with Sodom. Committing these crimes could be constructed as the first step on a path leading to unmentionable crime. This would be a variation of what happens in Bede's commentary to Luke 17:26-28, where he does not suggest a sinful dynamic, but equates sins with the well-known unmentionable crime to use the readers' horror about this well-known crime to deter them from committing the other, seemingly less serious sins. Bede's commentary on Gen. 13:13 can be read as a somewhat implicit attempt to use such an argument. As mentioned, Bede starts his commentary by outlining how the Sodomites added to their *luxuria* by misusing their wealth. Before detailing the Sodomitical sins associated with this ever-growing *luxuria* through the misuse of wealth (Ezekiel's mainly wealth-focussed list of sins), Bede reminds his readers of the ultimate consequence of this ever-growing *luxuria*: 'the one unspeakable sin [*illo infando*] which Scripture mentions in the sequel'.[366] This could be interpreted as an attempt to remind readers of the dangers that these more common wealth-related crimes pose. After all, at a later stage (in the scriptural sequel), the sinful dynamic the Sodomites created by adding to their *luxuria* with these seemingly minor wealth-related crimes led them to commit the well-known unmentionable crime the readers abhorred. With this use of Sodom's sins, Bede combines the new expectation that his readers readily associated one crime they found especially horrendous or unspeakable with the Church Fathers' tradition of using Sodom's sinful dynamic to dissuade people from committing *luxuria*-related sins. This use of the readers' inherent horror about the well-known unspeakable crime the Sodomites committed to warn them against the sins leading up to this crime, i.e. the cascade of *luxuria*-related sins, possibly further improved the impact of the educational or instructive use of the sinful dynamic.

This interpretation would provide an answer to the question of how Bede's emphasis on the unmentionable crime as the Sodomites' primary sin and the ultimate reason for their destruction can be combined with his more general statements about the other Sodomitical sins. However, it must be stressed that even though the link between Sodom's general sins, the sinful dynamic, and the unmentionable sin as the endpoint of this dynamic is apparent in Bede's commentary, the explicit use of this dynamic to dissuade people from committing the sins associated with the early stages of this dynamic is missing.

The educational potential of Sodom's sinful dynamic: the Anglo-Saxon Psychomachian tradition

For such use of the dynamic, we must turn to the so-called Psychomachian tradition, which contains works intended to educate their readers on the internal struggle between vices and virtues.[367] Two Anglo-Saxon authors contributed to this tradition: Aldhelm with his *De octo vitiis principalibus* (part of his *Carmen de Virginitate*) and Boniface with his *Enigmata*.[368]

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[366] Bede, *In Genesim,* 13:13 (p.178-179) [p.256]: '*Quibus autem peccatis Sodomitae fuerint subiugati, excepto illo infando quod in sequentibus scriptura commemorat. Iezechiel propheta sufficienter exponit…*'

[367] On this Psychomachian tradition, see: Sinead O'Sullivan, 'Aldhelm's De Virginitate and the Psychomachian Tradition', *Mediaevalia* 20 (2001), 313-337, esp. 313-318.

[368] Aldhelm, *Carmen de Virginitate*, lin. 2446-2761 (p.452-465). *De octo vitiis principalibus* was sometimes transmitted independently from the main text of Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate*. Aldhelm based the style of his *Psychomachia* on Prudentius' *Psychomachia* and the discussion of the vices in Gregorius' *Moralia in Iob* and Cassianus' *Collationes*. There has been some discussion about the importance of Prudentius and, therefore, the Psychomachian tradition as a source; see: O 'Sullivan, 'Aldhelm's De Virginitate', 317-328; Gernot Wieland, 'Aldhelm's *De Octo Vitiis Principalibus* and Prudentius' *Psychomachia,*' *Medium Aevum* 55 (1986) 1, 85-92.

Aldhelm's Carmen de Virginitate

Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate* ends with an account of the war between vices and virtues lacking in the prose version.[369] As with the prose version of *De Virginitate* analysed in the previous chapter, the passage has an elaborate structure (Table 2, Appendix 4). Sodom's story is part of the second example in a section on *'ebrietas'*, itself part of a discussion on '*ingluviem ventris'*. The common theme of the first two examples of '*ebrietas'* is the idea that '*ebrietas'* opens doors to other, predominantly sexually tinted, vices because it 'tends to (morally) weaken [*enervare*] the minds of men'.[370] At the start of the second example, Aldhelm introduces Lot as someone who 'lived generously among wicked men', 'as a host offered the shaded comfort of a couch' and 'gave abundantly the comfort of food to all'.[371] Before turning to Lot's actual crime, Aldhelm goes on to sketch a colourful picture of Sodom's inhabitants and their destruction: 'Dark thunderbolts with sulphuric flashes set afire the *scortatores* and *cenidos*, softened [*molles*] by baseness [*sorde*], who were committing the vile deed of Sodom [*Sodomae facinus*] in an unspeakable fashion [*more nefando*].'[372] After this 'diversion', Aldhelm explains that Lot had intercourse with his daughters, a 'deed unspeakable in its perversity' [*scelus infandum*], only because he was too drunk to notice what he was doing.[373]

As with Alcuin's letter analysed in the previous chapter, the current historiography on Aldhelm's use of Sodom in this passage primarily focuses on reconstructing the Anglo-Saxon definition of Sodom's sin. The existing historiographical debate, therefore, focuses almost exclusively on what Aldhelm meant with '*scortatores'*, '*cinaedi'*, '*molles'*, and the '*Sodomae facinus'*.[374] Until now, little attention has been paid to the question of how this way of mentioning the Sodomites contributes to the goal of Aldhelm in the context of Lot as an example of the dangers of drunkenness or *ingluviem ventris* in general. Of course, a clear understanding of the meaning of Aldhelm's Latin is necessary to properly reconstruct the function of the Sodomites in this broader context. Therefore, this section starts with examining the historiographical debate, followed by a new suggestion for an interpretation of the Latin text. This interpretation is used in the last part of this section to examine Aldhelm's purpose with mentioning the Sodomites and their sin.

A historiographical overview: scortator and cinaedus

Aldhelm's description of the Sodomites as people who, due to their baseness, had become '*molles'*, turning them into '*scortatores'* and '*cenidos'*, is innovative. As mentioned, the interpretation of Aldhelm's

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[369] The prose version of *De Virginitate* contains a briefer reference to a battle between vices and virtues: Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate,* c.22-23 (p.241-242), esp. p.242. On the relation between this reference and *De octo vitiis principalibus*, see: O'Sullivan, 'Aldhelm's De Virginitate', 313-337.

[370] Aldhelm, *Carmen de Virginitate,* lin.2501 (p.455): '*Ebrietas animos solet enervare virorum*'. This association of drunkenness with gluttony and lust is common. For other examples in Anglo-Saxon writings and Aldhelm's riddles, see: Richard Fahey, 'The Wonders of Ebrietas: Drinking and Drunkenness in Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddles', in: John A Geck, Rosemary O'Neill and Noelle Phillips (eds.), *Beer and Brewing in Medieval Culture and Contemporary Medievalism* (Dallas 2022) 315-339, esp. 315-320.

[371] Aldhelm, *Carmen de Virginitate*, lin. 2515-2517 (p.455):
'Loth quoque, qui largus sceleratos vixerat inter,
Hospes hospitibus praebens umbracula lecti
Dapsilis et tribuens cunctis solamina victus'

[372] Ibidem, lin. 2518-2520 (p.455):
'Cum scortatores et molles sorde cenidos,
Qui Sodomae facinus patrabant more nefando,
Caerula sulphureis torrent fulmina flammis'

[373] Ibidem, lin.2523 (p.455):
'Quod scelus infandum patraret crimine numquam,
Ni mero madidus nesciret iura tororu'

[374] For an overview, see Table 3 in Appendix 4.

Latin is debated. This debate is plagued by the use of different translations and interpretations of the Latin text, as the overview in Table 3 in Appendix 4 makes clear. Of these three translations, the first is the most puzzling. As Aldhelm uses *scortatores* and *cinaedos* to describe the inhabitants of Sodom, both terms refer to Sodomites. Thus, translating one of the terms as 'Sodomites' and the others as fornicators is questionable. The rendering of the singular *Sodomae facinus* as 'vile deeds [plural] of Sodom' is even more puzzling.[375] The possible consequences of this mistranslation become clear in Clark's analysis of the text. He claims that, although same-sex intercourse is undoubtedly included among the 'vile deeds of Sodom' [*Sodomae facinus*], 'it is not the only or even the primary sin' of the Sodomites, 'as the full context' shows. According to Clark, this context associates Sodom's sin with incest, greed, drunkenness and *luxuria* in general.[376] Based on this interpretation, the reader gets the idea that to Aldhelm, the 'vile deeds of Sodom' include a whole spectrum of sins. Besides using the plural Sodom's sins instead of Aldhelm's singular *Sodomae facinus* as his starting point, Clark's theory is also based on a misinterpretation of the context. His comments suggest that Aldhelm uses Sodom's story to associate its sins with incest and greed and, more broadly, a list of sins related to *luxuria.* As explained above, it is not necessarily the specific sins of Sodom, Lot (or Noah) that interest Aldhelm, but the cause of these sins. After all, these are examples to illustrate how, through the abundance of food or drink, licentious behaviour is caused. Therefore, Clark's conclusion that, presumably because of its association with the sins in the other examples, Aldhelm 'clearly sees the "vile deeds of Sodom" as including both other-sex and same-sex acts' is untenable.[377]

The second translation, which Frantzen presents as a literal translation of the Latin intended to improve on translation one, seems to ignore *cinaedos* and translates '*molles'* as effeminate men. Frantzen provides no basis for his assertion that these terms refer to intermale prostitution.[378] The third translation restores the mistakes of translations one and two. However, the interpretation of the Latin that Fulk and Monk offer in their explanatory texts is equally problematic. Their assertion that *cinaedi* are those who like to be penetrated is based on the assumption that our current reconstruction of the classical meaning of the obscure Latin word '*cinaedus'* aligns with the definition Aldhelm and his first readers were familiar with.[379] As Clark noted in his critique on Fulk, this assumption is problematic because the definition of '*cinaedus'* is part of an ongoing debate amongst classicists.[380] Applying insights from this debate to Aldhelm's use of *cinaedus* is further complicated because most of the sources central to these debates were unknown to Aldhelm.[381] Fulk's and Monk's idea that the *scortatores* are penetrators is equally problematic, because it depends on their problematic definition of *cinaedus* and the assumption that the *cinaedi* and *scortatores* perpetrated the *'Sodomae facinus'* together. According to their theory, the

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[375] For a similar critique, see: Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Aldhelm and the "crime of Sodom"'.
[376] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 75.
[377] Ibidem.
[378] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 197.
[379] Monk, for example, explicitly mentions the work of Craig Williams (Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Aldhelm and the "crime of Sodom"') Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 75, esp. n.22.
[380] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 75, esp. n.22. Multiple aspects of the classical *cinaedus'* precise characteristics are subject to debate, among which the relative importance of their sexual acts compared to their gender-deviant behaviour, the association of *cinaedi* with a solely 'passive' role in same-sex intercourse and even their supposed exclusive sexual attraction towards men. For recent reviews of and contributions to these debates, see the essays in: Tommaso Gazzarri and Jesse Weiner (eds.), *Searching for the Cinaedus in Ancient Rome* (Leiden 2023). These debates on the characteristics of the *cinaedus* fit a broader discussion about the meaning of sexual terminology in Ancient Rome. For a concise overview, see: Deborah Kamen and Sarah Levin-Richardson, 'Revisiting Roman Sexuality: Agency and the conceptualisation of penetrated males', in: Mark Masterson, Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and James Robson (eds.) *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World* (New York 2015) 499-460, at 453-454, esp. note 26 on *cinaedi*.
[381] On the works mentioning the *cinaedus* available to Aldhelm, see note 393.

scortatores were looking for same-sex sexual gratification, which they found in the *cinaedi.* Because they believe the *cinaedi* to be penetratees, they conclude the *scortatores* must have been penetrators.[382]

To solve the problem Clark identified, it is necessary to reconstruct the meanings *scortatores* and *cinaedus* might have had for Aldhelm and his readers. As will become apparent, three sources are relevant to this reconstruction: the early Anglo-Saxon glossaries, Juvenal's satires and the eighth-century *Liber Monstrorum*.

Scortator, mollis and cinaedus in the Anglo-Saxon glossaries

A short overview of the glossaries' interrelation is necessary to understand the usefulness of the Anglo-Saxon glossaries for interpreting Aldhelm's text.[383] Michael Herren and Hans Sauer have provided the most recent overview. Figure 2 is based on their *stemma glossariorum*.[384]

Figure 2: interrelation of Anglo-Saxon glossaries associated with the school of Canterbury.[384]
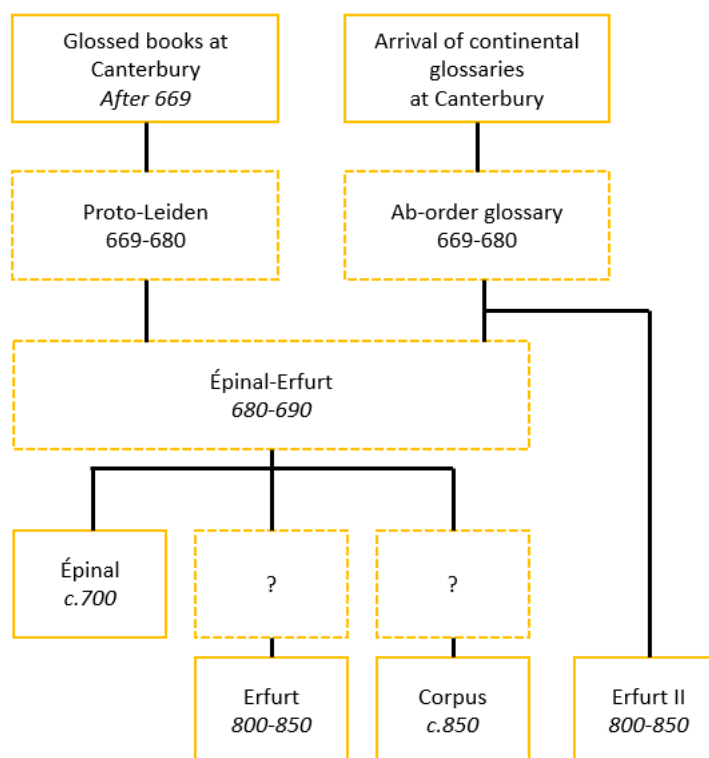
The now lost Proto-Leiden, Ab-order, and Épinal-Erfurt glossaries are all associated with and were probably compiled at the seventh-century school of Canterbury Aldhelm attended. Recently, Herren has argued that

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[382] Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism', 14. Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Aldhelm and the "crime of Sodom"'.

[383] For an overview of the use and development of glossaries within the broader context of Anglo-Saxon learning, see: Patrizia Lendinara, 'The world of Anglo-Saxon Learning', in: Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (eds.), The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature (Cambridge 2013) 295-312, esp. 304-306.

[384] The dates and interrelation are based on the *stemma glossariorum* in: Michael W. Herren and Hans Sauer, 'Towards a New Edition of the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary: A Sample', *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 26 (2016), 125-198, at 143. Two changes have been made to their stemma: 1. The Leiden Glossary and glossaries preceding the ab-order glossary are omitted because they are irrelevant to this thesis. 2. An extra line is drawn between the ab-order glossary and the possible archetype of the Corpus Glossary. Although somewhat unclear in their initial article, Herren believes glosses missing in EE but present in Corpus derive from the ab-order glossary. This is supported by the fact that some of these additional entries correspond to entries in Erfurt II. Regarding the relation between Erfurt II, Corpus and the ab-order glossary, see note 389

the glosses in these glossaries were intended to shed light on aspects of ancient life that would have been unfamiliar to seventh-century students or scholars of ancient texts.[385] It has long been accepted that Aldhelm knew, used, and perhaps even contributed to the now lost Épinal-Erfurt glossary (EE). Although it is impossible to see the extent to which the *interpretamenta* in this glossary reflect Aldhelm's interpretation of a word, he was likely familiar with the interpretations contained in this glossary. [386] Even though the EE was not transmitted in full in a single manuscript, comparing the entries the Épinal, Erfurt and Corpus glossaries have in common, Michael Herren and Hans Sauer have recently reconstructed the entries belonging to the letters A-U.[387] Although not directly linked to Aldhelm's works, the lost Ab-order glossary was also compiled at the school of Canterbury around the time Aldhelm was a student.[388] Because the glossaries were used to understand the Greco-Roman culture in the ancient texts, the *interpretamenta* potentially reflect interpretations of words at Theodore's school when Aldhelm also studied these texts. Although the Ab-order glossary is lost, some of its glosses can be reconstructed using the *Corpus* and *Erfurt II* glossaries, because both use it as a source. If a gloss occurs in both these glossaries with a similar interpretation, it was part of the now-lost Ab-order glossary.[389]

Table 4 in Appendix 4 provides an overview of the glosses relevant to Aldhelm's characterisation of the Sodomites. The most straightforward are the glosses for '*scortator*'. Erfurt II and Corpus interpret it as a '*meretricum amator*'. However, caution is necessary when dealing with Anglo-Saxon or, more generally, post-Classical Latin uses of terms classical Latin uses to describe present-day prostitution, i.e. trading sexual acts for money. As Sara Pons-Sanz has pointed out, terms like *meretrix* sometimes were used in a more general sense as 'promiscuous woman' or a woman who 'is available for the lusts of many men'.[390] In this sense, the term seems closer in meaning to the current 'slut' than to 'prostitute'. Erfurt II and Corpus also contain glosses for '*cinaedus*'. These associate the *cinaedus* with 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: 'Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor *adulteri*, nor *molles*, nor *masculorum concubitores* … will inherit the

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[385] Michael W. Herren, 'The Épinal-Erfurt Glossary and the Classical World: A first Harvest', in: Renate Bauer, Christine Elsweiler, Ulrike Krischke and Kersin Majewski (eds.), *Travelling Texts – Texts Travelling: A Gedenkschrift in Memory of Hans Sauer* (München 2023) 53-66, esp.54-55.

[386] This theory is proposed by: Michael Lapidge, 'The School of Theodore and Hadrian', *Anglo-Saxon England* 15 (1986), 45-72; J.D. Pheifer, 'Early Anglo-Saxon glossaries and the school of Canterbury', *Anglo-Saxon England* 16 (1987), 17-44. Rosamond McKitterick has argued against a connection between the School of Canterbury with glossaries, particularly the Leiden Glossary. In response, Lapidge has defended the original attribution of the glosses to the School of Canterbury. See: Rosamond McKitterick, 'Glossaries and Other Innovations in Carolingian Book Production', in: Erik Kwakkel, Rosamond McKitterick and Rodney Thomson (eds.) *Turning over a New Leaf: Change and Development in the Medieval Manuscript* (Leiden 2012) 21-76; Michael Lapidge, 'St Gallen and the "Leiden Glossary"' *Anglia* 133 (2015), 624-655.

[387] The edition of the EE is still in progress. The still missing entries will be published in due course. For this project, see: Michael Herren, David Porter, Hans Sauer (eds), *The Épinal-Erfurt Glossary*, https://epinal-erfurt.artsci.utoronto.ca/index.php/edition/ (accessed 16-03-2024).

[388] On this glossary, see: Herren and Sauer, 'Towards a New Edition', 136, 143-144.

[389] In a recent article, Herren suggests that the ab-glossary is the source of all the glosses in the Corpus glossary that are lacking in EE. The interrelation of glossaries shown in Figure 2 presents a potential problem for this theory. It is possible that in the intermediate stage between EE and Corpus glosses from other sources than EE and the Ab-order glossary were added. So, if a gloss does not occur in Erfurt II and EE, but does occur in Corpus, it could have been part of the Ab-order glossary but could as well have come from a different lost or not yet identified source. If a gloss occurs in Corpus and Erfurt, it seems more likely that the Ab-order glossary was the source. Therefore, this thesis uses Erfurt II and Corpus to reconstruct glosses from the Ab-order glossary. See: Herren, 'The Épinal-Erfurt Glossary and the Classical World', 53.

[390] Sara M. Pons-Sanz, 'The Etymology of the Word-Field of Old English *hōre* and the Lexico-Cultural Climate of Eleventh-Century England', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 55 (2011), 23-48, at 24-26.

kingdom of God'.[391] That the glossators chose *molles* instead of *adulteri, masculorum concubitores,* or *fornicarii* from this list of sinners suggests that *cinaedi* were not synonymous with these sexual offenders. It also echoes Aldhelm's explanation that the *cinaedi* became *molles* because of their sordidness.[392] This begs the question: what are '*molles*'? According to EE, '*molles*' are '*effeminanti*'. In sum, to the glossators, the *cinaedus'* main characteristic was their femininity, not their possible same-sex sexual acts. However, Aldhelm's phrasing suggests a difference between '*molles*' and '*cinaedi*'; after all, he presents *cinaedi* as effeminates because of their sordidness. If the *cinaedi's* only characteristic was their femininity, Aldhelm could just have called them '*molles*'.

Cinaedi in Juvenal's satires

There is a way to hypothesise what these other characteristics of the cinaedus might have been. As *cinaedus* is an unusual Latin term, there are only a limited number of sources from which Aldhelm could have picked up the term. Lapidge, in his overview of the Anglo-Saxon Library, has reconstructed a list of works Aldhelm probably had access to because he uses or directly quotes them in his writings. Juvenal's satires are the only work on the list mentioning *cinaedi*. [393] This approach is somewhat speculative, since there is no way of telling whether Aldhelm had access to other works mentioning *cinaedi* that are not cited in his surviving works. Nevertheless, an analysis of the characteristics of *cinaedi* in Juvenal's satires may provide helpful background to Aldhelm's use of the term.

One of the defining characteristics of the classical *cinaedi* returning in Juvenal's satires is their signature dance move: a wiggling of the buttocks. This is often interpreted as a deliberate invitation to be anally penetrated by other men.[394] Their search for a penetrator should not be confused with sexual 'passivity'. Their active and inviting wiggling of the buttocks, combined with the actively voiced desire to be penetrated, sketches an image of the *cinaedi* fulfilling an active and initiatory role in same-sex anal intercourse. In other words: 'being' penetrated should not be equated with sexual passivity.[395] Although present, this sexual aspect of the *cinaedus* has a less prominent place in Juvenal's satires than in other sources. Instead, 'the poem's focus shifts away from what deviant bodies might desire (and do) to how these bodies can be altered by dress and cosmetics: a shift from sexuality to gender display.'[396] This emphasis on the femininity of *cinaedi* instead of focussing on their sexual proclivities fits the glossator's

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[391] 1 Cor. 6: 9-10 : '*An nescitis quia iniqui regnum Dei non possidebunt? Nolite errare : neque fornicarii, neque idolis servientes, neque adulteri, neque molles, neque masculorum concubitores, neque fures, neque avari, neque ebriosi, neque maledici, neque rapaces regnum Dei possidebunt.*'

[392] Ibidem, lin. 2518-2520 (p.455). For the Latin text see note 372.

[393] Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 178-191. This conclusion is based on a search for all word forms of *cinaedus* in the works listed by Lapidge. Apart from Juvenal, there are also five mentions of *cinaedus* in Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae* (Lib.7, GL.2, p.298 and 304; Lib.12, Gl.2, p.590; Lib.13, Gl.3, p.10; Lib.18, Gl.3,p.361). These mentions are all quotations of the same sentence from Juvenal: '*Implet et ad moechos dat eisdem ferre cinaedis.*' (Priscian, *Institutiones Grammaticae*, Lib.7, GL. 2, p. 298). Because Priscian provides no additional information on the *cinaedus*, but just cites this one sentence from Juvenal he does not add to the characteristics of the *cinaedus* in Juvenal. However, this mention fits a debate on whether Aldhelm had direct access to Juvenal's works or only had second-hand knowledge of these works. From the total of nine Aldhelmian quotations from Juvenal, four also occur in Prician's *Institutiones Grammaticae*, a work Aldhelm knew and used, and one quote shares a unique textual variant with Priscian's text not found in the existing manuscript tradition of Juvenal. However, the fact that Aldhelm always specifies the books from which his quotations are taken and the four remaining quotations not found in Priscian suggest Aldhelm had access to the complete works. See: Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 101 and Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge 1994), 136-139.

[394] The analysis of Juvenal's use of *cinaedus* in this thesis is taken from: Tom Sapsford, *Performing the Kinaidos: Unmanly Men in Ancient Mediterranean Cultures* (Oxford 2022).

[395] On this point, see: Kamen and Levin-Richardson, 'Revisiting Roman Sexuality', 453-455.

[396] Sapsford, *Performing the Kinaidos*, 166 n.9.

choice for '*molles*' from the list of sinners in 1 Cor. 6:9-10. The sexual attraction to other men and the wish to be penetrated is a characteristic of *cinaedi* but not a defining characteristic.

The Liber Monstrorum's 'hermaphrodite': Same-sex whoredom

In the light of this image of a *cinaedus* as someone who wishes to engage in same-sex sex but whose main characteristic is gender-deviant behaviour, the seventh-century Anglo-Saxon *Liber Monstrorum* comes to mind.[397] Andy Orchard, the latest editor of the text, provides an often-used translation of the relevant passage: 'Indeed I bear witness […] that I have known a person of both sexes, who although they appeared more masculine than feminine from their face and chest, and were thought male by those who did not know, yet loved feminine occupations and deceived [*decipiebat*] the ignorant amongst men [*ignaros uirorum*] in the manner of a whore [*more meretricis*]; but this is said to have happened often amongst the human race'.[398] Like the glossaries, the *Liber Monstrorum* is closely connected to the School of Canterbury and Aldhelm. Although Aldhelm has been suggested as its author, stylistic differences point to someone with access to the same library as Aldhelm working around the same time. Also, like Aldhelm, this author seems to have known the glosses from the Ab-order and EE glossaries. Therefore, the *Liber Monstrorum* (LM) probably reflects Aldhelm's intellectual milieu.[399]

Orchard's translation and his suggestion that the source of this text is Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* XVI.viii, which describes '*hermaphrodites*', have shaped recent interpretations of this text in which the person is interpreted as a hermaphrodite, transvestite or inter-sex person.[400] According to this reading, they are someone 'whose gender ambiguity even allows them to seduce other men'.[401] This interpretation relies on the assumption that the '*ignaros uirorum*' are deceived by their feminine looks and do not immediately realise that this person is of biologically masculine sex. This is clearly not the case because the author stresses that those who did not know considered the person a male.[402] '*Decipiebat*', which

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[397] On the date and origin of the *Liber Monstrorum*, see: Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600-899* (London 1996), 283-296; Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Cambridge 1995), 86-115, with an edition and translation at 254-317.

[398] *Liber Monstrorum*, 1.1 (p.258) [p.259]: '*Me enim quendam hominem in primordio operis utriusque sexus cognouisse testor, qui tamen ipsa facie plus et pectore uirilis quam muliebris apparuit; et uir a nescentibus putabatur, sed muliebria opera dilexit, et ignaros uirorum more meretricis, decipiebat; sed hoc frequenter apud humanum genus contigisse fertur.*'

[399] Lapidge already discussed the connection with the School of Canterbury and the potential for Aldhelmian authorship, see: Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600-899*, 288-296. Patrizia Lendinara contributed to this connection by showing that the author of *LM* used the glossaries associated with the School of Canterbury, see: Patrizia Lendinara, *Anglo-Saxon Glosses and Glossaries* (Aldershot 1999), 113-138.

[400] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 318. The supposed source is: Augustine, *De Civitate Dei,* 16.8 (p.508) [p.709]. Augustine describes persons 'who embody the characteristics of both sexes so completely that it is uncertain whether they should be called male or female'. He also claims this is a rare condition. Augustine does not mention the sexual attraction to other men or the love of female occupations. Together with the fact that *LM* 1.1 talks about a common occurrence, Augustine seems an unlikely source. *LM* 1.1 as a 'hermaphrodite': Lisa Verner, 'Medieval Monsters, in Theory and in Practice', 26 *Medicina nei Secoli Arte Scienza* 51 (2014), 43-68, at 51. *LM* 1.1 as an 'inter-sex person': Karen Bruce Wallace, 'Grendel and Goliath: Monstrous Superability and Disability in the Old English Corpus', in: Richard H. Godden and Asa Simon Mittman (eds.), *Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman in the Medieval and Early Modern World* (London 2019) 107-126, at 119. *LM* 1.1 as a 'transvestite': Dana Oswald, 'Monstrous Gender: Geographies of Ambiguity' in: Ada Simon Mittman, Peter J. Dendle (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (London 2012) 343-363, at 354 n.47.

[401] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 65 n.28. Strangely, Fulk also believes this is a case of 'transvestite seduction', even though he recognises that 'the passage itself offers no evidence of sexual indeterminacy, only a male's preference for a feminine role', see: Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism', 31; Because the intended gendered identity of the person in *LM* 1.1 is unclear, after all it is a person of '*utriusque sexus*', I use 'they' to refer to this person.

[402] Boswell also recognised that hermaphroditism in the modern sense of the word was not at stake in this passage. Instead, he believed that the person was 'a homosexual male' who 'preferred the female role in intercourse'.

Orchard translates as 'deceived', can also be interpreted as 'enticed' or 'seduced'.[403] Read this way, the qualification '*more meretricis*' also makes more sense: the person enticed or seduced the *ignaros uirorum* like a whore or rather a slut: probably by making overt sexual advances. This interpretation raises the question of what the '*ignaros uirorum*' were ignorant or unknowing about. Again, a slightly different understanding of '*ignaros*' is helpful. A gloss in the Corpus Glossary is insightful: '*idiota. ignarus*'.[404] This suggests the *ignaros uirorum* might have been the uneducated laity, the 'common man' who was, in the eyes of the author, 'stupid' enough to yield to these advances.

One problem remains: if the person described in *LM* 1.1 looked like a male, why are they described as 'a person of both sexes'? The structure of *LM* 1.1 answers this question. The author's statement that the person in *LM* 1.1 looked like a male forms one part of a dichotomy against which their feminine characteristics are listed. The person looked like a male, *but* they loved feminine occupations or tasks (*muliebria opera dilexit*) *and* they made sexual advances towards other men like a slut or a whore. This description is reminiscent of Juvenal's *cinaedus*: the defining characteristic of the described person is their feminine behaviour - in this case, a love for 'feminine occupations'. This defining characteristic is combined with a characteristic active search for a male to have same-sex sex with. So, LM 1.1, in line with Juvenal, paints a picture of someone who, although biologically male, behaves like a female and is thus seen as someone 'of both sexes': biologically male but behaviourally or socially female.

Combined with the picture from the glosses and Juvenal, this finding shows that, at least in the eighth-century intellectual circles surrounding the school of Canterbury, there existed a concept of a person with two identifying characteristics: they were seen as less manly or not entirely male because they behaved like a woman, either in dress or actions (the 'feminine occupations' of *LM* 1.1) and they made sexual advances towards other men like a whore or a slut. Given the evidence of *LM* 1.1 and the glosses, it seems plausible that Aldhelm and his first audience might have had a similar interpretation in mind when they used *cinaedus*. If Juvenal inspired this use of *cinaedus*, these sexual advances focussed on actively looking for someone who could penetrate them, like a man would penetrate a woman.

Aldhelm re-interpreted

With the definitions of *scortator* and *cinaedus* proposed in the previous section in mind, Aldhelm's text can be re-examined. Two possible interpretations present themselves. First of all, Monk's and Fulk's suggestion that the *scortatores* and *cinaedos* performed the *Sodomae facinus* together.[405] In this scenario, the *cinaedi,* who, like a *meretrix* or slut, actively seek same-sex intercourse (and probably anal

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Boswell's interpretation is, however, problematic in his own right because he translates *LM* 1.1's '*muliebria opera dilexit'* as 'preferred the female role [in intercourse]' and uses this to argue that *LM* 1.1 describes 'a man who is sexually passive with other men'. This is a very free translation of the Latin. After Orchard's translation and interpretation, Boswell's interpretation was no longer cited. However, Boswell's interpretation recently resurfaced in David Rollo's description of the different meanings 'hermaphrodite' acquired in the Middle Ages. Rollo argues that in one of the meanings, actual bodily indeterminacy of gender was not required; just same-sex 'feminine' behaviour was enough to classify a person as a hermaphrodite. Like Fulk (see previous note), Rollo still maintains that the person in *LM* 1.1 'like a harlot deceived unexpecting men'. Again, the question arises why these men were 'unexpecting' if the person in question looked masculine. See: Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 185; David Rollo, *Medieval Writings on Sex between Men* (Leiden 2022), 9.

[403] The DMLBS lemma for '*decipere'* reads: 'b to ensnare, entrap, entice. b to beguile, deceive. c to cheat…'. Since there are two 'b' definitions and a definition 'a' lacks even though there are examples for a definition 'a', the 'b' before 'to ensnare, entrap, entice' must read 'a'. *LM* 1.1 is one of the examples the DMLBS cites for definition 'a'. This fits my belief that, contrary to Orchard's interpretation, *LM 1.1* is not an example of definition b, but of definition a. Before Orchard, this interpretation was common, as shown by Boswell's translation, which uses 'seduces' to render 'decipiebat', see: Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 185.

[404] Corpus, I-21: 'idiota: ignarus'.

[405] See Table 3 and the analysis provided above.

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penetration) by enticing foolish men, find their targets in the *scortatores* who are only too happy to succumb to these sexual advances because of their characteristic love of these *meretrices*. Thus, the population of Sodom exist of two kinds of people: those seeking to be penetrated in same-sex intercourse (Aldhelm's *cinaedi* or the 'monster' in *LM* 1.1) and those willing to succumb to these wishes (Aldhem's *scortatores* or the 'ignorant men' of *LM 1*.1). Both practise same-sex intercourse (the *Sodomae facinus*) together, but each fulfils their distinctive desires. Although this is possible, it seems to be the only instance in which the Sodomites, generally considered a homogenous group, would be separated into two classes of people: *scortatores* and *cinaedi*. It also remains unclear in Monk's and Fulk's analysis how this passage connects to the rest of the example of Lot's incest as a warning against *ebrietas.* The question remains: what do lines 2515-2522 add to this example?

An alternative interpretation provides the answer. Instead of referring to two different types of persons in Sodom, Aldhelm's *scortatores* and *cinaedi* can also be read as a description of one kind of person: a Sodomite, who was both a *scortator* and a *cinaedus*. This division of the Sodomite's behaviour in two parts can be mapped onto the two parts of the person in *LM* 1.1: they love feminine acts (like the *cinaedus*) and try to seduce men in the manner of a whore/slut (they thus love whoredom/fornication like a *scortator*). This raises the question: with whom did the Sodomites practice the '*Sodomae facinus*' in an unspeakable manner? The answer seems to be the angels who visited Lot in the Biblical narrative. Indeed, the temporal structure of lines 2515-2522 appears to follow the chronological order of the Biblical narrative. The main clause reads: 'Loth quoque [relative clause: *qui - victus*] [*cum*-clause: *cum – flammis*] nonne sator soboles stupro cognovit adultas Ebrius?'[406] The relative clause and the *cum*-clause tell the biblical narrative background against which Lot's incest is happening. The relative clause explains the starting point: Lot initially lived amongst the Sodomites, where he was a charitable host to his (angelic) guests (lines.2515-2518; Gen.19:1-3). A change occurs in the cum-clause. After the Sodomites had brought their *Sodomae facinus* to a climax (line 2519), fire and sulphur rained down on them (line 2520; Gen.19:24-29). During this punishment, Lot committed incest with his daughters (lines 2520-2522; Gen.19:31-35). If this is read as a description of the Sodom narrative in Genesis 19, the reference to a same-sex act bringing the Sodomite's crime to a climax just before their destruction must be their attempted rape of the angels. This is not only in line with Bede's definition of the Sodomites' unspeakable sin and the related sinful dynamic but also corresponds to Aldhelm's use of Noah and Nabal as examples of the dangers of *ebrietas.* In these examples, Aldhelm also sticks closely to the biblical narrative and timeline.

This temporal interpretation invites the reader to compare the Sodomites, who are punished because they brought their sexual crime to a climax, with Lot, who, during that punishment, is also committing a sexual crime. Two other characteristics show the text invites the reader to draw this comparison. Firstly: the wording used to describe the Sodomites' and Lot's sins. When Aldhelm describes Lot's sin, he calls it a '*scelus infandum*', echoing the *'more nefando'* in which the Sodomites perpetrated their crime.[407] Secondly, the cause of the sinning: the *cum*-sentence can be read as containing a sinful dynamic comparable to the dynamic underlying Lot's sin in the main clause. The *cum*-sentence starts with identifying Sodomites as lovers of fornication or whoredom (*scortatores*), moves on to establish that, through their (sexual?) sordidness, they had become effeminate, and, therefore, were also *cinaedi*, i.e. same-sex penetration-seeking effeminate people. The Sodomites subsequently brought this sinful search for same-sex penetration to a climax when they tried to force their desire on the angels. Aldhelm creates

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[406] Aldhelm, *Carmen de Virginitate*, lin.2515-2522 (p.455). For Latin text belonging to the analysis presented here see notes 371-373 or Table 3 (Appendix 4).
[407] Ibidem, lin. 2523-2524 (p.455). For the Latin text, see note 373. *Infandum* and *nefandum* are often used as synonyms, as the glossaries in Table 4 (Appendix 4) make clear.

similarities with this dynamic in his reading of the direct cause leading to Lot's lapse. When Aldhelm introduces the vice *ebrietas,* he stresses that it softens men's minds.[408] Therefore, the reason for Lot's lapse of judgement seems evident: by drinking too much, Lot became morally weakened or softened, like the Sodomites. Because he was softened, Lot commits an unspeakable act, again, just like the Sodomites. Aldhelm indeed concludes that, if Lot had not been drunk, he would never have committed such a crime.[409]

Read this way, lines 2515-2520 have a clear purpose. They paint a picture of the Sodomites as degenerate, same-sex seeking effeminates whose sinful behaviour culminated in an unspeakable act. Through the influence of *ebrietas,* someone as righteous as Lot temporarily became soft like these degenerates and perpetrated a comparably nefarious act. In this reading, Aldhelm thus uses the sinful dynamic and the idea of an unmentionable sin as the end-station of this dynamic to create a stern warning against excessive consumption of alcohol and, somewhat more broadly, to illustrate the dangers of the vices associated with *ingluviem ventris.* Within this dynamic, rules and regulations governing proper sexual conduct and gendered acts aid this educational use of the sinful dynamic. As was the case in the Sodom allegory studied in the previous chapter, undesirable behaviour is linked to feminine weakness. This femininity, or weakness, plays a crucial part in softening the sinner who, subsequently, falls prey to sexual conduct which goes against the norm.

Boniface's *Enigmata*, a reaction to Aldhelm's Carmen de Virginitate

Admittedly, the connection between the sinful dynamic of drinking and feasting leading to softness and the Sodomites' sinful dynamic leading to the *Sodomae facinus* is somewhat implicit in Aldhelm's text. He just mentions that their sordidness softened them. As Monk has already noted, Aldhelm's 'rather inexplicit phrasing' makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions.[410] Uniquely, there is a way to reconstruct the reaction of the next generation of readers to Aldhelm's reference to the Sodomitic dynamic: a riddle collection known as the *Enigmata* written by Boniface before 720 and addressed to an unknown female.[411] Like Aldhelm's *De octo vitiis principalibus*, the *Enigmata* belong to the Psychomachian tradition, which focuses on the battle between vices and virtues.[412] The collection contains twenty riddles. The first ten focus on virtues, and the last ten on vices. In each riddle, a personified vice or virtue is talking. Unlike other Anglo-Saxon riddles, there is no real challenge in 'solving' the riddle because the solution to every riddle, the name of the vice or virtue speaking, is given in an acrostic. Instead, the riddles are meant to be contemplative: they must be 'chewed-over' 'to extract their spiritual nourishment'. [413]

Some background information is necessary to understand the Enigmata's relation with Aldhelm's De octo vitiis principalibus. Born as Wynfrith (ca.675), Boniface permanently moved to the Continent in the autumn of 718 to serve as a missionary in *Germania*.[414] Writing many letters, he became the linchpin of a close-knit cultural community whose members, though often geographically separated from each other,

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[408] Ibidem, lin. 2501 (p.455). For the Latin text, see note 370.

[409] Ibidem, lin. 2521-2524 (p.455): *Nonne sator soboles stupro cognovit adultas*
Ebrius? In thalamo natarum nescius errat;
Quod scelus infandum patraret crimine numquam,
Ni mero madidus nesciret iura tororum.'

[410] Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon imagination*, 'Aldhelm and the "crime of Sodom"'.

[411] Emily V. Thornbury, 'Boniface as Poet and Teacher', in: Michel Aaij and Shannon Godlove (eds.), *A Companion to Boniface* (Leiden 2020) 99-122, at 113 n.42 and 118.

[412] On the Anglo-Saxon Psychomachian tradition, see note 368.

[413] Emily V. Thornbury, 'Boniface as Poet and Teacher', 118.

[414] For an overview of Boniface's work, see: Rudolf Schieffer, 'Boniface: His Life and Work', in Michel Aaij and Shannon Godlove (eds.), *A Companion to Boniface* (Leiden 2020), 1-26.

formed close connections. Characteristic of this cultural community was their Aldhelmian style of writing. Following Boniface, the members used a style full of Aldhelmian references, sometimes described as a 'private dialect'.[415] This style depended on shared knowledge: community members must have had access to and intimate knowledge of the same list of books quoted repeatedly. This knowledge also formed an entry barrier separating the members of Boniface's circle who 'got' the references to Aldhelm's writings from those who would not 'get' it.[416] This characteristic borrowing has traditionally led historians to characterise the *Enigmata* as derivative, unimaginative, and lacking in literary value compared to other Anglo-Saxon riddle collections.[417] In line with this attitude, there has been no study of Boniface's use of Sodom in these riddles. Recently, however, Megan Cavell and Jennifer Neville have criticised this attitude, arguing that Boniface's riddles should be read as a fan fiction response to Aldhelm's *De octo vitiis principalibus* 'reflecting on and revising Aldhelm's sharp focus on Virginity'.[418] To achieve this, Boniface 'creates characters from Aldhelm's work' by writing a speech for each vice and virtue in which they interact with each other. In these speeches, references to Aldhelm's text invite intertextual readings and thus 'build meaning' throughout the text.[419] Following this idea, Cavell and Neville show that in his riddles on *Humilitas, Virginitas, Superbia,* and *Vana gloria* Boniface adds to Aldhelm's warning against taking pride in virtue.[420]

Turning to the riddles themselves, at first glance it seems Boniface only associates Sodom with two of the vices: *crapula gullae* and *luxoria*. *Crapula gullae's* speech starts with a reference to Sodom: 'I was once renowned, while Sodom's grain fields stood, // holding foul reigns, until the pious avenger form on high // sent down burning flames and sulfur as punishment…'.[421] Luxoria's speech ends with a very similar allusion to Sodom's downfall: 'Refrain from lavish lifestyles and taking up the drink // through which the old serpent is usually nourished. // He was once the prince of Sodom, while their kingdoms were thriving, // until the fire-bearing sulphur from the sky seized the citizens."[422] Until now, the speeches of these vices have mainly been studied in isolation, without attention to the possible clustering of riddles. Such clusters are found in other riddle collections.[423] A close reading of *crapula gullae* and *de luxoria* suggests that the

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[415] Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge 2014), 201-208, quote at 208.

[416] On this phenomenon, see: Ibidem, 203; Andy Orchard, 'Old sources, new resources: finding the right formula for Boniface' *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001), 15-38, esp. 20. Megan Cavell and Jennifer Neville, 'Aldhelm's Fandom: The Humble Virtues of Boniface's Riddles', *The Review of English Studies* 74 (2023), 775-794, at 777-778.

[417] Cavell and Neville, 'Aldhelm's Fandom,' 780-781.

[418] Ibidem, 787.

[419] Ibidem.

[420] Ibidem, 787-784.

[421] Boniface, *Enigmata,* De vitiis V, lin.1-3 (p.329): '*Clara fui quondam, Sodomae dum farra manebant*
Regmina foeda tenens, donec pius ultor ab alto
Ardentes flammas multans et sulphura misit.' In this thesis Fr. Glorie's edition of the *Enigmata* is used. The order of the riddles differs per manuscript. For consistency, the cited numbers of the riddles, page numbers and line numbers are all based on Glorie's edition: F. Glorie (ed.), *Variae Collectiones aenigmatum Morvingicae aetatis,* CCSL 133 (Turnhout 1968), 273-343. Translations are my own unless noted otherwise.

[422] Ibidem, De vitiis VII, lin.13-16 (p.335): '*Parcite sumptuosos uictus et sumere potus*
Quo solet antiquus sperens nitrimine pasci,
Qui Sodomae princeps quondam dum regna uigebant,
Igniferum rapuit dum ciues sulphur ab ethra.'
The translation is taken from: Richard Fahey, *Enigmatic Design and Psychomachic Monstrosity in Beowulf* (PhD, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2019), 442.

[423] For an example of such a study using the riddle on *ebrietas*, see: Fahey, 'The Wonders of Ebrietas: Drinking and Drunkenness in Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddles', 316-321. Cavell and Neville, 'Aldhelm's Fandom' is the exception to this trend. On the intentional clustering of riddles in Anglo-Saxon riddle collections, see: Mercedes Salvador-Bello, 'Patterns of Compilation in Anglo-Latin *Enigmata* and the Evidence of a Source Collection in Riddles 1-40 of the *Exeter Book', Viator* 43 (2012) 339-374, for a relevant example see esp. 346-349.

references to Sodom are part of a clear thematic unit consisting of c*rapula gullae, ebrietas* and *luxoria*. Four indicators point to the existence of this unit.

1. Although the order of the other vices differs in the manuscript tradition, *Crapula gullae, ebrietas,* and *luxoria* always appear in the same order.[424]
2. The vices explain their interconnectedness in their speeches. *Crapula* says she is the sister of *bibula* and the bringer of *luxus*.[425] *Ebrietas* states that she is the mother of *luxoria.*[426] *Luxoria* confirms this, saying that she grows 'in the nourishment of food and wine'.[427]
3. This unit of three vices ends with a summary and call to the reader, which is clearly not part of *Luxoria's* speech, because the perspective changes from a description in the first person to an appeal to the readers. In it, Boniface summarises the relation between the three vices by repeating his warnings against 'a lavish lifestyle [*crapula gullae's* speech] and taking up the drink [ebrietas' speech]'.[428]
4. This summary returns to a theme introduced at the start of the unit: the association between these vices and Sodom. To communicate the seriousness of the consequences when someone indulges in 'a lavish lifestyle and taking up the dink', Boniface stresses that such a lifestyle nurtures the '*antiquus serpens*'. This snake 'was once the prince of Sodom […] before the fire-bearing sulfur from the sky' destroyed it.[429] This is a clear reference to the first three lines of *crapula gullae's* speech in which she says: 'I was once renowned, when the grit of Sodom was alive, retaining their loathsome kingdom, until a holy avenger from heaven punished me, sending out burning flames and sulphur.'[430] Although it first seems the 'I' is *crapula gullae*, when read after reading the summary, it becomes clear that the 'I' is (also) the *antiquus serpens*.

When the three riddles are read as a unit, they tell a story very similar to the sinful dynamic in Bede: the Sodomites enjoyed lavish meals and drinks, which softened their body and bred *luxoria*. This complements the use of Sodom in Aldhelm's *De octo vitiis principalibus*, to which Boniface's *Enigmata* are a reaction, as has been argued above. As mentioned earlier, Aldhelm clearly links feasting, drinking, and sexual excesses in his description of *ingluviem ventris* and the phalanx of vices following it. However, the fact that the softness of the Sodomites and their unspeakable acts also stem from their lavish lifestyle is left somewhat implicit, because Aldhelm only mentions they have grown soft through sordidness, committed the Sodomitic act, and were subsequently punished with burning sulphur from the sky. By using the references to the Sodomites to demarcate the beginning and the end of the riddles on this sinful dynamic, Boniface further develops the cause of their softness, already implied by Aldhelm, and thus illuminates and elaborates on the sinful dynamic which led to Sodom's ultimate destruction.[431] By doing

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[424] For an overview of the order of the vices and virtues in the two traditions, see: Thornbury, 'Boniface as Poet and Teacher', 116-119.

[425] Boniface, *Enigmata*, De vitiis V, lin.4-5 (p.329) : '*Praeuia sum luxus petulanti foetore carnis. Viribus aequalis bibulae perfecta sorori.*'

[426] Ibidem, De vitiis VI, lin.9 (p.331): '*Dulcem semper amat me sic luxoria matrem.*'

[427] Ibidem, De vitiis VII, lin.8 (p.333) : *'Ars mea escarum et uini nutrimine crescit.'*

[428] Ibidem, De vitiis VII, lin.13 (p.225) : '*Parcite sumptuosos uictus et sumere potus*
Quo solet antiquus serpens nutrimine pasci,
Qui Sodomae princeps quondam dum regna uigebant,
Igniferum rapuit dum ciues sulphur ab ethra.'

[429] Ibidem.

[430] Boniface, *Enigmata,* De vitiis V, lin.1-3 (p.329). For the Latin see note 421.

[431] This association between *ebrietas* and creating softness explicitly returns in ebrietas' speech: Boniface, *Enigmata,* De vitiis VI, lin.6 (p.331): '*Toto infirmato mollescens corpore trado.*
Aurea faustorum fugiet sapientia longe,
Stultorum passim persultant gaudia mecum.'

so, Boniface also reminds his readers, who were invited to contemplate the vices and virtues in the introduction of the *Enigmata*, about the dangers of not regulating their earthly desires correctly: if they started behaving like the people of Sodom, that is, adding to their *luxuria* by eating and drinking excessively, they fed the *antiquus serpens* which once ruled Sodom before God punished it. The relevance of these warnings against *ebrietas, crapula gullae* and most of all *luxuria* become apparent in the letters Boniface later wrote in an attempt to reform the behaviour of the Anglo-Saxons.

The corrective potential of Sodom's sinful dynamic: Boniface's letter to Aethelbald of Mercia

As has become clear in the previous section, Aldhelm and Boniface placed seemingly minor sins at the start of Sodom's sinful dynamic ending in a well-known horrendous, unmentionable sin to discourage their readers from picking up these sinful habits and encourage them to regulate their earthly desires properly. This mechanism also has corrective potential, as an analysis of a group of letters Boniface wrote around 747 will show. This group consists of four letters:[432]

1. Tangl 73, first version: a draft letter from Boniface and seven other bishops admonishing King Aethelbald for numerous sins.
2. Tangl 75: a letter to archbishop Ecgberht of York, asking him to check and improve the draft letter to Aethelbald.
3. Tangl 73, second version: the letter to Aethelbald with the improvements of Ecgberht of York.
4. Tangl 74: a letter from Boniface to a priest called Herefrid asking him to deliver, read, and explain the letter of admonition to Aethelbald.[433]

Boniface mentions Sodomites in letters nr. 1-3. Before analysing the corrective function of Boniface's mention of the Sodomites in these letters, it is necessary to understand their historical context and analyse Boniface's reasons for writing them. It has been argued that Boniface styled and saw himself as a quasi-apostolic authority modelled on the apostle Paul working to convert the heathen.[434] This is visible in the reasons Boniface provides for writing the letters. On a pastoral level, he is concerned for the spiritual well-being of King Aethelbald.[435] However, on a more personal level, he feels that the reports of the lifestyle of the English and their king are detrimental to his missionary efforts on the Continent.[436] At the time of writing, Boniface experienced serious resistance not only on the missionary front but also from Frankish bishops whom he considered to be living in sin.[437] This provides the background for Boniface's complaints in Tangl 73 and Tangl 74 that he is confronted with complaints from both heathens and Christians about the licentious lifestyle of the English. Lastly, on an apostolic level, Boniface is concerned with the spiritual well-being of the English people as a whole and, as part of his apostolic duty,

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[432] Boniface's letters are cited using the numbers provided in Tangl's edition. Although Tangl provides the Latin for the draft letter, he does not give this letter its own number. My interpretation of the interrelation of these letters is based on: Volker Scior, 'Stimme, Schrift und Performanz. "Übertragungen" und "Reproduktionen" durch Frühmittelalterliche Boten', in: Ingrid Kasten, Niklaus Largier and Mireille Schnyder (eds.), *Trends in Medieval Philology* (Berlin and New York 2005) 77-100.

[433] On Herefrid, see: Scior, 'Stimme, Schrift und Performanz', 84 n.20.

[434] Shannon Godlove, 'In the words of the apostle: Pauline apostolic discourse in the letters of Boniface and his circle', *Early Medieval Europe* 74 (2017) 3, 320-358, esp. 352-354.

[435] On this function, see: Samual Cardwell, ''What sort of love will not speak for a friend's good?': pastoral care and rhetoric in early Anglo-Saxon letters to kings', *Journal of Medieval History* 45 (2019) 4, 405-435, esp. 406-409.

[436] Godlove, 'In the words of the apostle', 353.

[437] See, for example, Tangl 63 (p.129-132), 64 (p.132-136) and 82 (p.182-184), which all deal with resistance from fellow Christians.

endeavours to call this erring people 'back into the way of salvation'.[438] In sum, the Tangl 73-75 are meant to change the behaviour of Aethelbald and his people to safeguard their spiritual well-being and ease Boniface's task on the Continent. As such, these letters can be placed in a broader campaign to reform the behaviour of the English people. Around the same time, Boniface also wrote to archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury (Tangl 78), asking him to put a halt to numerous practices that brought disgrace to the English church. Some of them overlap with points raised in Tangl 73.[439] Boniface also advised Archbishop Egbert of York in Tangl 75 to root out 'those evils described in the letter against the king of Mercia', if he encountered them among his own people.[440]

The mention of Sodom in Tangl 73 forms the centre of a historiographical debate. In both versions, the letter reads: 'If the English people, as is reported here and as is charged against us in France and Italy and even by the heathen themselves have lived a foul life – lawful marriage having been spurned by defiling [*adulterando*] and luxuriating [*luxuriando*] in the manner of the people of Sodom – from such a mingling of harlots it shall be reckoned that degenerate peoples, ignoble and mad with lust, will be produced. At last, sinking the whole people [all the English] into more degenerate and ignoble acts. And finally, they will be neither strong in war nor steadfast in faith, neither honoured among men nor pleasing in the sight of God'.[441] The historiography on this mention of Sodom can be divided into three groups. Members of the first group interpret the mention of Sodom as a reference to same-sex intercourse, sometimes concluding that Boniface believed that it was prevalent among the English.[442] Authors belonging to the second group correctly point out that there is 'no hint of same-sex desire' in the letter and instead use the contents of the letter as a whole and another mention of Sodom in Tangl 75 to argue that Boniface associates Sodom with adultery and that it 'forms part of an extended condemnation of male-female adultery involving nuns'.[443] In a reaction to this theory, the last group, best represented by Christopher Monk, observes that 'Boniface is not creating an exact parallel of sexual behaviours or acts, but rather […] sees the Sodomites' lifestyle as analogous to the depraved choices of the English'. The comparison of the Anglo-Saxons to the Sodomites is thus used as a kind of hyperbole 'most likely intended to indicate that English immorality, sexual and otherwise, is reportedly as excessive as that of the people of Sodom' and to 'strike the fear of God into the king and his people.'[444]

There is undoubtedly merit in Monk's observation that the function of Boniface's comparison between the Sodomites and the Anglo-Saxons is not to create an analogy between the sex acts of the Sodomites and the sex acts of the Anglo-Saxons, but to compare something else. However, his claim that the common factor between their lifestyles is only their excessive immorality needs further analysis. A comparison of Tangl 73-75 helps to get closer to what Boniface actually thought of when he compared the Sodomitic with the Anglo-Saxon lifestyle. In the historiography, Tangl 75 is often used to help explain what sins Boniface is talking about, because it also mentions Sodom and a list of sins. However, the wording in Boniface's often overlooked letter to Herefrid (Tangl 74) has more similarities with Tangl 73's wording (see Table 5 in Appendix 4).

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[438] Boniface, *Tangl 75*, (p.157), lin. 21-22: '… *ad viam salutis invitare et revocare totis viribus niterer*.'

[439] For an analysis of this letter and its relation to Tangl 73, see: Godlove, 'In the words of the apostle', 353-354 and Scior 'Stimme, Schrift und Performanz', 85-86.

[440] Boniface, *Tangl 75*, (p.157), lin.28-39: '*et si radicem aliquam flagitiorum, de quibus in illa epistola contra regem Mercionum disputatum.*'

[441] Boniface, *Tangl 73*, (p.151), lin.15-28. For the Latin, see table 5.

[442] Among these members are: Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition,* 110. Peter Coleman, *Christian Attitudes to Homosexuality* (London 1980), 131.

[443] Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality,* 20; Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 198; Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 77.

[444] Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination,* 'Boniface: 'after the fashion of the Sodomite people'.

Table 5 in Appendix 4 shows that the sentence mentioning Sodom in Tangl 73 can be divided into three parts. The first part mentions one of Boniface's reasons for wanting to change Anglo-Saxon behaviour: other people, both heathen and Christian, confront him with it. The second part describes this behaviour. In Tangl 73, this description consists of two parts: the Anglo-Saxons spurn legitimate marriage and luxuriate and adulterate *ad instar Sodomitane gentis*. In Tangl 74 a very similar construction is used: the Anglo-Saxons spurn the custom of other people and God's commands because they disdain legitimate marriage and they luxuriate and adulterate 'like wild donkeys and whinnying horses', shamelessly defiling and confusing/mixing everything or, rather, everyone.[445] The meaning of 'defiling and mixing/confusing everything/everyone' becomes clearer in the parallel passage in Tangl 75. Boniface laments that it is 'an evil unheard of in times past and […] three or four times worse than the *luxoria* of Sodom, if a Christian people should despise lawful marriage … and cling to incest, *luxoria*, and adultery, and pursue the abominable sexual violation of veiled and consecrated women.' Considering this comparison, it seems that, to Boniface '*ad instar Sodomitane gentis*' refers to a people giving in to unbridled desire like animals, causing, among other things, sexual escapades with women who are normally out of bounds. This equation of a life totally governed by unchecked (sexual) desire with the Sodomites fits in the tradition of Bede's comment that the Sodomites 'delight only to be whirled about in wicked earthly desires.'[446] It seems that by referencing Sodom in Tangl 73 Boniface tries to get this idea across without resorting to the rather colourful description he used in his letter to Herefrid.[447] So, Boniface's use of Sodom in Tangl 73 can at least partially be explained by a wish to get across this picture of sexual licentiousness without resorting to too direct language.

However, the addition of Sodom also serves another purpose. Boniface does not just exchange the whinnying horses for a reference to Sodom. He uses the earlier cited reference to Sodom to explain the consequences of these acts, outlining a clear dynamic: because the English live foul lives, being governed totally by sexual desire, they will sink into an increasingly depraved state, ultimately robbing them of their spiritual and military prowess. In other words: the Anglo-Saxons will be physically and spiritually 'softened', not unlike the Sodomites who became effeminate through their sordidness in Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate.* The process Bede sketches also strongly resembles the dynamic late antique authors like Orosius and Gildas associate with Sodom's demise: excessive desire, led to same-sex desire which, in turn, led to femininity and a loss of military prowess. In his letter to Egbert, Bede also hints at a Sodomitic dynamic, advising Egbert to cut down the 'roots of those evils described in the letter against the king of Mercia' and 'root them out completely, lest "their vine be of the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah"'.[448] This reference to Deuteronomy 32:32-33 is commonly used to refer to the process in which an initial sin grows when it is not rooted out but 'watered' by other sins and produces very sinful behaviour.

In sum, Boniface not only cleverly uses Sodom to euphemistically describe a life governed totally by (sexual) desire, but he also uses the associated sinful dynamic which Bede, Aldhelm and late antique writers like Orosius associated with Sodom to sketch a grim picture to the king: if he and his peoples keep on behaving like they do, they will grow soft, losing their spiritual and military prowess and will thus

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[445] For the Latin of these and subsequent quotations, see table 5.

[446] Bede, *In Genesim*, Gen. 10:30-32 (p.151) [p.226] '*Et hoc in "campo," quia neque montem contemplationis, qua superna inquirant, ascendunt reprobi, neque tranquillitatem intellectualium adeunt insularum, per quam labentis seculi curas altiori animi libertate transcendant; sed in concupiscentiis tantum terrestribus effrenata gaudent petulantia circumferri.*'

[447] For the idea that Boniface custom-tailored the style of his letters to match the recipient's status or expectations, see: Michael W. Herren, 'Boniface's Epistolary Prose Style: The Letters to the English', in: Rebecca Stephenson and Emily V. Thornbury, *Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Toronto and London 2016) 18-37, esp. 21.

[448] Ibidem, *Tangl 75*, (p.157), Lin.29-33.

eventually be destroyed either by God or an earthly enemy like the Saracens. This use of the Sodomites' sinful dynamic is a slight variation on the use discussed in the previous section. Instead of integrating seemingly small sins into a Sodomitic dynamic ending in unmentionable sin and heavenly wrath to prevent readers from committing sinful acts, Boniface tries to correct existing behaviour by suggesting that his readers have already copied the Sodomites' characteristic lack of regulating their sexual desires and are spiralling towards baseness and softness, ultimately ending in heavenly punishment.

There also is another difference. Whereas the use of the Sodomites' sinful dynamic in the Psychomachian tradition focused on individuals and the potential consequences for those committing acts associated with this dynamic, Boniface, in his letters, emphasises the interplay between the individual and the collective. Just before he accuses the Anglo-Saxons of acting '*ad instar Sodomitane gentis*', he warns King Aethelbald that his people were perishing because they followed his example of sexual licentiousness. Thus, the Sodomitic dynamic Boniface paints is a consequence of the king's sinful acts. Instead of the personal damnation waiting for those who feed the *antiquus serpens* in Boniface's *Enigmata,* the result of the king's sodomitical behaviour is the moral downfall of his people. By following his example and failing to regulate their sexual desire properly, the king's people followed the same route to destruction as the Sodomites. Using the Sodomitic dynamic, Boniface thus creates a powerful tool to correct the behaviour of those bearing political responsibility. When they act like the Sodomites, there is a chance their people will also act and ultimately become like the Sodomites, potentially suffering a similar faith.

The punitive potential of Sodom's sinful dynamic: creating and judging Sodomites

The attempts to use Sodom's sinful dynamic to educate about the seriousness of some seemingly minor sins concerning earthly desires (the educational potential) and to correct people who already fail to regulate their desires properly (the corrective potential) raise the question: What happened when people chose to ignore these warnings? The most obvious source for analysing the answer is the *penitentials.*

Before analysing these penitentials, a short overview of their interrelation is necessary. In total, there are seven 'Anglo-Saxon' penitentials, five of which belong to a group called the *Iudicia Theodori* (see Table 6 in Appendix 4). These are based on the decisions of Theodore of Canterbury and are therefore linked to the School of Canterbury discussed in the second section of this chapter. The D-version, presumably the oldest, must have been known before 725 in Ireland, since the compilers of the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis* used it.[449] The youngest version is the *P.Umbrense*, compiled by someone calling themselves the *Discipulum Umbrense* and working approximately two generations after Theodore's death. The compilation of the other versions falls somewhere in between these two.[450] The *P.Ecgberhti* was composed by an unknown eighth-century compiler. Although it is unclear whether the penitential was composed on the Continent or in England, it was undoubtedly composed in Anglo-Saxon circles and uses the *Iudicia Theodori* as one of its principal sources.[451] The *Excarpsus Cummeani* was certainly composed

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[449] Wilhelm Kursawa, *Healing not Punishment: Historical and Pastoral Networking of the Penitentials Between the Sixth and Eighth Centuries* (Turnhout 2017), 230 and 232.
[450] Ibidem.
[451] Reinhold Haggenmüller, *Die Überlieferung der Beda und Egbert zugeschriebenen Bußbücher* (Frankfurt am Main 1991), 149-155. For the opinion that this penitential was potentially written in England, see: Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe*, 91-92.

on the Continent, but is included in this study because it was written either by Boniface or someone closely connected to his circle.[452]

With these connections in mind, it is time to turn to the contents of the canons in the penitentials. As the first section of this chapter established, the Irish penitentials use references to the Sodomites to explain certain same-sex sins further. As part of this explanation, the behaviour under consideration was compared to the behaviour of the biblical Sodomites, using phrases such as '*fornicauerit sicut Sodomitae fornicauerunt*, '*fornicauerit sodomitico ritu*' and '*faciunt scelus uirile ut Sodomite*.[453] Although the penitentials recognised other categories of sexual sinners, like adulterers, 'Sodomites' is never used as a description for such a category but always as a reference to the Biblical Sodomites to clarify the act in question.

As Table 6 in Appendix 4 shows, this changes in the Anglo-Saxon penitentials. All penitentials belonging to the *Iudicia Theodori* contain a penance for 'Sodomites'. This change is the most obvious in the *Paenitentiale Ecgberhti*. As Table 6 shows, the penitential contains three references to Sodom. Canon 1.3, the first reference, includes a list of the capital crimes according to Augustine. However, after '*idolatria*', the composer switched from listing sins to listing sinners, because '*idolatria*' is followed by '*molles, sodomit(a)e, maledici*' and '*periuri*'. To this compiler, the Sodomites formed a contemporary group of sinners, like the *maledici* and *periuri*. The following reference to Sodom, c.1.8, belongs to a series of canons detailing the penance for (variations of) these *capitalia crimina.* Instead of using a description of a sin, like fornication in the manner of the Sodomites, it simply reads: '(Concerning) Sodomites, if it is a habit: a bishop fourteen years[…].'[454] This use of Sodomites implies that Sodomites were people who belonged to a group of sinners solely because they committed a particular sin. After all, the compiler distinguishes between the habitual and non-habitual Sodomite. It thus appears that 'Sodomites' in this context fulfil a similar function to that of, for example, 'thieves' could: a recognisable group of people characterised by the fact that they committed the same sin. The same seems to happen in the *Excarpsus Cummeani,* which uses comparable wording to the *Paenitentiale Ecgberhti.* The *Iudicia Theodori* provide even less information to the user. All versions simply state: 'Sodomites 7 years'.[455]

The change of the use of Sodomite in the Anglo-Saxon penitentials as a category of sinners signifies a move away from using 'Sodomite' as a purely geographical and historical signifier referring to those living in the biblical Sodom, in favour of a definition of 'Sodomite' which focussed on someone having specific 'Sodomitical' behavioural characteristics or a particular lifestyle. The 'Sodomite' had become an ahistorical label used to describe a type of person characterised by a sodomitic way of living. This use of 'Sodomite' is a logical development from the educative and corrective use of the sinful dynamic ending in the Sodomites' unmentionable crime. After all, if someone continued to act like the Sodomites, for example, by drinking or eating excessively (as in the Psychomachian use of the dynamic) or by failing to regulate their sexual desire properly (as in Boniface's letters) it seems logical that they would end up becoming a Sodomite. In fact, Bede's earlier mentioned unique interpretation of the Sodomites' attempted rape of the angels as an attempt to make the angels 'like themselves' already points to the possibility of becoming (like) a Sodomite through (forced) participation in same-sex acts.[456] Thus, the

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[452] Meens, 'Boniface: Preaching and Penance', 209-217.

[453] Quotations from resp. *Paenitentiale Columbani,* B3 and B15; *Paenitentiale Cummeani*, c.2.9. For more examples, see Table 1 in Appendix 4.

[454] *Paenitentiale ps. Ecgberhti*, c.1.7.

[455] *Capitula Dacheriana*, c.153; *Canones Gregorii*, c.101; *Canones Basilienses*, c.64, *Canones Cottoniani*, c.160, *Paenitentiale Umbrense*, c.1.2.6. For the Latin, see Table 6 in Ack ppendix 4.

[456] Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:4-5 (p.222) [p.300]: *'…cum absque respectu pudoris alicuius omnes a puerili aetate usque ad ultimam sanectutem masculi in masculos turpitudinem uperari solebant, adeo ut ne hospitibus quidem ac peregrinis*

educational use of Sodom created the potential for the label 'Sodomite' to change from a specific historic-geographic label for people living in biblical Sodom to an ahistorical label used to describe a type of sinner characterised by a Sodomitic way of living. Therefore, if there is a link between the sinful dynamic and the use of 'Sodomite' to describe contemporary sinners, the penitentials are an example of the punitive potential the association of Sodomites with a sinful dynamic provided: it provided a name for the group of sinners, enabling the compilers to single them out and give them a penance.

Although there is no direct evidence that this change in the use of Sodom is directly connected to the Anglo-Saxon educational and corrective use of Sodom, the fact that this use only appears *after* the Anglo-Saxon authors started using the Sodomitical dynamic with the unspeakable sin as its endpoint, suggests there might be a causal link. A cursory examination of some Irish biblical commentaries seems to confirm that this difference between the Irish and Anglo-Saxon use of Sodom in the penitentials mirrors a difference in the Irish and Anglo-Saxon Biblical commentaries on Sodom. In his influential '*Wendepunkte'* article, Bernard Bischoff compiled an overview of Irish Biblical commentaries, providing each commentary with a number.[457] Nos. 1-4 are especially relevant to this thesis because they contain commentaries on the book of Genesis. Of these, nos. 3-4 do not contain a commentary on the parts of Genesis containing Sodom's story. No.1, an eighth-century work also known as the *Bibelwerk* or the Reference Bible, comments on the noise of the Sodomites leading to God's decision to send his angels to investigate, provides an allegorical interpretation of the importance of the number of godfearing people Abraham agrees with God as a threshold for Him to spare Sodom, allegorically interprets the fire and sulpher with which Sodom is punished and provides an allegorical interpretation of Lot's wife being turned into salt which does not fit Bede's gendered explanation.[458] No. 2, also known as *De operibus sex dierum,* largely deals with the same issues as No.1, but adds a partial and short version of the Sodom allegory based on Isidore. [459] *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*, No. 38 on Bischoff's list and already discussed in chapter two, also fits this picture: although it discusses the Sodomites' sins and their relation to God's punishment of the city, it does not reflect the cascade of sins or *luxuria* leading up to the Sodomtes' same-sex acts.[460] This limited overview suggests that the Irish eighth-century biblical commentaries do not use the Sodomitic dynamic central to the writings of Bede, Aldhelm and Boniface.

In light of this potential link between Sodom's sinful dynamic, its punitive potential and the penitentials, a peculiarity in all canons in the *Iudicia Theodor*i dealing with Sodomites might be relevant. In all versions, the canon on Sodomites contains a reference to '*molles'*.[461] The D-version, reads: '*Sodomite VII annis;*

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sua scelera abscondere, set et hos uim inferendo suis similes facere sceleribus atque suis facinoribus implicare contenderent'.

[457] Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter', 189-281, esp. 222-281.

[458] For this thesis, the following manuscript was used to study the *Reference Bible*: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 76, fol. 1-106, saec. VIII-IX, at fol. 92r-93r.

[459] Michael Gorman has made a preliminary edition of this text: Michael Gorman, 'A Critique of Bischoff's Theory of Irish Exegesis: The Commentary on Genesis in Munich Clm 6302 (Wendepunkte 2)', *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 7 (1997) 178-233, at 212-233. Gorman is critical of Bischoff's identification of the Reference Bible as 'Irish'. On the debate about Bischoff's *Wendepunkte* article in which Gorman participates, see note 280.

[460] See: Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae libri très,* Lib.1,Cap.10 (col. 2161):' *Quae vindicta hactenus eorumdem terram non deseruit, dum quali poenae, qui talia agunt subjacebunt, ostendit. Inter istas vero duas primarias in saeculo poenas, diluvii scilicet et Sodomitanam, talis differentia deprehenditur, quod aqua una terra, igni altera punita videatur: una coeli rore, et abyssi unda diluitur; altera igneo imbre, et sulphuris superfusione damnatur. Una anni circulo unius permanente, terra retegitur; per alteram terra et adhuc cessatione maceratur: in una naturale scelus in hominibus punitur, per alteram adinventio concupiscentiae contra consuetudinem facta vindicatur, In ista vero Sodomitana poena nil contra naturam Deus facere cernitur, cum desuper aereo ignito illo spatio, insoliti desiderii ardor inflammatur.'*

[461] See Table 6 in Appendix 4.

molles uno anno'.[462] As mentioned above, the D-version, written before 725, is the oldest of the *Iudicia Theodori*. Therefore, it stands the closest to Theodore's actual judgments.[463] Its connection with Theodore's school of Canterbury and its late seventh-early to eighth-century date places it at the same time, place and cultural context as the *Liber Monstrorum,* Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate* and the Epinal-Erfurt glossary. After all, these works are all connected to the early eighth-century School of Canterbury.[464] As argued above, these texts seem to construct a type of person, a Sodomite in Aldhelm's case and a 'monster' in the case of the *LM* 1.1. This person has two relevant characteristics: he is a *cinaedus* (i.e.: someone who loves feminine occupations, or, according to the Epinal-Erfurt, someone who is a *molles*) and a *scortator* (i.e.: lovers of fornication / whoredom). As argued above, Aldhelm seems to separate these two characteristics to create a sinful dynamic: the people of Sodom were first only *scortatores* until their sordidness softened them and they became *cinaedi* who wanted to rape the angels.

Although hard to prove, the same division between these two characteristics might be happening in the D-version. In this reading, Sodomites are the complete 'monster' described in LM 1.1: they both love feminine occupations and are sexually promiscuous. The '*molles'*, who receive a lighter penance, are only soft or effeminate but have not yet reached the end point of Sodom's sinful dynamic. What made them soft is hard to establish because, as has become clear above, multiple factors such as a luxurious lifestyle, a preference for feminine activities, or fornication could lead to someone being 'effeminate'. So, it seems possible that the *'molles uno anno'* refers to someone who was guilty of something associated with Sodom's sinful dynamic and (moral) weakness or femininity but had not yet reached the end point of this dynamic, probably because the other element of the 'monster' in LM 1.1 or Aldhelm's Sodomite, namely same-sex activities, was still missing. If this is the case, the Sodomites' sinful dynamic not only created one category of sinners but two: Sodomites and *molles*.

Although it is important to stress that, in the absence of any relevant context to the canon mentioning Sodomites and '*molles'* in the D-version, this interpretation remains speculative. At the same time, it presents a slight improvement on the currently available interpretation in the historiography. To understand why, a short overview of the historiography is necessary. The historiography most often explains the difference between the '*molles'* and '*Sodomite'* as the difference between the 'active' and 'passive' partners in same-sex intercourse.[465] Frantzen first suggests this interpretation. He observes that the '*molles'* were associated with adultresses and, thus, with the role of women, whereas the Sodomite was not. Frantzen observes that both were equally culpable because both received a penance of seven years. This leads him to suggest that both were practising the same act, same-sex intercourse, with one fulfilling the role of a woman (the penetratee) and one the role of a man (the penetrator).[466]

This interpretation is solely based on an analysis of the U-version of the *Iudicia Theodori*, which provides additional context to the canon in the form of other canons also dealing with same-sex acts with which the penance in the canon mentioning Sodomites can be compared.[467] In the U-version, the canon reads:

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462 *Capitula Dacheriana*, c.153 (p.15).
463 This observation is based on: Kursawa, *Healing not Punishment*, 230-232.
464 See section two of this chapter.
465 For the interpretation of Sodomites as penetrators and *molles* as penetratees, see: Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 152; Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism', 12; Abraham, *Anticipating Sin in Medieval Society,* 140-141. Deviating from this analysis, Clark proposes that '"*molles sicut adultera"* is essentially a rephrasing of "*Sodomitae VII annos peniteant*", and that both terms refer to the passive partner in this context*.'* Although he adds that, even though apparently irrelevant in this context, *molles* might not mean the exact same thing as *sodomitae.* See: Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 62.
466 Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 152.
467 For an overview of these canons, see: Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 61.

'*Sodomite VII annos peniteant et molles sicut adultera'*.[468] In another canon, the U-version stipulates that a female adulterer should do penance for seven years.[469] Thus, the *molles* and Sodomites both receive the same penance. Kursawa suggests that the compiler of the U-version reconstructed this text from a garbled manuscript tradition.[470] Indeed, the G- and C- and B-versions, all written prior to the U-version but after the D-version, contain different variations on the canon (For the Latin text, see Table 6 in Appendix 4). Of these, only the U-, B- and D- versions seem to make sense. The G-version seems, at least to my modern eye, clearly unusable because it provides two wildly different penances for the *molles*, one of one year and one of seven years like an adultress.[471] The C-version is also clearly corrupt, although it seems a corrupted rendering of the B-version.[472] B-version seems to stand closest to the D-version, only adding '*sicut mulier'* to the D-version. It seems possible that the scribe responsible for this addition either tried to clarify to a reader unknown with the tradition described above what a '*molles'* was by comparing it to a woman or specified the mode of penance, namely like a woman, although the meaning of this alteration is unclear to me. This confusion might also have influenced the scribe responsible for adding the reference to adultery and its associated seven years of penance in the G-version. The compiler of the U-version, perhaps faced with a tradition resembling the G-version, retains the reference to adultery only the G-version contains, removes the penance of one year for the *molles* which all other versions contain and turns the stipulation that a female adulterer should do seven years of penance into a separate canon.[473]

The traditional differentiation between penetrator (Sodomite) and penetratee ('*molles'*) holds up in the U-version and might therefore reflect the interpretation of its compiler, but it seems an unlikely interpretation for the D-, C- and B- versions. After all, why would someone who not only participated in same-sex acts but also violated the gendered expectation of men as penetrators receive such a light penance? This would contradict the (late) antique idea that being a penetrator in same-sex intercourse was less objectionable than being penetrated.[474] Even though the proposed interpretation that *molles* refers to people at an earlier stage of a sinful dynamic ultimately ending in becoming considered a Sodomite is hard to prove definitively because of the lack of any other canons on same-sex acts against which the penance could be compared in the D-version, it seems somewhat more likely than the alternative interpretation applied to the U-version because it can be connected to an intellectual tradition at the School of Canterbury at the start of the eighth century.

Sodom's sinful dynamic and *Geslacht*

It has become clear that Anglo-Saxon authors used and altered the sinful dynamic they encountered in the writings of the Church Fathers. Boniface's letters represent the most 'classical' application of the sinful dynamic: like Orosius; he used it to warn King Aethelbald that if his society was to continue its misregulation of sexual desire, his kingdom would sink even further into a moral abyss, ultimately losing God's favour and succumbing to foreign invaders. Apart from re-using this late antique application of the sinful dynamic Bede, Aldhelm and Boniface also innovated. They used their readers' expectations

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[468] *Paenitentiale Umbrense*, 2.6 (p.6).
[469] Ibidem, 14.14 (p.17).
[470] Kursawa, *Healing not Punishment*, 270-271.
[471] Both Kursawa and Clark share this observation: Ibiden, 271; Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 62 n.23.
[472] The C-version reads: '*Sodomite atuem VII annos peniteant; mollis uero I annum sicut et mulier'* (source: *Canones Cottoniani*, c.161 (p.11)), whereas the B-version reads: '*Sodomite VII; molles uno anno sicut mulier.'* (source: Canones Basilienses, c. 64 b-c (p.7).
[473] See notes 467 and 468.
[474] On these ideas, see: Williams, 'The language of gender: lexical semantics and the Latin vocabulary of unmanly men', 461-481.

regarding Sodom's sins, namely the idea that the Sodomites were punished because of one especially horrendous unmentionable act by placing that act at the end of the sinful dynamic. The use of this altered dynamic also slightly shifted: whereas the Church Fathers used it predominantly to describe the fate of a society, Bede, Aldhelm and Boniface seem to focus more on the sins of an individual and the individual implications of giving into the wealth related sins that form the start of the dynamic. This more individual focus is further highlighted by the potential impact the dynamic had on the language used in the penitentials, who, after all, deal with individuals. Within this dynamic *geslacht*, that is both the proper regulation of sexual desires towards procreation and gendered expectations connected to certain behaviour, plays a crucial role. The abundance of food or drink which, in the case of Aldhelm's *De Virginitate* and Boniface's response to it, form the start of the sinful dynamic, lead to softness or femininity. This femininity weakens the sinner, who, subsequently, fails to regulate his sexual desires properly and falls prey to modes of sexuality which were not aimed at procreation. Thus, like the Sodom allegory, the move towards eternal damnation, in this case falling prey to the sinful dynamic, is strongly connected with gendered language. If the above-presented suggestion for interpreting the reference to '*molles'* in the D-version of the Iudicia Theodori is correct, the association with femininity might even have been used to create a 'group' of sinners like the use of 'Sodomites' did.

Conclusion

When Allen Frantzen wrote the first book-length study on Anglo-Saxon same-sex desire, he rightly complained that, while there was 'an extensive body of scholarship' dealing with same-sex desire in English texts from the fourteenth century onwards, 'the origins of this venerable and distinctive tradition have never been explored'.[475] In the meantime, two book-length studies on the subject have appeared, as well as numerous articles. As explained in the introduction to this thesis, Sodom's citizens play a key role in these studies as the authors try to establish the role same-sex desire played in the Angelo-Saxon conceptualisation of the Sodomites' sins. To move beyond this debate, this thesis approached the use of Sodom through the concept of *geslacht*: the transfer between generations of rules and regulations concerning procreation, gender appropriate behaviour and sexual acts. This thesis therefore analysed not what the Sodomites did that led to their punishment, but how the Anglo-Saxon authors writing in Latin between the seventh and the end of the eight-century used Sodom's story as a tool to transmit these rules and regulations.

Identifying the starting point: Church Fathers and Sodom

As Michael Carden's extensive study on the reception of Sodom's story in antiquity shows, the Anglo-Saxon authors studied in this thesis were far from the first writers interested in Sodom's story.[476] Generations of authors had interpreted and used the story. Far from looking at the story afresh, each generation was confronted with the existing interpretations. This thesis has shown that these interpretations shaped how generations of authors used and wrote about Sodom's demise. Not ignoring the existing exegeses, most authors who used Sodom's story chose to interact with them, adding, removing, or revising elements. Through this process, certain interpretations were handed down for generations before they influenced the Anglo-Saxon authors central to this essay. Philo's innovative exegeses are a point in case: although authors like Bede had never read his original works, their use of Sodom's story was heavily indebted to his novel interpretations. This means that any reconstruction of the way Anglo-Saxon authors used Sodom's story as a tool to teach about *geslacht* should start with understanding the tradition which served as the starting point of these authors.

Although based on only a small number of the writings Bede and his contemporaries would have had access to, the first chapter of this thesis has provided the start of a reconstruction of the way Sodom was used to educate in this existing tradition. The analysis of these writings showed that, contrary to the commonly held view, these Anglo-Saxon authors did not encounter a wide variety of competing and 'mixed associations' with Sodom in the works of Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory the Great.[477] Although the Church Fathers connected a great variety of sins to the Sodomites, the analysis in chapter one suggests that since Philo's commentaries these sins were interconnected, forming a sinful dynamic surrounding the vice *luxuria.* This dynamic always follows the same pattern: through an abundance of wealth, the Sodomites fell prey to *luxuria*, causing excessive *libido*, resulting in the attempted rape of the angels which was the direct cause of the Sodomites' heavenly punishment. Chapter one has shown that this dynamic was not only used to interpret the events which unfolded in Genesis 19 but was also used by Orosius and Augustine to persuade their readers to change their behaviour. Although it is unclear what

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[475] Frantzen, *Before the Closet,* 112.
[476] Carden, Sodomy. For his short overview of the Anglo-Saxo use of Sodom, see esp. p.165-170.
[477] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, 58.

behaviour Augustine was thinking of, Orosius clearly linked his instructive or educational use of Sodom to the correct regulation of earthly desire. More specifically: sexual desire.

Apart from using this sinful dynamic as a tool to teach about rules and regulations surrounding the regulation of (sexual) desire, the first chapter also showed the development of an allegorical interpretation of Lot's flight from Sodom via Zoar to the mountains. These historical places were used as markers against which someone's spiritual development could be measured. In this allegorical landscape, Sodom marked someone whose life was governed by desire, the mountains signified someone who, undisturbed by earthly desires, focussed on heavenly contemplation and Zoar signified those who, although no longer governed by illicit desires, had not (yet) been able to totally escape their grasp.

Reshaping past interpretations: Anglo-Saxons and Sodom

The second chapter focussed on Anglo-Saxon uses of Sodom's story that took this allegorical interpretation as their starting point. Bede, Aldhelm and Alcuin applied and further developed this use of Sodom's story. In his commentary on Genesis Bede provided the most elaborate theoretical background to the educational use of the allegory. Perhaps because he wrote to instruct *doctores* who would be tasked with educating others, Bede is the first to explicitly frame the allegory as a tool to teach people what were the wrong and right ways of dealing with illicit sexual and monetary desires. Further strengthening its educational potential, Bede also added new elements to the allegory. Building on Augustine's description of Sodomites in *De Civitate Dei,* Bede put greater emphasis on the contagious nature of Sodom's vices advising his readers to prevent any association with those who allegorically lived in Sodom. Probably inspired by Origen, Bede also added gendered language to the explanation of the allegory: moving back to Sodom signified a 'feminine frailty' which did not suit the *vir perfectus.* With this change, the allegory became even more connected to *geslacht*. It not only described different ways of dealing with sexual desire and procreative acts needed to create a new generation but explicitly tied these ways to gendered expectations. A man whose mind was governed by worldly desire and the enticement of *luxuria* and *libido*, instead of the heavenly contemplation that was to be expected from a *perfectum virum* had failed to repress his womanly heart. Suffering from such feminine frailty, he was deemed to be less of a man.

For a practical application of the educational use of the allegory Bede outlined, chapter two turned to Alcuin and Aldhelm. Aldhelm, writing for a highly educated monastic audience, created an intricate structure in the prose version of his *De Virginitate.* He compared Lot's wife with saint Malchus, who, beset with worldly concerns, looked back at his old life and decided to leave his monastery to travel back to his old family. This not only severely threatened his spiritual progress but resulted in his suicidal death. Aldhelm, who wrote before Bede, did not explicitly use the Sodom allegory. However, his use of Sodom to warn against spiritual regression from a life filled with heavenly contemplation to a life in which earthly desires again influence life choices clearly fits the same tradition that led Bede to his allegorical interpretation of Sodom. It also served as a suitable warning for his monastic audience: once called to a life of heavenly contemplation, giving in to earthly thoughts would have grave consequences.

Writing for a not yet fully educated audience, chapter two has shown how Alcuin's writings illustrate how a generation after Bede the same interpretations still shaped the educational use of Sodom. In a letter to an old student Alcuin compared the recipient's childlike lack of spiritual strength to fight desire with the Sodomites by warning the recipient that, were he to continue his behaviour, he would burn in Sodom's flames. However, instead of connecting gendered language to the spiritual progression, as Bede did, Alcuin compared the spiritual regression of the recipient towards Sodom's flames with a regression from *vir perfectus* to the less perfect state of *adolescentia*. Although Alcuin does not use the Sodom allegory in

his *Quaestiones in Genesim,* the main theme underlying his analysis of Sodom's narrative is comparable: Sodom's story is used to educate the reader on the correct way of dealing with sexual desire. However, instead of using the places in the story of Sodom's destruction to describe different ways of controlling (sexual) desire, Alcuin used the behaviour of the people in the story. By placing them on a scale from reprehensible to laudable ways of regulating desire, he combined the literal interpretation of Genesis characteristic of the *Quaestiones* with an educative use comparable to the allegorical interpretation of Sodom's story: communicating rules and regulations concerning sex by presenting ways of dealing with (sexual) desire on a scale from bad to good ways of regulating desire.

Focussing on the sinful dynamic identified in chapter one, the third chapter asked how Anglo-Saxon authors used this dynamic to transmit ideas about *geslacht*. Although building on the Church Father's instructive and educational use of this sinful dynamic, the analysis of Bede's commentary on Genesis revealed an innovative use of this dynamic. Contrary to the Church Fathers Bede relied on his audience to associate one '*infando'* with the Sodomites without needing to explain what this '*infando'* entailed. As an analysis of Bede's often overlooked commentary on Luke 17:26-28 made clear, he used the readers' expectation that this '*infando'* was Sodom's main identifying sin to dissuade them from committing more 'common' sins relating to *luxuria* by claiming that these other sins also led to Sodom's downfall. Using this insight, chapter three proposes a new solution to the longstanding historiographical question of how the Sodomites' '*infando'* relates to the other non-sexual sins Bede also mentions as the cause of Sodom's downfall. Chapter three argued that Bede, like the Church Fathers, frames the Sodomites' failed attempt to force their habitual same-sex desire onto the angels as the endpoint of a dynamic of ever-growing *luxuria*. Like the different sins the Church Fathers associate with Sodom's demise, the sins Bede mentions are all part of a sinful dynamic characteristic of the Sodomites.

The Anglo-Saxon authors did, however, use this dynamic in a different way than their late antique predecessors. By including seemingly minor sins in the early stages of the dynamic, they used Sodom's sinful dynamic to create an effective slippery slope argument focused primarily on preventing individual people from committing a particular vice. Using this idea as a basis, chapter three analysed the educational, corrective, and punitive potential of this use of Sodom's sin. The Anglo-Saxon psychomachian tradition provided the main evidence for the educational application. The analyses of the structure and context of Aldhelm's use of Sodom in his poetic version of *De Virginitate* has revealed that Aldhelm, like Bede, describes a sinful dynamic: the Sodomites started as lovers of whoredom, had become effeminate through their (sexual) sordidness and were, therefore, also *cinaedi* , i.e. same-sex penetration-seeking effeminate people. They brought this dynamic to its climax in their attempted rape of the angels. Aldhelm uses this dynamic to compare the Sodomites with Lot, whose inebriation softened his mind and led to unspeakable sexual sin. By comparing the sinful dynamic underlying Lot's sin with the Sodomites, Aldhelm effectively uses Sodom's story as a stark warning against the excessive consumption of alcohol. An analysis of Boniface's *Enigmata* in chapter three has shown that this message was not lost on the next generation of Aldhelm's readers. Boniface, writing for an audience steeped in Aldhelm's literature, reacts to, and elaborates on Aldhelm's short and somewhat implicit characterisation of Sodom's sinful dynamic by using Sodom's demise as the framing device for a thematic unit consisting of speeches from *crapula gullae, ebrietas* and *luxoria*. Using Sodom this way, Boniface reminded his readers about the dangers of not regulating their earthly desires correctly: if they start eating and drinking excessively, that is adding to their *luxuria* they feed the former ruler of Sodom and thus await a similar fate.

Closer to the use of the sinful dynamic in the writings of the Church Fathers, which was aimed primarily at societal sin, chapter three showed that Sodom was also used to correct those already engaged in sins by relating these sins to the sinful dynamic and thus suggesting an imminent moral collapse of the recipient ending in a fate similar to the Sodomites. This becomes clear in the group of letters Boniface wrote around

747. In these letters references to Sodom had two functions. Firstly Boniface, like late antique authors such as Orosius, uses Sodom's sinful dynamic to warn the king of Mercia that, were he and his people to continue their failure to correctly regulate their sexual desires, they would sink even further into a state of moral depravity. They would not only lose their spiritual and military prowess but also be destroyed either by enemies or by God. Secondly, Boniface uses the reference to Sodom to describe a total state of sexual licentiousness, without resorting to the colourful language he uses in other letters. Like Bede, he could count on his readers to associate Sodom with an extreme failure to properly regulate sexual desires.

Lastly, Sodom's sinful dynamic facilitated disciplining people who did not correct their behaviour in time. As the analyses of the Anglo-Saxon and Irish penitentials made clear, there is an important change in the language used to refer to Sodom-related crimes. Whereas the Irish penitentials referred to the biblical Sodomites to clarify the acts sinners engaged in, using words such as 'fornicated like the Sodomites had fornicated', the Anglo-Saxon penitentials call the perpetrators of certain sins 'Sodomites'.[478] Like a thief committed theft, a Sodomite committed a certain sin. Which sin is not always clear. Although there is no direct link between this change and the use of Sodom's sinful dynamic it seems a logical consequence: if authors warned people who failed to regulate their (sexual) desires that they would become like the Sodomites, calling people who failed to heed these warnings 'Sodomites' seems a logical next step. Sodom's sinful dynamic, therefore, provided a language to talk about and create a group of sinners which before did not exist as a group. Although somewhat speculative, the analysis of the D-version of the *Iudicia Theodori* even suggests that the canons sanctioning *'molles',* which started appearing together with the penances for Sodomites in the Anlgo-Latin penitentials, might originally have sanctioned the behaviour of people who were showing characteristics of a Sodomite, but had not yet reached the end-station of Sodom's sinful dynamic. Thus, the sinful dynamic might have helped to create not one but two categories of sinners.

Looking to the future: Sodom and the next generation(s)

It has become clear that the novel approach to analysing Sodom taken in this thesis has resulted in new insights into the educational use and meaning of Sodom in Latin Anglo-Saxon texts. This approach also shows the necessity of further analysis of other sources mentioning Sodom, which did not fit the narrow focus of this thesis. The most obvious candidates for such an analysis are the Old-English sources studied by Clark.[479] Most are written roughly a generation after the Latin texts studied for this thesis. Therefore, they might reveal how the next generation further developed the educational uses of Sodom's story. Especially the ninth-century Old English translations of Latin sources studied in chapters one to three might provide a unique opportunity to analyse how this new generation received and remoulded the use of Sodom in older sources. Of special interest is the Old-English translation of Gregor the Great's *Regula Pastoralis*, given Gregory's significant role in shaping the Sodom allegory and the translation of Orosius's *Historia adversus paganos*, because of its role in the creation of Sodom's sinful dynamic.

The focus on the use of Sodom to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of rules and regulations related to *geslacht* also raises a last intriguing question: what if later generations no longer understand the writings of the previous generations? The garbled state of some of the canons mentioning Sodom in the *Iudicia Theodori* and the attempt by the compiler of the U-version to make sense of a tradition which, at that point, had already become hard to interpret show that this transfer might have been less smooth than most instances of intergenerational transfer studied in this thesis. The same confusion seems to plague the later Old English translations of the *Iudicia Theodori.* However, the most intriguing example I

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[478] For an overview of the canons mentioned, see table 6 (Appendix 4).
[479] He discusses these sources in the second part of his book, see: Ibidem, 85-209.

encountered during my research is the rather obscure 'Capitulary of Charlemagne of 779'.[480] A probably mid-ninth century 'forgery' that combines multiple documents to create a condemnation of same-sex acts. It cites Boniface's letter to Aethelbald in favour of such a condemnation.[481] Intriguingly, as the analysis of this letter in chapter three mentioned, the exact same misinterpretation of this letter reappeared in modern historiography.

The analysis in this thesis focussed primarily on reconstructing the way the author most likely intended references to Sodom to function. However, if later readers interpreted these mentions differently, like this forger, the actual educational or instructive function of the mention of Sodom changes. A study into the later reception of some of the writings discussed in this thesis might thus provide insight into a potential change in the way later generations used and thought of Sodom's story.

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[480] Boswell mentions this source in a footnote, see: Boswell, *Christianity Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 177 n.30.
[481] Ibidem.

Appendix 1: The Sodom allegory before 600

Overview

As explained in chapters 1 and 2, the Sodom allegory is one of the ways in which both Anglo-Saxon authors and the generation before them used Sodom's story as a teaching tool. This appendix provides an overview of the texts in which this Sodom allegory is used prior to the Anglo-Saxon authors studied in chapters 2 and 3. This overview is intended to both aid future research into the Sodom allegory before the seventh century and to enable an easier analysis of the way the Anglo-Saxon authors studied, adapted and used this allegorical reading of Sodom's demise. As mentioned in chapter one, more research is necessary into the use and form of this allegorical interpretation in sources written prior to the Anglo-Saxon sources studied in chapters two and three. Therefore, the list of sources containing a version of the allegory presented in this appendix might be incomplete.

For the sake of completeness, Philo's work is included. As far as I have been able to establish, he is the first to allegorically link Lot's journey from Sodom with different phases of spiritual progress. However, since there is no evidence of any Anglo-Saxon knowledge of this work, any influence from Philo was indirect either via the other works listed here, or via works containing the allegory I have not identified. Most of the original Greek version of Philo's work containing his most elaborate explanation of this allegory has not survived. Instead, modern editions are based largely on a fifth century Arameic translation. Given the focus of this thesis on Latin literature, the English translation is quoted instead of the Aramaic source text.

The schematic providing an overview of the Sodom allegory from chapter one is printed at the end of this appendix. The colours used in the quotations correspond with the colours of the different phases of spiritual development in this schematic.

Philo of Alexandria

Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus, Book 4, Question 46-47:
'Question 46: What is the meaning of the words, "Escape to the mountain lest thou be seized among them"?

The literal text reveals the destruction of a plain of low-lying (places). But as for the deeper meaning, it seems to be somewhat as follows. When the mind begins to take the higher road, it becomes better and progresses, leaving behind earth-bound and low things, which those men pursue and admire who are undisciplined. But (the mind), becoming light, is elevated to higher things, and looking around observes what is in the air and in the ether and the whole heaven together, its substance and movements and harmonies and affinities and sympathies, by which things are related to one another, and this whole world. This ascent is more figuratively called "mountain," but its true name is "wisdom," for the soul which is truly a lover of wisdom desired a vision of higher and more exalted things, by being in ethereal regions. Accordingly, a divine response and warning was uttered, that those who strive after low and base and earthly things shall die in respect of true life—the soul, wandering about in the manner of the dead. But those who desire heavenly things and are borne on high shall be saved[i] alone, exchanging mortal for immortal life.

Question 47: What is the meaning of the words, "Lot said, I shall not be able to escape to the mountain lest perchance evils overtake me, and I die. Behold this city is near to escape to, which is small, and it is not small. Thereto I will escape, and my soul will live"?

The divine word, extending abundant grace, calls up the soul of the progressive man to perfection. But he is still small and, like those whose health revives after a long illness and who, though they are delivered from the danger of death, are not yet well but still maintain a balance between health and illness, confesses his own poverty by saying that he is not able to depart altogether from his city and from civilization and change to the security of quiet that is becoming to wise men. But it is for him to progress and no longer accept the city and civilization as great and honoured, and to restrain his admiration for them, considering them small indeed but somehow necessary and not a little useful. Thus there are three persons who stand in the middle: the wise man, the progressive man and the wicked man; and the extremes are at war. For the wise man (pursues) peace and— and leisure in order that he may devote himself to following after divine contemplation. But the wicked man (pursues) the city and the excitement of the multitude and the crowding of the city and the stream of men and things as well. For the love of business and greed and zeal to obtain authority are honourable to such a man, but quiet is not honourable. But he who is progressive between both moves toward the peacefulness of security; he is not, however, able to get entirely beyond civilization though he no longer, as. formerly, admires the city as a great good but restricts his perception and receives the impression that that which formerly seemed great is a slight and small thing. But the statement of contradiction that the same city is small and not small has a most natural reason, which is in order and follows upon the things that were declared earlier. For the life of the city seems great to him who wishes to please the multitude, but small to the progressive man. And this question has a solution something like this. There are three ways of life which are well known: the contemplative, the active and the pleasurable. Great and excellent is the contemplative; slight and unbeautiful is the pleasurable; small and not small is the middle one, which touches on, and adheres to, both of them. It is small by reason of the fact that it is a close neighbour to pleasure; but it is great because of its nearness and also its kinship to contemplation.'[482]

Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus, Book 4, Question 52
Question 52: Why did his wife look backward and become a pillar of salt and not some other material?

'(…) But as for the deeper meaning the wife of the mind is symbolically sense-perception, which becomes insolent not only in evil men but also in those who progress, and it inclines toward sense-perceptible things which are external rather than the things seen internally by reason. And for this reason it turns back, in appearance to Sodom, but in truth to all the visible possessions, and it returns to those things which are with measure and without measure and to the varieties of their exhalations and to the properties of pleasant odours and tastes and substances, and it changes into an inanimate thing by separating itself from the mind, for the sake of which it was animated.'[483]

Origen of Alexandria

Homiliae in Genesim, Homily 5, Section 1:
'Quid ergo ad hospitem suum pro hospitalitatis officiis dicant angeli, uideamus. 'In monte', inquit, 'saluam fac animam tuam, ne forte comprehendaris'.[484] Erat quidem hospitalis Lot, qui etiam, sicut ei Scriptura testimonium tulit, ab interitu latuit angelis hospitio receptis. Sed non erat ita perfectus, ut statim de Sodomis exiens montem posset adscendere ; perfectorum namque est dicere : 'Leuaui oculos meos in montes, unde seniet aucilium mihi'.[485] Iste ergo neque talis erat qui inter Sodomitas perire deberet, neque tantus erat qui cum Abraham in excelsioribus posset habitare. Si enim fuisset talis, numquam ad eum diceret Abraham : 'Si tu ad dextram, ego ad sinistram, aut si tu ad sinistram, ego ad dextram' nec

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[482] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 4.46-47 (p.321).
[483] Ibidem (p.322).
[484] Gen. 19:17.
[485] Ps. 120:1.

habitacula ei sodomitica placuissent.[486] *Erat ergo medius quidam inter perfector et perditos. Et sciens non conuenire uiribus suis ut adscenderet montem, religiose et humiliter excusat dicens : 'Non possum in monte saluus fieri, sed ecce haec ciuitas pusilla est, hic saluabor, et non est pusilla'.*[487] *Ingressus uero Segor ciuitatem pusillam, in ea saluatur. Et post haec cum filiabus adscendit in montem.'*[488]

Homilies on Genesis, Homily 5, Section 6:

'Quod uero in morali loco superius ipsum quidem Lot ad rationabilem sensum et uirilem animum traximus, uxorem uero eius, quae retro respexerit, carnem concupiscentiis et uoluptatibus deditam diximus, non negligenter haec, O auditor, excipias. Obseruare enim debes, ne forte etiam cum effugeris flammas saeculi et incendia carnis euaseris, etiam cum pusillam et non puxillam eiuitatem Segor, qui est medius quidam et ciuilis profectus, superaueris et ad scientiae altitudinem uelut ad quaedam cacumina montis adscenderis: uide ne tibi insidientur duae filiae istae, quae a te non discedunt, sed sequuntur te etiam cum adscendis ad montem, id est uana gloria et maior soror eius superbia.'[489]

Ambrose of Milan

De Abraham, Book 1, Chapter 6, Section 54:

'Non ergo indefensum scriptura uirum sanctum relinquit et tradidisse maritis filias et monuisse generos inducitur. Sed uisum illis quod derideret eos: et tamen adhuc morabatur Loth, ut persuaderet generis suis, et paene non esset profectus, ut euaderet, nisi urgentibus angelis et tenentibus manus eius egredi coactus esset. Non ergo profectus, sed eductus est et mandatum accepit ne respiceret retro nec resisteret in tota regione illa, sed in montem ascenderet.

Hoc cum illi dicitur, omnibus dicitur. si uis ergo et tu euadere, ne respicias retro, sed ante te. aspice ubi Christus est, qui dicat tibi: uade retro me, sicut Petro dixit: uade retro me, ut Christum sequeretur, Christum uideret. Retro Sodoma est plena flagitii, retro Gomorra uitiis scatens, criminum regio. Ne tetigeritis inquit apostolus, ne adtaminaueritis, ne gustaueritis quae sunt omnia ad corruptelam. fuge ergo Sodomam, relinque ocius, desere elementa huius mundi, ne te inminentia inuoluant pericula: non resistas fugiens nec in tota uitiorum regione remoueris. qui non respexit euasit: quae respexit non potuit euadere.'[490]

Ambrosii Epistularum, Book 5, Letter 11, Section 21:

'Erige igitur oculos, anima, tuos, illos oculos de quibus tibi verbum dei dicit: Corde nos cepisti, soror mea sponsa, corde nos cepisti uno ab oculis tuis. Ascende in palmam, vince saeculum, ut teneas verbi altitudinem. Imaginem istam mundi foris relinque, foris malitiam! Introduc autem mentis bonitatem, quae habet gratiam in ligno vitae, si laverit stolam suam et ingrediatur in civitatem, quae vera est patria sanctorum, in qua est dei tabernaculum, circa quod 'scribae domini' praetendunt, ubi 'non dies aut sol aut luna lumen ministrant, sed ipse dominus lumen est totam illam civitatem inluminans'. Est enim lux mundi, non utique lux visibilis, sed animarum quae in hoc mundo sunt intellegibilis claritudo, quibus se splendenti lumine rationabilis infundit prudentiae, praedicatur in evangelio incorporeae virtutis inflammans vapore secreta mentium animorum que penetralia. Si quis igitur incola esse coeperit illius civitatis supernae, incola videlicet conversatione ac moribus, non discedat ab ea, non exeat, non reflectat vestigium - non

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[486] Gen. 13:9.
[487] Gen. 19:19-20.
[488] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.1 (p.162-164)
[489] Ibidem, Homilia 5.6 (p.180).
[490] Ambrose, *De Abraham*, 1.6.54 (p.538).

corporis dico sed mentis vestigium -, non revertatur retro. Retro luxuria, retro inpuritas est; denique ascendens ad montem Loth retro reliquit sodomitana flagitia, quae autem respexit retro, non potuit ad superiora evadere. Non ergo pedes tui retro, sed mores non revertantur. Non fiant manus tuae remissae et devotionis tuae ac fidei genua dissoluta Non fiat voluntatis tuae recidiva infirmitas, non ullus intercursus criminum. Sed ingressus es: mane! Pervenisti: consiste! Salvans salva animam tuam!' [491]

Ambrosii Epistularum, Book 5, Letter 11, Section 22:

'Ascendens directum adtolle gradum! Nullus inde tuto redit. Hinc via, inde ruina est, hinc ascensus, inde praecipitium. Ascendendi quidem labor, sed descendendi periculum. Sed potens est dominus, qui te fundatum illic custodiat, saeptum propheticis muris et apostolicis turribus. Ideo tibi dicit dominus: Intrate, calcate, quia adsistit vindemia! Intus, non foris simus! Et in evangelio dei filius dicit: Qui est in tecto, non descendat vasa sua tollere. Non utique de hoc tecto dicit, sed de illo: Extendit caelum sicut cameram.' [492]

Gregory the Great

Regula Pastoralis, Chapter 3, Section 27:

Quod bene Loth in semetipso exprimit, qui ardentem Sodomam fugit, sed tamen Segor inueniens, nequaquam mox montana conscendit. Ardentem quippe Sodomam fugere est illicita carnis incendia declinare. Altitudo uero est montium, munditia continentium. Vel certe quasi in monte sunt qui etiam carnali copulae inhaerent, sed tamen extra suscipiendae prolis admixtionem debitam, nulla carnis uoluptate soluuntur. In monte quippe stare est, nisi fructum propaginis in carne non quaerere. In monte stare, est carni carnaliter non adhaerere. Sed quia multi sunt qui scelera quidem carnis deserant, nec tamen in coniugio positi usus solummodo debiti iura conseruent, exit quidem Loth Sodomam, sed tamen mox ad montana non peruenit, quia iam damnabilis uita relinquitur, sed adhuc celsitudo coniugalis continentiae subtiliter non te netur. Est uero in medium Segor ciuitas, quae fugientem saluet infirmum, quia uidelicet cum sibi per incontinen tiam miscentur coniuges, et lapsus scelerum fugiunt, et tamen uenia saluantur. Quasi paruam quippe ciuitatem inueniunt in qua ab ignibus defendantur, quia coniugalis haec uita non quidem in uirtutibus mira est, sed tamen a suppliciis secura. Vnde idem Loth ad angelum dicit : 'Est ciuitas haec iuxta, ad quam possum fugere, parua ; et saluabor in ea. Numquid non modica est, et uiuit in ea anima mea'. [493] *Iuxta igitur dicitur, et tamen ad salutem tuta perhibetur, quia coniugalis uita nec a mundo longe diuisa est, nec tamen a gaudio salutis aliena. Sed tunc in actione hac uitam suam coniuges quasi in parua ciuitate custodiunt, quando pro se assiduis deprecationibus intercedunt. Vnde et recte per angelum ad eundem Loth dicitur : 'Ecce etiam in hoc suscepi preces tuas, ut non subuertam urbem pro qua locutus es'.* [494] *Quia uidelicet cum Deo deprecatio funditur nequaquam talis coniugum uita damnatur. De qua deprecatione quoque Paulus ammonet, dicens : 'Nolite fraudare inuicem, nisi forte ex consensu ad tempus, ut uacetis orationi'.* [495]

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[491] Ambrose, *Ambrosii Epistularum*, Epist.11.21 (p.90).
[492] Ibidem, Epist.11.22 (p.90-91).
[493] Gen. 19:20.
[494] Gen. 19:21.
[495] Gregory the Great cites 1 Cor. 7:5. The Latin quotation of which this citation is a part, is taken from: Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452).

Isidore of Sevilla

Expositio in Genesim, Section 15:

Illud uero notandum quod ipse Loth, ardentem Sodomam fugiens, Segor uenit, et nequaquam ad montana conscendit. Ardentem quippe Sodomam fugere est, illicita carnis incendia, uel mundi desideria declinare. Altitudo uero est montium speculatio perfectorum, sed quia multi sunt iusti, qui mundi quidem illecebras fugiunt, sed tamen in actione positi, contemplationis apicem subire non queunt, hoc est, quod exiit quidem Loth de Sodomis, sed tamen ad montana non peruenit, quia licet iam damnabilis uita relinquitur, sed adhuc celsitudo speculationis subtiliter non tenetur. Inde idem Loth ad angelum dicit, Est ciuitas haec iuxta, ad quam possum fugere, parua, et saluabor in ea. Numquid non modica est, et uiuet in ea anima mea? Iuxta igitur dicitur, et tamen ad salutem tuta esse perhibetur, quia actualis uita, nec a mundi curis ex toto discreta est, nec tamen a gaudio aeternae salutis aliena.[496]

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[496] Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim*, 15 (p.52).

Sodom — Sodomites

Philo: 'Earth-bound and low things'.[497]
Origen: 'The flames of the world and the fires of the flesh'.[498]
Ambrose: *Luxuria* and impurity.
Gregory the Great: 'Illicit fires of the flesh'.[499]
Isidore: 'illicit fires of the flesh or the desires of the world'.[500]

Lot's wife

Philo: Those who fail to progress because of a feminine mind focussed on earthlly wealth.
Origen: Not a manly mind, but 'the flesh given to desire and pleasure'.[501]
Ambrose: Those who start to leave *luxuria* and impurity, but look behind at their old life and fail.

} Eternal damnation

Zoar

Philo: Between 'peacefulness of security' and 'the city' (Sodom).[502]
Origen: 'Between the perfect and the lost'.[503]
Gregory the Great: Someone who has 'escaped damnable life', but has not reached 'the height of conjugal continence'.[504]
Isidore: An active life not 'free from the cares of the world', but also 'not alien to the joy of eternal salvation'.[505]

The mountain — Lot

Philo: 'Heavenly things'.[506]
Origen: 'The perfect' and 'the heigh of knowledge'.[507]
Ambrose: A total escape from *luxuria* and impurity.
Gregory the Great: 'The height of conjugal continence'.[508]
Isidore: 'The contemplation of the perfect'.[509]

} Eternal salvation

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[497] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 4.46 (p.321).
[498] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.6 (p.180) [p.120].
[499] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452) [p.172].
[500] Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim*, 15 (p.52).
[501] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.6 (p.180) [p.120].
[502] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 4.47 (p.322).
[503] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.1 (p.162-164) [p.89].
[504] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452) [p.172].
[505] Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim*, 15 (p.52).
[506] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 4.46 (p.321).
[507] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*, Homilia 5.1 (p.162-164) [p.89].
[508] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.27 (p.452) [p.172].
[509] Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim*, 15 (p.52).

Appendix 2: the Sodom allegory

This appendix contains an overview of the explanation of the Sodom allegory in Bede, *In Principium Genesis*. In chapter two his explanation of the allegory has been analysed. This appendix aims to provide a clearer image of the sources Bede used. As mentioned in chapter two, the *apparatus fontium* in the last edition of this text has received criticism. The similarities between the sources identified by Jones and Bede's text are sometimes very slight. Therefore, Jones's references to sources are re-evaluated in this appendix for those parts of Bede's text of importance to understanding the Sodom allegory. Apart from aiding future analysis of the Anglo-Saxon development of the Sodom allegory, this analysis can contribute to further nuance the existing idea that nothing can be found in Anglo-Saxon Latin writings on Sodom which cannot also be found in the Church Fathers.

The texts referred to in Figure 1 are printed below. The footnotes to the text contain a discussion of the sources Bede used. Each source proposed by Jones is introduced with 'Jones:…' and followed by an analysis of the possible relationship between the two texts. The underlined text shows the lines Jones argued the sources were used for. Apart from evaluating Jones's suggestions, new suggestions for possible sources are proposed.

As explained in the main text of chapter two, part one and two of the allegory end with a short summary of the entire allegory. The last part starts with this summary. The first summary is the most extensive, framing the allegory as a tool useful for education. The two other summaries each stress the part of the allegory to which they belong. These summaries are referred to with the letters A, B and C in Figure 1.

Figure 1: This figure provides a graphical presentation of Bede's interpretation of the Sodom allegory. Bede's text can be divided into three parts, each beginning or ending with a summary of the entire allegory. These summaries are labelled A-C. Each part is associated with a text, shown in the orange-lined squares. The blue-filled squares reference a place, person or event in Sodom's story. The blue-lined squares contain Bede's allegorical interpretation of this place, person or event.
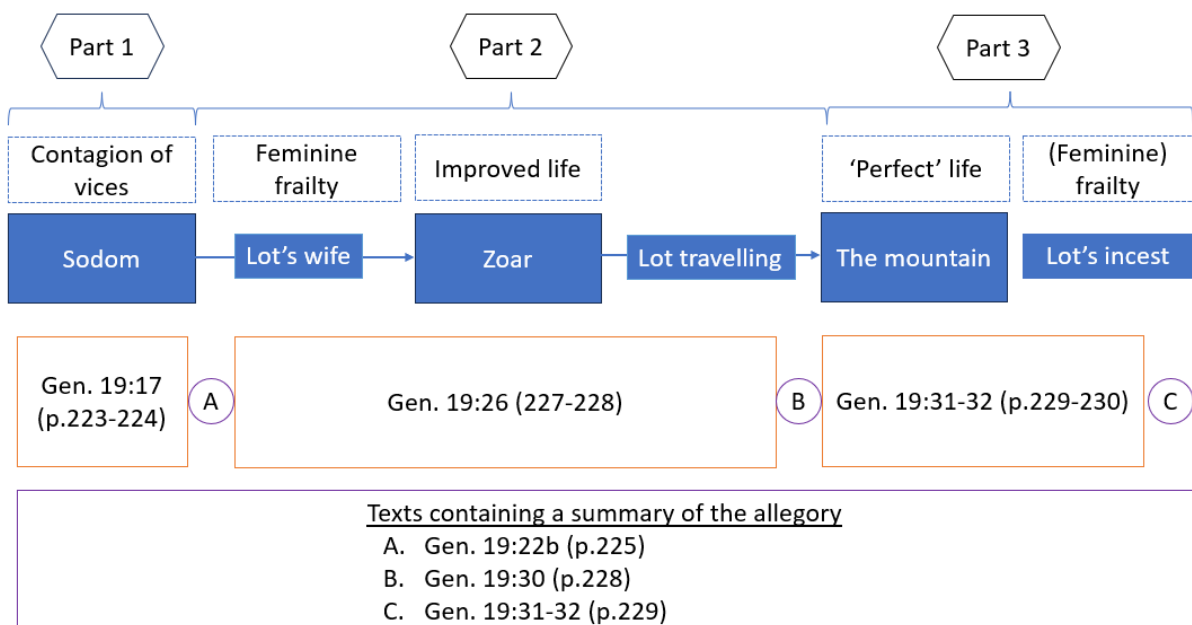
Part 1: Gen. 19:17 (p.223, lin.1066- p.224, lin.1098)

Potest autem idem ignis sodomiticus etiam flammas uitiorum quibus in hac uita reprobi uruntur, atque ad sempiternum praeparantur incendium, non inconuenienter insinuare. Qui cum nunc in concupiscentiis terrenis carnisque inlecebris ardere non cessant, tunc igne ultionis ardere numquam desistent.[510] Hunc quoque sensum Domino adfirmante, immo etiam docente, qui ait, In illa hora qui fuerit in tecto et uasa eius in domo, ne descendat tollere illa ; e qui in agro similiter non vedeat retro. Memores estote uxoris Loth. Neque enim docemur ne, instante articulo ultimi examinis, culmen rectae conuersationis deserentes, ad ima concupiscentiae mundialis animum deflectamus ; uel ne, relicto aratro agriculturae spiritalis, retro respiciamus, quando non ultra nobis operum aliqua correctio restat, sed eorum quae operati sumus reddenda ratio instat. Verum potius, inminente iudicio, fidelibus haec exhortatio datur, ut coeptis bonis ac salubribus insistant ne, uitiorum quae relinquere contagia repetentes, Loth imitentur uxorem, quae ardentem sulphure Sodomam dum incauta respiceret, uersa est in statuam salis. Dum ergo nos Dominus uxorem Loth imitari prohibet, ostendit profecto quod incendium ciuitatis, ad quod oculos reduxerat, flammas uitiorum, quas uitare et ualemus et debemus, exprimit. Vnde nunc exhortatio angelorum, qua eductum de Sodomis Loth admonuerunt ne retro respiceret, neque in omni circa regione consisteret, sed montem saluandus peteret. Et spiritaliter intellegenda et maxima est nobis intentione sequenda ne uidelicet ardores et incentiua uitiorum quae parumper euasisse uidemur incauti repetamus. Neque omnimodis in uicinia peccantium, quantum possibile est, manere consentiamus, ne illorum exemplo a nostrae uia rectitudinis aberremus, iuxta illud psalmistae de beato uiro, Et in uia peccatorum non stetit, sed ad fastigium arduae conuersationis conscendere ocius curemus.[511]

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[510] Jones: Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 16.30 (p.535): *'Post hanc promissionem liberato de Sodomis Loth et ueniente igneo imbre de caelo tota ilia regio impiae ciuitatis in cinerem uersa est, ubi stupra in masculos in tantam consuetudinem conualuerant, quantam leges solent aliorum factorum praebere licentiam. Verum et hoc eorum supplicium specimen futuri iudicii diuini fuit.'* Augustine and Bede both express the idea that Sodom's punishment is a foretaste of things to come in divine judgment. However, in this passage, Augustine does not connect the method of punishment (burning by flames) to the nature of the crime committed. He focuses on the public practice of same-sex sex as being a reason for the punishment. Bede, on the other hand, foregrounds the implicit question of why the method of punishment (fire) is appropriate (not necessarily because of the same-sex nature of the sin, but because it shows the flames of vices with which the people burned during their lives). The notion that the Sodomites burn because the manner of their punishment (fire) is determined by their sins (burning with vices), is not unique to Bede but also occurs in Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 4.38-39 (p.138): *'Petrus. Putamusne hoc auctoritate sacri eloquii posse monstrari, ut culpae carnalium foetoris poena puniantur? Gregorius. Potest. Nam libro Geneseos adtestante didicimus quia super Sodomitas Dominus ignem et sulphorem pluit, ut eos et ignis incenderit, et foetor sulphoris necarit. Quia enim amore inlicito corruptibilis carnis arserant, simul incendio et foetore perierunt, quatinus in poena sui cognoscerent quia aeternae morti foetoris sui se delectatione tradidissent.'* See also: Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob*, 14.23 (p.711): *'Sulphur quid aliud quam fomentum ignis est? Quodtamen sic ignem nutrit ut fetorem grauissimum exhalet. Quid itaque in sulphure nisi peccatum carnis accipimus ? Quod dum peruersis cogitationibus quasi quibusdam fetoribus mentem replet, aeterna incendia praeparat ; et dum fetoris sui nebulam in mente reproba dilatat, contra eam flammis subsequentibus quasi nutrimenta subministrat. Nam quia per sulphur fetor carnis accipitur, ipsa sacri elogui historia testatur, quae contra Sodomam ignem et sulphur pluisse Dominum narrat. Qui cum carnis eius scelerat punire decreuisset, in ipsa qualitate ultionis notauit maculam criminis. Sulphur quippe fetorem habet, ignis adorem. Quia itaque ad peruersa desideria ex carnis fetore arserant, dignum fuit ut simul igne et sulphure perirent, quatenus ex iusta poena discerent ex iniusto desiderio quid fecissent.'*

[511] Jones: Cf. Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, 22.41 (p.634). Although Augustine does mention Lot and his wife, there is little parallel between these texts. Augustine's goal is to explain two classes of people: Lot (a type of Christ, someone who lives as a saint among sinners) and Lot's wife (men who are called by God, but look back at their old life). It does not mention the spiritual journey from Sodom to the mountain, the danger of living in the vicinity of sinners, nor the identification of Sodom with the fire of vices. If Bede did use an interpretation of a Church

Summary 1: Gen 19:22b (p.225, lin.1127-1140)

Sicut autem Sodoma ardens flammas uitiorum et mons ad quem ascendere Loth iubetur uirtutum culmen insinuat, ita Segor quemdam bonae conuersationis modum minus perfectum designat - qui etsi a celsitudine perfectorum adhuc longe abest, iam tamen a contagio sceleratorum secretus est.[512] Verbi gratia, qui coniugalem recte seruat uitam, a fornicationis quidem flamma sulphurea euasit, nec tamen montem continentiae conscendit.[513] Qui a rapinis atque auaritia manum mentemque auertit, ac de rebus habitis pauperibus dare consueuit, necdum tamen omnem relinquere potuit, de incendio quidem

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Father as an example for his exegesis Ambrose's *De Abraham*, 1.6 seems a more logical fit. Ambrose also uses the message from the angels as an urgent call for sinners to leave Sodom, never look behind, and hurry because the corruption of Sodom might corrupt them if they linger. He also identifies Sodom as a region filled with vices. Ambrose, *De Abraham*, 1.6 (p.528-539): *'Hoc cum illi dicitur, omnibus dicitur. si uis ergo et tu euadere, ne respicias retro, sed ante te. aspice ubi Christus est, qui dicat tibi: uade retro me, sicut Petro dixit: uade retro me, ut Christum sequeretur, Christum uideret. retro Sodoma est plena flagitii, retro Gomorra uitiis scatens, criminum regio. 'Ne tetigeritis' inquit apostolus, 'ne adtaminaueritis, ne gustaueritis quae sunt omnia ad corruptelam'. fuge ergo Sodomam, relinque ocius, desere elementa huius mundi, ne te inminentia inuoluant pericula: non resistas fugiens nec in tota uitiorum regione remoueris. qui non respexit euasit: quae respexit non potuit euadere.'* Ambrose also associates fleeing Sodom with fleeing the contagion of vice in: Ambrose, *De Fuga Saeculi,* 5.12 (p.205): *'Fugiamus sicut Loth Sodomitana crimina amplius quam supplicia formidans. Magis enim pius certe scelerum fugit contagia qui Sodomitanis domum clausit nec cohabitans nouerat eos quorum flagitia nesciebat et obprobria auersabatur nec fugiens respexit eos quorum conuersationes non desiderabat. Fugit ergo sicut Loth, qui renuntiat uitiis, abdicat se incolarum moribus, qui post se non respicit, qui superiorem illam ciuitatem ingreditur introitu cogitationum suarum nec recedit ex ea, donec moriatur princeps sacerdotum, qui tulit peccatum mundi.'*

[512] Three sources could have inspired this passage: 1. Origen, *In Genesim Homiliae XVI*, Hom. 5.6 (p. 180): *'Observare enim debes, ne forte etiam cum effugeris flammas saeculi et incendia carnis evaseris, etiam cum pusillam et non pusillam evitatem Segor, qui est medius quidam et civilis profectus, superaveris et ad scientiae altitudinem velut ad quaedam cacumina montis ascenderis: vide ne tibi insidientur duae filiae istae, quae a te non discedunt, sed sequuntur te etiam, cum adscendis ad montem, id est vana gloria et maior soror eius superbia'.*
2. Gregory, *Regula Pastoralis,* 3.27 (p.452): *'Quod bene Loth in semetipso exprimit, qui ardentem Sodomam fugit; sed tamen Segor inveniens, nequaquam mox montana conscendit (Gen. XIX, 30). Ardentem quippe Sodomam fugere, est illicita carnis incendia declinare. Altitudo vero montium, est munditia continentium. Vel certe quasi in monte sunt qui etiam carnali copulae inhaerent, sed tamen extra suscipiendae prolis admistionem debitam, nulla carnis voluptate solvuntur. In monte quippe stare est, nisi fructum propaginis in carne non quaerere. In monte stare, est carni carnaliter non adhaerere. Sed quia multi sunt qui scelera quidem carnis deserunt, nec tamen in conjugio positi usus solummedo debiti jura conservant, exiit quidem Loth Sodomam, sed tamen mox ad montana non pervenit, quia jam damnabilis vita relinquitur, sed adhuc celsitudo conjugalis continentiae subtiliter non tenetur. Est vero in medio Segor civitas, quae fugientem salvet infirmum, quia videlicet cum sibi per incontinentiam miscentur conjuges, et lapsus scelerum fugiunt, et tamen venia salvantur.'*
3. Isidore, *Expositio in Genesim*, 15 (p. 51-52): *'Illud uero notandum quod ipse Loth, ardentem Sodomam fugiens, Segor uenit, et nequaquam ad montana conscendit. Ardentem quippe Sodomam fugere est, illicita carnis incendia, uel mundi desideria declinare. Altitudo uero est montium speculatio perfectorum, sed quia multi sunt iusti, qui mundi quidem illecebras fugiunt, sed tamen in actione positi, contemplationis apicem subire non queunt, hoc est, quod exiit quidem Loth de Sodomis, sed tamen ad montana non peruenit, quia licet iam damnabilis uita relinquitur, sed adhuc celsitudo speculationis subtiliter non tenetur. Inde idem Loth ad angelum dicit, Est ciuitas haec iuxta, ad quam possum fugere, parua, et saluabor in ea.'*
As explained in chapter one, Gregory's text might have been inspired by Origen's text. Isidore in turn used Gregory's text as his source. Origen's text seems to be Bede's most likely source. Gregory's description of the allegory focuses specifically on sexual acts and procreation. It is more specific than Bede's, Origen's, and Isidore's descriptions, which associate Sodom more broadly with vice or desire in general. Origen is, in turn, a more likely source than Isidore, because Bede's commentary on part two of the Sodom allegory was probably also inspired by Origen's fifth homily on Genesis. Bede never uses Isidore for any other part of his interpretation of Sodom's story.
[513] Cf. Gregory, *Regula Pastoralis,* 3.27 (p.452): see previous note for the Latin. Gregory, however, believes that those correctly observing married life can reach the mountain.

Sodomorum effugit, moenia paruae ciuitatis in qua periculum interitus euaderet intrauit, sed necdum arcem uirtutis in qua iam perfectus emineret ascendit, et cetera huiusmodi.

Part 2: Gen. 19:26 (p.227, lin.1203 - p.228, lin.1230)

Et quidem uxor metu femineae fragilitatis ad clamorem pereuntium repentinum, et fragorem flammarum caelo delapsarum, retro respexit. Sed eorum tamen tenet in hac infirmitate figuram qui, semel mundo renuntiantes ac uirtutum iter arduum inchoantes, repente ad ea quae reliquerant mundi desideria, instabili et uelut muliebri corde recurrunt.[514] *De quibus apostolus Petrus, Melius, inquit, eis fuerat non cognoscere uiam iustitiae, quam post agnitionem retorsum conuerti ab eo, quod illis traditum est, sancto mandato; sicut e contra Loth qui sua quae possiderat omnia cum peccatoribus peritura reliquit, illos qui uere mundo abrenuntiant, neque eos abrenuntiasse penitet, insinuat. Quos etiam beatus Noe, qui et ipse cuncta sua cum reprobis, sicut hic ignibus, sic ille undis absumenda reliquit, manifeste designat. Quod autem uxor Loth, dum se ab itinere quod Dominus ostendebat, auertisset, exstincta et in statuam salis conuersa est ; aperte indicat quod hi qui a uia ueritatis repetendo uitia declinant, ipsi quidem in sua prauitate pereunt. Sed exemplo perditionis suae aliis quasi condimentum sapientiae relinquunt, ut eorum interitum reminiscentes cautius se et circumspectius in arrepto iustitiae proposito custodiant.*[515] *Denique Dominus admonens fideles ne coeptum fidei callem deserant, quasi petram eis salis, quo dulcius eius uerba sapiant, adhibet, cum dicit inter alia, Memores estote uxoris Loth. Qui ergo ignem uitiorum, qui ultimum euadere iudicium desiderat, oportet ut praeteritorem obliuiscens, in ea quae ante sunt diuinae promissionis gaudia semper intendat.*

Summary 2: Gen. 19:30 (p.228, lin 1232-1245)

Festinauit ad montem ascendere de Segor, quia hoc magis placuisse angelis per quos ereptus est cognouit, timensque ne articulo temporis illius sua intercessione periculum mortis euasit, postea tamen ob scelera ciuium eadem urbs posset simili cum uicinis urbibus perditione consumi. Pertimuit maxime, cum nosset eam tempore superiore crebro terrae motu fuisse consumptam - unde et Bale, id est 'praecipitans' siue 'deuorans,' uocata est. Sed et iuxta intellegentiam spiritalem, quia Sodoma flammas uitiorum, Segor modicam adhuc inchoationem bonorum operum, mons altitudinem uirtutum designat, necesse est ut, cum ab incendio uitiorum quisque ad initium uirtutis accesserit, non iam in ipso initio

[514] Cf. Origen, *In Genesim Homiliae XVI*, 5.2 (p.166): '*Putamus tantum sceleris inhoc esse commisso, ut, quia post se respexit mulier, interitum, quem divino beneficio effugere videbatur, incurreret? Quid enim tantum criminis habuit, si sollicita mulieris mens tetrorsum, unde nimio flammarum crepitu terrebatur, adspexit? Sed quia lex spiritalis est et quae contingebant antiquis, in figura contingebant, videamus, ne forte Lot, qui non respexit post se, rationabilis est sensus et animul virilis, uxor autem hic carnis imaginem teneat. Care est enim, quae respicit semper ad vitia, quae, cum animus tendit ad salutem, illa retrorsum respicit et voluptates requirit. Inde denique et Dominus dicebat: 'nemo manum suam mittens in aratrum et retro respiciens aptus est regno Dei'… Quod vero in morali loco superius ipsum quidem lot ad rationabilem sensum et virilem animum traximus, uxorem vero eius, quae retro respexerit, carnem concupiscentiis et voluptatibus deditam diximus, non gegligenter haec, o auditor, excipias.* ' There are two similarities between Origin and Bede. When explaining the literal meaning of the text, Origen like Bede suggests Lot's wife looked back because of the noise of the flames. Origen also uses the difference in gender between Lot and his wife in his interpretation. However, he focuses on Lot being the epitome of reason, and therefore manliness. He does not mention feminine frailty but equates Lot's wife, and therefore the feminine, with the flesh which naturally seeks pleasures.

[515] Jones: Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 16.30 (p.535): '*Nam quo pertinet quod prohibiti sunt qui liberabantur ab angelis retro respicere, nisi quia non est animo redeundum ad ueterem uitam, qua per gratiam regeneratus exuitur, si ultimum euadere iudicium cogitamus? Denique uxor Loth, ubi respexit, remansit et in salem conuersa hominibus hdelibus quoddam praestitit condimentum, quo sapiant aliquid, unde illud caueatur exemplum.*' Augustine is indeed likely the source of Bede's idea that Lot's wife was turned into salt to serve as a seasoning for others, although Bede has paraphrased the passage and does not cite it directly.

segnis perseueret sed ad altiorem bonae actionis profectum semper alacri gressu tendere ac properare contendat.[516] Sed et iuxta intellegentiam spiritalem, quia Sodoma flammas uitiorum, Segor modicam adhuc inchoationem bonorum operum, mons altitudinem uirtutum designat, [517] necesse est ut, cum ab incendio uitiorum quisque ad initium uirtutis accesserit, non iam in ipso initio segnis perseueret sed ad altiorem bonae actionis profectum semper alacri gressu tendere ac properare contendat.

Summary 3 + part 3: Gen. 19:31 (p.229, lin.1275 – p.230, lin.1294)

Iuxta sensum uero moralem possumus in hoc facto intellegere quod nullus terrenae adhuc inhabitationis status, quamuis sublimis esse uideatur, a culpae temptantis possit liber esse contagio. Ecce enim beatus Loth putidas quidem Sodomorum flammas euasit, Segor aeque peccatricis ciuitatis ruinam uitauit, montis uerticem ascendit ; sed ubi eum in sublimi uirtutum arce positum rebaris, ibi nocte inebriatum et a filiabus suis repente foedatum conspicis, quia saepe contingit ut qui per inlustrationem gratiae celestis alia uitiorum temptamenta deuicerant, denuo per inertiam propriae infirmitatis aliis eneruiter succumbant.[518] Ducatus quippe angelicus auxilium celeste quo a peccatorum periculis liberamur indicat. Filiae uero beati Loth carnales etiam sublimium uirorum cogitationes exprimunt, quarum incuria ita nonnumquam eis suberigitur, ut etiam ex pio corde uerbum siue factum minus probum quasi filii nequam concipiantur. Neque enim dubitandum est quia filii Loth ex filiabus nati, qui gentiles populos et a fide sui patris alienos procreauerunt, illa sanctorum opera designent, quae non ad regulam sanctitatis, sed ad malorum potius prauitatem pertineant.

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[516] Jones: Jerome, *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, Gen.19:30 (p.30): '*Et ascendit Lot de Segor, et sedit in monte: et duae filiae ejus cum eo. Timuit enim sedere in Segor. Quaeritur quare cum primum fugae montis Segor praetulerit, et eam in habitaculum suum voluerit liberari, nunc de Segor rursum ad montem migret? Respondebimus veram esse illam Hebraeorum conjecturam de Segor, quod frequenter terrae motu subruta, Bale primum, et postea Salisa appellata sit: timueritque Lot, dicens, Si cum caeterae adhuc urbes starent, ista saepe subversa est: quanto magis nunc in communi ruina non poterit liberari? Et ob hanc occasionem infidelitatis, etiam in filias coitus dedisse principium. Qui enim caeteras viderat subrui civitates, et hanc stare, seque Dei auxilio erutum: utique de eo, quod sibi concessum audierat, ambigere non debuit. Illud igitur, quod pro excusatione dicitur filiarum, eo quod putaverint defecisse humanum gentis, et ideo cum patre concubuerint, non excusat patrem.*' Jones is right in suggesting that Bede's claim that Lot left Sodom because he feared the earthquakes which had previously plagued Zoar derives from Jerome. However, Jerome's interpretation of Lot's motives contradicts Bede's interpretation. For his explanation of the allegory to work, Bede needs to interpret Lot's move from Zoar to the mountains as something positive. Jerome, on the other hand, calls it an act of disbelief and sees it as contributing to the incest of Lot's daughters later in the story.
[517] See note 513.
[518] Jones: Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, 22.42-44 (p.635-636). Bede starts this commentary by explaining the literal meaning of the text. This section is not printed here. The section printed here follows that explanation. According to Jones Bede used Augustine's *Contra Faustum*, 22.42-44, for the entire section, both the literal and allegorical explanation. However, *Contra Faustum* does not follow Bede's allegorical interpretation. It also seems unlikely that Bede derived his literal explanation from Augustine. Although Augustine mentions that Lot's daughters were driven by the fear humanity would become extinct if they did not have intercourse with their father, his main focus is the question of whether this desire was natural or unnatural. Origen has more details in common with Bede, for example, a reference to Noah's daughters-in-law after the flood, the idea that Lot's daughters are less guilty because lust was not involved, and the idea that Lot appears to be innocent because he did not commit incest willingly. However, Origen as a source also presents problems because Origen's and Bede's exegesis partly disagree on the question of whether the daughters of Lot were to blame or not. See: Origen, *In Genesim Homiliae XVI*, 5.3-4 (p.180). On the sources of the summary of the allegory, see Appendix 1.

Appendix 3: Alcuin's *Quaestiones in Genesim*

In this appendix, the text of Alcuin, *Queastiones in Genesim,* questions 178-191 is printed from the edition in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* vol. 100, col.540B-543B. The appendix contains of four elements:

1. An identification of the sources of the questions and answers. To enable an evaluation of the amount Alcuin borrowed from his source, the source texts are provided in the footnotes. The parts of Alcuin's text corresponding with the source text are underlined to show how Alcuin changed his source material. For ease of reading, those parts in the source are also underlined where Alcuin copied separate parts or only a small part of the source.
2. A comparison between Alcuin's questions and answers and Bede's exegesis in his commentary on Genesis.
3. A second version of the answer to question 191 is not found in Migne. A comparison of the answers to the questions with the electronically available ninth-century manuscripts revealed a second abridged version of this answer.
4. A table with the page or folio numbers corresponding to the questions in each studied manuscript. This table is compiled to aide future research and show that the order of the questions does not change between the manuscripts.

In this appendix, Fox's list of ninth-century manuscripts is used. Of these, only the digitised manuscripts that include questions 178-191 are studied.[519] The following manuscripts have been used:

a. Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, 60 (580), p. 1-85, saec. ix, West Germany?[520]
b. Orléans, Bibliothèque municipale, 191 (168), pp. 157-75, saec. ix.
c. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 1764, fol. 10-27v, saec. ix-x.
d. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 1862, fol. 60-82v, saec. ix, Micy.
e. Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, lat. 13373, fol. 34v-89v, 817-835, Corbie.
f. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14760, fol. 1v-105, saec. ix, from St Emmeram, Regensburg.
g. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14727, fol. 53-122v and 131-138, saec ix, from St Emmeram, Regensburg.
h. Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Cod. B. 3., fol. 25-83v, c.820s.
i. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 289, fol. 2v-57v, saec. ix, Mainz
j. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 13187, fol. 65-127, saec. ix, Reims.

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[519] Three manuscripts from Fox's list did not contain questions 178-191, because they contain partial versions of the text. These are: Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, 552, fol.89-89v, saec. Ix; Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 756, fol. 23v-29, saec. ix; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 13581, fol. 105v-115, sec. ix, from St Emmeram, Regensburg.

[520] The description of these manuscripts, including date and place of origin, have been copied from: Fox, 'Alcuin the Exegete', 53-60. Fox also provides a description of these manuscripts.

Question 178 (Gen 18:3)

Inter. 178. Quaeritur, cum tres viri essent, qui Abrahae apparuerunt, quomodo singulariter Dominum appellat dicens: *Domine, si inveni gratiam ante te* (vers. 3)?[521]

Resp. Igitur in angelis Dominum sentiens, Domino potius, quam angelis loqui elegit. Et quidem aliquando imaginibus, et ante corporeos oculos, ad tempus ex aere assumptis per angelos loquitur Deus, sicut nunc Abraham non solum tres viros videre potuit, sed etiam terreno habitaculo recipere et eorum usibus etiam cibos adhibere. Nisi enim angeli, cum quaedam nobis in terra nuntiant, ad tempus ex aere corpus assumerent, exterioribus profecto nostris obtutibus non apparerent. Nec cibos cum Abraham sumerent, nisi propter nos solidum aliquid ex coelesti elemento gestarent. Nec mirum quod illi ipsi qui suscepti sunt, modo angeli, modo Dominus [*Edit.,* Domini] vocantur; quia angelorum vocabulo exprimuntur, qui exterius ministrabant, et appellatione Domini ostenditur, qui eis interius praeerat: ut per hoc praesidentis imperium, et per illud claresceret officium ministrantium.[522]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Alcuin and Bede both mention the idea that Abraham sensed the Lord to be present in the three angels and, therefore, spoke to them in the singular.[523] Both authors also focus on Abraham providing food to the angels, treating them as humans. However, Bede uses Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* as a source, whereas Alcuin based his treatment on Gregory's *Moralia in Iob*. Although both texts convey more or less the same idea, the details of the exegesis differ.

Text: Bede, *In Genesim*, 18:2-3 (p.211-212) [the parts in italics correspond to Augustin, *De Civitate Dei* 16.29 (p.534-535)][524]

Mouet forte aliquod quomodo uel in hac lectione Abraham uel in sequente Loth, angelos uidens, hospitio quidem quasi homines susceperit, et quasi mortales cibis humanis refecerit, cum quibus tamen quasi cum Deo loquebantur, eorumque uerba non aliter quam oracula celestia susceperunt. Sed credibile est, ut sanctus Augustinus ait, quod et Abraham vn tribus, et Loth in duobus, uiris Dominum ait, *quod et Abraham in tribus, et Loth in duobus, uiris Dominum agnoscebant, cui per singularem numerum loquebantur etiam cum eos homines esse arbitrarentur; neque enim aliam ob causam sic eos susceperunt, ut tamquam mortalibus et humana refectione indigentibus, ministrarent. Sed erat profecto aliquid quo ita excellebant, licet tamquam homines, ut in eis esse Dominum sicut esse assolet in prophetis, hi qui hospitalitem illis exhibebant dubitare non possent ; atque ideo et ipsos aliquando pluraliter, et in eis Dominum aliquando singulariter, appellabant. Angelos autem*

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[521] Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum,* Quaest.33 (p.126): '*Quaeritur, cum tres viri essent qui ei adparuerant, quomodo singulariter dominum appellet dicens: Domine, si inveni gratiam ante te.'*

[522] Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob*, 28.1.3 (p.1396): '*Aliquando imaginibus et ante corporeos oculos ad tempus ex aere assumptis per angelos loquitur Deus, sicut Abraham non solum tres uiros uidere potuit, sed etiam habitaculo terreno suscipere, et non solum suscipere, sed eorum usibus etiam cibos adhibere. Nisi enim Angeli quaedam nobis interna nuntiantes ad tempos ex aere corpora sumerent, exterioribus profecto nostris obtu ibus non apparerent ; nec cibos cum Abraham caperent, nisi propter nos solidum aliquid ex caelesti elemento gestarent. Nec mirum quod illic ipsi qui suscepti sunt, modo angeli, modo Dominus uocantur, quia angelorum uocabulo exprimuntur qui exterius ministrabant, et appellatione Domini ostenditur qui eis interius praeerat ; ut per hoc praesidentis imperium, et per illud claresceret officium ministrantium.'*

[523] This exegesis of the three people Abraham saw at Mamre is part of a broader late antique tradition of interpretation. For an overview, see: G.J.M. Bartelink, 'Tres vidit, unum adoravit, formule trinitaire' *Revue des Études Augustiennes* 30 (1981), 24-29.

[524] Both Jones and Kendall use italics to highlight Bede's dependency on Augustine in this instance. I have copied their analysis.

fuisse scriptura testatur, non solum in hoc Genesis libro, ubi haec gesta narrantur, uerum etiam in epistola ad Hebreos, ubi cum hospitalitas laudaretur. 'Per hanc', inquit, 'etiam quidam nescientes hospitio receperunt angelos'.

Some people may be puzzled how it is that both Abraham in this passage and Lot in the following one, seeing angels, received them with hospitality as though they were indeed men, and refreshed them with human food as though they were mortals; and yet they spoke with them as if with God, and took their words as messages from heaven. But *it is likely*, as St Augustine says, *that Abraham recognized the Lord in the three men, and Lot in the two. They spoke to him in the singular, even though they thought that they were in the company of men. And they took them in as they did for no other reason than to minister to them as mortals in need of human refreshment. But assuredly there was some way in which they so excelled, although they seemed like men, that those who offered them hospitality could not doubt that the Lord was in them, as is often the case in the prophets. This is why they sometimes addressed them in the plural, and sometimes they addressed the Lord in them in the singular. But Scripture states that they were angels, not only in this book of Genesis where these events are narrated, but also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it says, in praising hospitality, 'Even by this some have received angels with hospitality unawares'.*

Question 179 (Gen. 18: 20-21)

Inter. 179. Quid est clamor Sodomorum; vel quid est, quod Dominus dixit: *Descendam et videbo, utrum clamorem qui venit ad me, opere compleverint* (Gen. XVIII, 20, 21)?

---*Resp.* Peccatum cum voce est culpa in actione; peccatum vero cum clamore est culpa cum libertate[525] et jactantia. Quod autem dixit: *Descendam et videbo,* et [caetera] hujusmodi, omnipotens Dominus et omnia sciens; cur ante probationem **[Col. 0540D]** quasi dubitat, nisi ut gravitatis nobis exemplum proponat, ne mala hominum ante praesumamus credere quam probare? Et ecce ut per angelos ad cognoscenda mala descendit, mox facinorosos percutit. Atque ille patiens, ille mitis, [ille], de quo scriptum est: *Tu autem [Domine] cum tranquillitate judicas* (Sap. XII, 18). Ille de quo rursum scriptum est: *Dominus patiens est,* cum [in] tanto crimine involutos inveniens, quasi patientiam praetermisit, et diem extremi judicii exspectare ad vindictam noluit, sed eos igne judicii ante diem judicii praevenit. Ecce malum, et quasi cum difficultate credidit cum audivit; et tamen sine tarditate percussit, cum verum cognoscendo reperit: ut nobis videlicet **[Col. 0541A]** daret exemplum, quia majora crimina et tarde credenda sunt cum audiuntur, et citius punienda, cum veraciter agnoscuntur.[526]

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[525] Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, 3.31 (p.486): 'Peccatum quippe cum voce, est culpa cum actione; peccatum vero etiam cum clamore, est culpa cum libertate.'

[526] Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob*, 19.25.46 (p.992): 'Omnipotens itaque Dominus et omnia sciens, cur ante probationem quasi dubitat, nisi ut grauitatis nobis exemplum proponat, ne mala hominum ante praesumamus credere quam probare? Et ecce per angelos ad cognoscenda , mala descendit moxque facinorosos percutit ; atque ille patiens, ille mitis, ille de quo scriptum est : Tu autem Domine, cum tranquillitate iudicas, ille de quo rursum scriptum est : Dominus patiens est redditor ; in tanto crimine inuolutos inueniens, quasi patientiam praetermisit et diem extremi iudicii exspectare ad uindictam noluit, sed eos igne iudicii ante iudicii diem praeuenit. Ecce malum et quasi cum difficultate credidit cum audiuit, et tamen sine tarditate percussit, cum uerum cognoscendo repperit, ut nobis uidelicet daret exemplum; quod maiora crimina et tarde credenda sunt cum audiuntur, et citius punienda sunt cum ueraciter agnoscuntur.'

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Although different in wording, both texts contain the notion that God's actions should be read as an example and instruction for faithful Christians not to judge other people hastily, but to make sure to know all the facts before taking action. Jones notes the parallel between Bede's treatment of the passage and Gregory's *Moralia in Iob*, 19.25.46.[527] If Bede's commentary was indeed inspired by Gregory, this would explain the similarities between Bede and Alcuin. Following Gregory more closely, Alcuin however also adds the idea that, once the facts are established, punishment should be swift. Alcuin's interpretation of *clamor* also deviates from Bede's interpretation.

Text : Bede, *In Genesim*, 18 :21 (p.220)

Descendam, inquit, et uidebo utrum clamorem qui uenit ad me opere compleuerint, an non est sita, ut sciam. Quod ergo se descendere Dominus ad uidendum an idem clamor uerus esset aiebat, non suam ostendit ignorantiam, qui omnium habet scientiam, sed nostram instruit temeritatem ne antequam perfecte discamus proximorum reprehendere facta praesumamus. Quod ipsum nos et in constructione turris docet, ubi scriptum est quia Descendit Dominus videre ciuitatem et turrem quam aedificabant filii Adam. Quid enim de caelo in terram non uiderit, de quo scriptum est quia Nudus est infernus coram illo, et nullum est operimentum perditioni?

[18:21] I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry that is come to me, or whether it be not so, that I may know. Now the fact that the Lord said that he went down to see whether or not that cry was true, does not show his ignorance, who has knowledge of all things, but instructs our rashness, lest we presume to reprove our neighbours' deeds before we are perfectly acquainted with them. This is the very thing that he teaches us in the building of the tower, where it is written that the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of Adam were building. For what did he not see from heaven to earth – he, of whom it is written that hell is naked before him, and there is no covering for destruction?

Question 180 (Gen.18:27)

Inter. 180. Quare Abraham dixit: *Pulvis sum et cinis* (Gen. XVIII, 27), cum tantas promissiones a Deo accepisset?

---*Resp.* Sublimitatem promissionum humilitatis temperavit subjectione. Apte [*Ms.,* aperte] enim intelligitur in quo loco se posuerat, qui pulverem se ac cinerem etiam tum cum Deo loqueretur, aestimabat. Si igitur se ita despicit, qui usque ad honorem divinae collocutionis [*Ms.,* contemplationis] ascendit, sollicita intentione pensandum est, qua poena illi feriendi sunt, qui ad summa non proficiunt, et tamen de minimis extolluntur.[528]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Alcuin and Bede both use Abraham's words to teach about humility. Both texts contain the notion that, if Abraham, who had risen to such heights that he was allowed to talk to God

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[527] See Jones' *apparatus fontium* for: Bede, *In Genesim*, 18:21 (p.220). Gregory's text is printed in the previous note. Bede's text is printed below.

[528] Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob*, 3.31.60 (p.152): '*Aperte enim cernimus in quo se apud se loco posuerat, qui puluerem se ac cinerem, etiam dum cum Deo loqueretur, aestimabat. Si igitur ita se despicit, qui usque ad honorem diuinae collocutionis ascendit, sollicita intentione pensandum est qua poena illi feriendi sunt, qui et ad summa non proficiunt, et tamen de minimis extolluntur.*'

himself, was still humble, other people should not lose their sense of humility because of lesser achievements. As with question 179, Jones suggests Bede used Gregory's *Moralia in Iob 3.31.60* as a source. If this is true, it explains the similarities between Bede and Alcuin, although Alcuin copies Gregory more directly than Bede.[529]

Text: Bede, *In Genesim*, 18:27B (p.221)

Quia semel coepi , loquar ad Dominum meum cum sim puluis et cinis. Quo uerbo manifeste nostram redarguit superbiam, qui longe ab altitudine meritorum eius distantes, longe a collocutione diuina pro nostra tarditate atque inertia remoti, nihilominus typo elationis inflati, cinerem nos ac puluerem futuros minime recolimus ; nam beatus Abraham quo diuinae uisionis puritati altius adpropinquauit, eo certius suae fragilitatis infirma dispersit et abiecta. At nos, qui a contuitu internae claritatis nubilo nostrae prauitatis excludimur, tanto minus insitae nobis miseriae tenebras deflemus, quanto nil praeter has intueri solemus.[530]

[18:27b] Seeing I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes. With these words he plainly refutes our pride, we, who standing a long way from the height of his merits, and being far removed from divine conversation on account of our dullness and sloth, are nevertheless puffed up by the swelling of pride, and reflect too little upon the fact that we are going to be ashes and dust. For the higher the blessed Abraham approached to the purity of the divine vision, the more certainly he scattered the despicable weaknesses of his own frailty. But we, who are shut off from the contemplation of divine glory within by the cloud of our depravity, bewail the darkness of the misery implanted in us by so much the less, as we are accustomed to gaze at nothing else.

Question 181 (Gen. 18:26, 32)

Inter. 181. Quaeri solet utrum quod de Sodomis dixit Deus, non se perdere locum, si invenirentur illic centum vel decem justi (vers. 26, 32), speciali quadam sententia de illa civitate, an de omnibus intelligendum sit generaliter, parcere Deum loco, in quocunque vel decem justi fuerint?[531]

---*Resp.* Non est [quidem] necesse, ut hoc de omni loco accipere compellamur. Verum tamen de Sodomis potuit sic dici, quia sciebat Deus, ibi non esse vel decem, et ideo sic respondebatur Abrahae, ut significaretur nec tot ibi posse inveniri, ad exaggerationem iniquitatis illorum.[532]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Bede does not provide commentary on Abraham's questions to God regarding the amount of righteous needed in Sodom to save the city. Alcuin's exegesis therefore adds to Bede's commentary.

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[529] See Jones' *apparatus fontium* for: Bede, *In Genesim*, 18:27b (p.221)

[530] In his *apparatus fontium* Jones recognizes Bede might have derived part of this exegesis from Gregory's *Moralia in Iob*, 3.31.60.

[531] Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum,* Quaest. 40 (p.132-134): '*Quaeri solet utrum quod de Sodomis dixit deus non se perdere locum, si invenirentur illic vel decem iusti, speciali quadam sententia de illa civitate an de omnibus intellegendum sit generaliter, parcere deum loco, in quocumque vel decem iusti fuerint.'*

[532] Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum, Quaest*. 40 (p.134): '*In qua quaestione non est quidem necesse ut hoc de omni loco accipere conpellamur; verum tamen de Sodomis potuit et sic dici, quia sciebat deus ibi non esse vel decem. Et ideo sic respondebatur Abrahae, ut significaretur nec tot ibi posse inveniri, ad exaggerationem iniquitatis illorum.'*

Question 182 (Gen. 18: 5-8)

Inter. 182. Quare Abraham in tribus viris illis, si Deum intellexit vel angelos, et iterum Lot in duobus, eos humano cibo vesci putabat?

---*Resp.* Fortasse prius eos homines esse arbitrati sunt, in quibus **[Col. 0541C]** Deum loqui intellexerunt; quibusdam divinae majestatis existentibus et apparentibus signis, postea fuisse angelos cognoverunt, cum eis videntibus in coelum issent.[533] Sed intuendum est hic quantum bonum sit hospitalitas. Hospitalem domum ingressi sunt angeli, clausas hostium [*Ms., hospitibus*] domos ingressus est ignis.[534]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Like Bede, Alcuin focuses on the question of why Lot and Abraham treated the angels like humans, by offering them food for example. Bede and Alcuin both also mention the exemplary hospitality enjoyed by the angels, although Alcuin puts more emphasis on this idea.

Text: Bede, *In Genesim*, 18:2-3 (p.211-212)[535]

Mouet forte aliquod quomodo uel in hac lectione Abraham uel in sequente Loth, angelos uidens, hospitio quidem quasi homines susceperit, et quasi mortales cibis humanis refecerit, cum quibus tamen quasi cum Deo loquebantur, eorumque uerba non aliter quam oracula celestia susceperunt.

Some people may be puzzled how it is that both Abraham in this passage and Lot in the following one, seeing angels, received them with hospitality as though they were indeed men, and refreshed them with human food as though they were mortals; and yet they spoke with them as if with God, and took their words as messages from heaven.

Question 183 (Gen. 18: 22-32)

Inter. Si judicium Dei justum est, quare infantes in Sodomis [simul] cum parentibus cremati sunt?

---*Resp.* Ut nimis impium facinus Sodomitarum possit adverti, peccatum eorum ultio[C][536] pervenit usque ad necem filiorum, ne de origine illorum aliquod signum remaneret. Nonne provisum est illis, ne diu viventes exempla sequerentur patrum; et levius in futuro crucientur, vel omnino non, aliena causa occisi. Parentes [enim] tam pro se quam pro his rei sunt. Ergo mors filiorum crimen est parentum, et ideo futuri sunt accusatores parentum. Est qualecunque beneficium reum non esse, qui gloriosus non est: prodest enim pauperem non esse, qui rex esse non potest.[537]

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[533] Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum,* Quaest. 37 (p.132): *'Sed fortassis in quibus deum loqui intellexit quibusdam divinae maiestatis existentibus et adparentibus signis, sicut in hominibus dei saepe adparuisse scriptura testatur. Sed rursus quaeritur, si ita est, unde angelos postea fuisse cognoverint, nisi forte cum eis videntibus in caelum issent…'*

[534] Origines (trans. Rufinus), *In Genesim Homiliae XVI*, 5.1 (p.162): *'Hospitalem domum angeli ingressi sunt; clausas hospitibus domos ignis ingressus est.'*

[535] This is the same passage as the one cited above under question 178.

[536] In manuscript C fol. 19v. multiple hands have written '*ultio*' in the upper and left margin.

[537] Ambrosiaster, *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, Quaest.13 (p.37-38): *'Si judicium Dei justum est, quare infantes in Sodomis simul cum parentibus cremati sunt (Gen. XIX, 25)? Ut nimis impium facinus Sodomitarum possit adverti, peccatum eorum pervenit usque ad necem filiorum ipsorum, ne de origine illorum signum aliquod remaneret. Nonne provisum est illis ne diu viventes exempla sequerentur patrum? A gehenna enim liberi sunt, in aliena causa occisi. Parentes enim tam pro se, quam pro his rei sunt, quia ut eorum opera*

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Bede does not mention the infants of Sodom. This question and answer is unique to Alcuin.

Question 184 (Gen 19, 20)

Inter. 184. Quaeritur quare Lot cum jussus esset ad montem fugere, Segor praetulerit, ut ibi salvaretur; et rursum de Segor ad montem migrasset (Gen. XIX, 20)?

---*Resp.* Tradunt Hebraei quod Segor frequenter terrae motu subruta, Bale primum, et postea Salissa appellata sit, timueritque Lot dicens: Si cum caeterae adhuc urbes starent, ista saepe subversa est, quanto magis nunc in communi ruina non poterit liberari? Et hanc occasionem infidelitatis, etiam in filias coitus principium dedisse certum est. Qui enim caeteras viderat subrui civitates, et hanc [stare, seque auxilio Dei erutum [(*In edit., mendose,* et hanc fuisse, quae Dei auxilio eruta est)]; utique de eo quod sibi concessum audierat, ambigere non debuit.[538]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Alcuin's text contradicts Bede's exegesis. Bede claims Lot's move to leave Zoar for the mountains was pleasing to God, but Alcuin sees it as an act of unfaithfulness. Both authors, however, use the same source: Jerome, *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, 30. Bede decided to deviate from the source, whereas Alcuin copied it in its entirety. As mentioned in chapter two, a possible reason for this difference is the fact that Bede had to change his source to make the Sodom allegory work, whereas Alcuin, who did not use the allegory, had no reason to change it.

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oblitterarentur, omnis progenies ipsorum erasa est. Nam sicut de bonis parentum laeti sunt filii, eo quod commendentur praerogativa illorum; sic et de morte, quae pro malis illorum infertur, queri non possunt. Quemadmodum enim participes in lucro sunt, necesse est ut sint et in damno. Similiter et in Aegypto pro noxis patrum plexi sunt filii, sed ut ad emendationem eorum proficeret: ut quia ex aliis causis Deum credere et venerari, qui in Moyse erat, noluerunt, hac plaga territi confiterentur cum satisfactione, ne gravius hunc reatum sentirent. Haec ergo mors filiorum, crimen est patrum. Quocumque enim modo filii debitum spiritum reddiderunt, futuri accusatores parentum, quia perfidiam suam nec sanguine filiorum vincere potuerunt. Non ergo in futurum, sed ad praesens tempus mala parentum filios invenerunt. Nec qualecumque beneficium est, gloriosum non esse, nec tamen reum. Nam si quidam cum precibus enituntur, in postremis positi, ad fidem veram accedere, ut, si non coronam, vel veniam mereantur; quomodo poterunt hinc aliquid queri, cum quibus ita actum est, ut neque esset unde ignosci sibi precarentur, neque sublimes haberentur quia minime laboraverunt? Confer nunc unius momenti cruciatum ad multi temporis poenam. Arbitrare etiam multos laborare, et quia perseverare non possunt, non solum effectum laboris amittere, sed et poena multari. Adde etiam, quia difficile de malis nati, et inter nequissimos educati vel conversati, mentem suam temperant ad disciplinam Dei sequendam. Vide ergo, si non magis bene actum est cum filiis perditorum.

[538] Jerome, *Quaestiones Hebraicae In Genesim*, Quest.30 (30): '*Et ascendit Lot de Segor, et sedit in monte: et duae filiae ejus cum eo. Timuit enim sedere in Segor. Quaeritur quare cum primum fugae montis Segor praetulerit, et eam in habitaculum suum voluerit liberari, nunc de Segor rursum ad montem migret? Respondebimus veram esse illam Hebraeorum conjecturam de Segor, quod frequenter terrae motu subruta, Bale primum, et postea Salisa appellata sit: timueritque Lot, dicens, Si cum caeterae adhuc urbes starent, ista saepe subversa est: quanto magis nunc in communi ruina non poterit liberari? Et ob hanc occasionem infidelitatis, etiam in filias coitus dedisse principium. Qui enim caeteras viderat subrui civitates, et hanc stare, seque Dei auxilio erutum: utique de eo, quod sibi concessum audierat, ambigere non debuit. Illud igitur, quod pro excusatione dicitur filiarum, eo quod putaverint defecisse humanum gentis, et ideo cum patre concubuerint, non excusat patrem.*'

Text: Bede, *In Genesim*, 19 :30 a/c (p.228)

Festinauit ad montem ascendere de Segor, quia hoc magis placuisse angelis per quos ereptus est cognouit, timensque ne articulo temporis illius sua intercessione periculum mortis euasit, postea tamen ob scelera ciuium eadem urbs posset simili cum uicinis urbibus perditione consumi. Pertimuit maxime, cum nosset eam tempore superiore crebro terrae motu fuisse consumptam - unde et Bale, id est "praecipitans" siue "deuorans," uocata est.

He hastened to go up out of Zoar to the mountain, because he knew that this was more pleasing to the angels by whom he had been saved, and he feared that the same city, which also escaped the danger of death at that moment of time by his intercession, nevertheless could be destroyed afterwards with its neighbouring cities in a similar ruin on account of the sins of its citizens. He was especially fearful, since he knew that it had been destroyed repeatedly by earthquake at an earlier period. Hence it was also called Bela, that is, 'falling headlong', or 'devouring'.

Question 185 (Gen. 19:1-2.)

Inter. 185. Cur igitur angeli, quasi hospites coacti, domum Lot introisse dicuntur?

---*Resp.* Ut tentata esset charitas Lot, probata et remunerata: et ut ostenderetur quantum esset hospitalitatis bonum. <u>Hospitalem vero domum angeli ingressi sunt</u> ad liberandum hospitem suum: <u>clausas</u> autem <u>hospitibus domos ignis ingressus [est]</u> ad perdendos peccatores in eis. Idcirco hospites non sunt evitandi, sed ultro invitandi.[539]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Like Bede, Alcuin stresses that Lot's hospitality towards the angels saved him from Sodom's destruction. However, the details of the exegesis differ. Most importantly, Alcuin uses the antithesis of the fire entering the houses closed to the angels. Elaborating on this image, he mentions that Lot was able to leave his house in time because he had let the angels enter his house earlier.

Text: Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:1c-2b (p.221)

Qui cum uidisset, surrexit et iuit obuiam eis, adorauitque pronus in terra et dixit, Obsecro Domine declinate in domum pueri uestri, et manete ibi, et cetera. Magnum perfectumque in beato Loth exemplum Deo deuotae hospitalitatis ostenditur. Qui ingredientes urbem hospites non solum occurrens excipere paratus fuit, uerum etiam ut ad se diuerterent secumque requiescerent obnixius postulabat. Renuebant autem primo domum eius intrare, quod tamen postmodum eo compellente facere consenserunt, ut sic industriam hospitalitatis eius diligentius probarent. Probatam dignius; remunerarent, dum eum a peccantium interitu cum sua domo eriperent.

[19:1c-2b] And seeing them, he rose up and went to meet them, and worshipped prostrate to the ground and said, I beseech you, Lord, turn in to the house of your servant and lodge there, and so forth. The blessed Lot offers a great and perfect example of hospitality devoted to God. Running to meet the strangers entering the city, he not only was ready to receive them as guests, but also most

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[539] Origen (trans. Rufinus), *In Genesim Homiliae XVI*, 5.1 (p.162): *'Alia eius bene gesta non legimus, hospitalitas in eo sola ex usu veniens memoratur; evadit ignes, evadit incendia ob hoc solum, quod domum suam patefecit hospitibus. Hospitalem domum angeli ingressi sunt; clausas hospitibus domos ignis ingressus est. Quid ergo ad hospitem suum pro hospitalitatis officiis dicant angeli, videamus. "In monte" inquit "salvam fac animam tuam, ne forte comprehendaris". Erat quidem hospitalis Lot, qui etiam, sicut ei Scriptura testimonium tulit, ab interitu latuit angelis hospitio recepti.'*

urgently entreated that they turn aside to his house and rest with him. Although they declined at first to enter his house, nevertheless at his urging they afterwards consented to do, so that in this way they approved the diligence of his hospitality more precisely, and rewarded more worthily what they approved, in rescuing him with his household from the destruction of the sinners.

Question 186 (Gen 19.24)

Inter. 186. Quaeritur quare de coelo vindicta data est super habitatores impios civitatum illarum (Gen. XIX, 24)?

---*Resp.* Quia clamor peccantium in coelum ascendisse dicitur; idcirco de coelo puniendi erant.

Comparison with Bede

Bede does not mention that the Sodomites' punishment was given from the sky. He therefore attaches no special significance to this aspect of the punishment.

Question 187 (Gen. 19:24)

Inter. 187. Cur sulphureo igne puniebantur?

---*Resp.* Ut putidissimus libidinis ardor putidissimo flammarum ardore puniretur.[540]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Like Bede, Alcuin connects the punishment to the mode of sinning: because the Sodomites were ruled by the flames of lust, they were punished by the flames of sulphuric fire. Jones believes Bede was influenced by Gregory's *Dialogi.* Rather than reading the *Dialogi*, Alcuin might have been inspired by Bede's commentary.

Text: Bede, *In Genesim*, 19: 23-25a (p.226)

'*Condigna autem suis sceleribus poena Sodomitae pereunt ; nam quia in putredine luxuriae et ardore libidinis uitam duxerunt impiam, merito cum flammis ignium etiam fetore sulphuris puniuntur.'*

*And the Sodomites perish from the punishment they deserve for their sins; for since they **led their life in the putrefaction of lust and the heat of desire,** they are deservedly punished by the flames of the fires and the stench of sulphur.*

Question 188 (Gen. 19:26)

Inter. 188. Cur [autem] uxor Lot in statuam salis conversa est (vers. 26).

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[540] I could not locate a source with any word-for-word similarities; however, two sources share the same idea. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, Lib.4, Cap.39 (p.291): *'PETRVS. Putamusne hoc auctoritate sacri eloquii posse monstrari, ut culpae carnalium foetoris poena puniantur? GREGORIVS. Potest. Nam libro Geneseos adtestante didicimus quia super Sodomitas Dominus ignem et sulphorem pluit, ut eos et ignis incenderit, et foetor sulphoris necarit. Quia enim amore inlicito corruptibilis carnis arserant, simul incendio et foetore perierunt, quatinus in poena sui cognoscerent quia aeternae morti foetoris sui se delectatione tradidissent.'* Cf. Bede, *In Genesim* 19:23-25a (p.226) : '*Condigna autem suis sceleribus poena Sodomitae pereunt ; nam quia in putredine luxuriae et ardore libidinis uitam duxerunt impiam, merito cum flammis ignium etiam fetore sulphuris puniuntur.'*

---*Resp.* Ad condimentum fidelium; quia punitio impii eruditio est justi.[541]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Like Bede, Alcuin uses the image of salt as seasoning to argue that Lot's wife serves as an example for the righteous. Jones and Kendall both point to similarities between Bede and Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* 16.30.[542] It is possible that Alcuin, rather than reading Augustine, used Bede's commentary as inspiration for the answer to this question.

Text: Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:26 (p.228).

And the fact that Lot's wife was slain and turned into a statue of salt when she turned aside from the way that the Lord pointed out, plainly signifies that those who deviate from the path of truth by returning to their vices do indeed perish in their own depravity. But by the example of their own perdition they leave to others a seasoning, as it were, of wisdom, so that the latter, calling to mind their destruction, may defend themselves more securely and prudently in the struggle for justice which they have undertaken. Finally, the Lord, in the course of warning the faithful not to forsake the path of faith which they have set out on, administers, as it were, the rock of salt to them so that they may taste his words more sweetly, when he says among other things, Remember Lot's wife.

Quod autem uxor Loth, dum se ab itinere quod dominus ostendebat, auertisset, exstincta et in statuam salis conuersa est; aperte indicat quod hi qui a uia ueritatis repetendo uitia declinant, ipsi quidem in sua prauitate pereunt. Sed exemplo perditionis suae aliis quasi condimentum sapientiae relinquunt, ut eorum interitum reminiscentes cautius se et circumspectius in arrepto iustitiae proposito custodiant. Denique dominus admonens fideles ne coeptum fidei callem deserant, quasi petram eis salis, quo dulcius eius uerba sapiant, adhibet, cum dicit inter alia, memores estote uxoris Loth.

Question 189 (Gen. 19:31-36)

Inter. 189. Quo consilio filiae Lot concubitum patris petierunt (vers. 31, 33); vel ab incestu **[Col. 0542C]** purgari possunt, dum hoc scientes fecerunt; ille vero [quasi] nesciens?

---*Resp.* Videtur [namque] filias Lot quaedam didicisse de saeculi [*Ms.* mundi] consummatione, quae immineret per ignem: sed tanquam puellae non intelligebant perfecte, quae didicerant. [Nescierunt] quod Sodomiticis igne vastatis multum adhuc spatium integrum resideret in mundo suspicatae sunt, tale aliquid factum, quale in temporibus Noe audierant, et ob reparandam mortalium posteritatem solas se esse cum parente servatas. Recuperandi igitur humani generis desiderium sumunt, atque instaurandi saeculi ex sese dandum opinantur exordium. Et quanquam grave eis crimen [videatur] furari concubitum patris, gravior tamen eis impietas videbatur, si humanae, ut putabant, posteritatis

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[541] As for question 187, I could not locate a source with any word-for-word similarities. Again, two sources share the same idea: Cf. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei,* 16.30 (p.535): '*Nam quo pertinet quod prohibiti sunt qui liberabantur ab angelis retro respicere, nisi quia non est animo redeundum ad ueterem uitam, qua per gratiam regeneratus exuitur, si ultimum euadere indicium cogitamus? Denique uxor Loth, ubi respexit, remansit et in salem conuersa hominibus fidelibus quoddam praestitit condimentum, quo sapiant aliquid, unde illud caueatur exemplum.*' Cf. Bede, *In Genesim,* 19:26 (p.228): '*Quod autem uxor loth, dum se ab itinere quod dominus ostendebat, auertisset, exstincta et in statuam salis conuersa est; aperte indicat quod hi qui a uia ueritatis repetendo uitia declinant, ipsi quidem in sua prauitate pereunt. Sed exemplo perditionis suae aliis quasi condimentum sapientiae relinquunt, ut eorum interitum reminiscentes cautius se et circumspectius in arrepto iustitiae proposito custodiant. Denique dominus admonens fideles ne coeptum fidei callem deserant, quasi petram eis salis, quo dulcius eius uerba sapiant, adhibet, cum dicit inter alia, memores estote uxoris loth.*'
[542] See Jones' *aparatus fontium* for: Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:26 (p.228); Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, 306 n.162.

spem servata castitate delessent. Propter hoc ergo consilium ineunt, minore, ut arbitror, culpa [spe tamen] argumentoque majore, patris moestitiam vel rigorem vino molliunt et resolvunt: singulis ingressae noctibus, singulae suscipiunt ab ignorante conceptum; ultra non repetunt, nec requirunt. Ubi hinc libidinis culpa, ibi incesti crimen arguitur; quomodo dabitur in vitio, quod non iteratur in facto?[543]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Like Bede, Alcuin asks the question whether the daughters of Lot were at fault when seducing their fathers. His answer also agrees with Bede on three main points. 1. The daughters compared their situation with the situation of mankind after the Flood. 2. They believed mankind was doomed to become extinct if they did not have intercourse with their father. 3. They intoxicated their father because they wanted to minimise his involvement. However, whereas Bede clearly states the daughters are to blame for what happened because they should have asked their father first, Alcuin suggests they are not to blame.

Text : Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:31-32 (p.229).

Excusabiles uidentur et filiae quia non causa luxuriae patrem incestauerint sed quia nullum uirorum in terra remanere uerum omnes eadem poena flammarum consumptos esse putassent, et suspicatae sint quia, sicut post diluuium per tres filios Noe et totidem nurus genus humanum restauratum est, ita nunc per se et patrem suum, qui soli ignibus superessent, denuo foret reparandum. Ideoque hoc per somnum magis agendum ratae sint, ne pater sciens tale connubium aspernatus respueret et spreuisset. Possunt excusabiles ergo uideri, quod se in huiusmodi facto obsequium diuinae dispositioni praestare credebant ; sed non excusantur in eo quod non uel sui patris in tali negotio uoluntatem siue consilium quaerebant uel temporis moram expectabant, donec certius quid de genere humano per orbem esset actum ; cognoscerent.

His daughters also seem to be excusable because they did not commit incest with their father out of lust, but because they thought that no man remained on earth, but rather that they had all been destroyed in the same flaming punishment. And they supposed that, just as after the flood the human race was restored by the three sons of Noah and a like number of daughters-in-law, so now it was to be renewed a second time by themselves and their father, who alone had survived the fires. And therefore they believed that this ought rather to be done in sleep, lest their father, knowing of it, despise and reject such a marriage in disgust. They can seem to be excusable, therefore, because they believed that they were displaying obedience to the divine order in a deed of this kind. But they

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[543] Origen (trans. Rufinus), *In Genesim Homiliae XVI*, 5.4 (p.170-172): '*Apparet namque filias Lot didicisse quaedam de consummatione mundi, quae immineret per ignem, sed tamquam puellae non integre perfecteque didicerant; nescierunt quod Sodomiticis regionibus igne vastatis multurn adhuc spatii integrum resideret in mundo. Audierunt in fine saeculi terram et omnia elementa ignis ardore decoquenda. Videbant ignem, videbant sulphureas flammas, videbant cuncta vastari. Matrem quoque suam videbant non esse salvatam, suspicatae sunt tale aliquid factum, quale in temporibus audierant Noe, et ob reparandam mortalium posteritatem solas se esse cum parente servatas. Recuperandi igitur humani generis desiderium sumunt atque instaurandi saeculi ex sese dandum opinantur exordium. Et quamvis grande iis crimen videretur furari concubitura patris, gravior tamen eis videbatur impietas, si humanae, ut putabant, posteritatis spem servata castitate delessent. Propter hoc ergo consilium ineunt minore, ut ego arbitror, culpa, spe tarnen argumentoque maiore: patris maestitiam vel rigorem vino molliunt et resolvunt. Singulis ingressae noctibus singulae suscipiunt ab ignorante conceptum; ultra non repetunt, non requirunt. Ubi hic libidinis culpa, ubi incesti crimen arguitur? Quomodo dabitur vitio, quod non iteratur in facto?*'

are not exempt from blame, in that they did not seek either the will or the counsel of their father in such a difficulty nor did they delay for a time, until they might know more certainly what had happened to the human race throughout the world.

Question 190 (Gen. 19: 31-36)

Inter. 190. Si Lot [quasi] incestus [*Al.,* incertus] in hoc facto culpandus est, an non?

---*Resp.* <u>Culpandus est quidem</u> in hoc facto Lot, quantum ebrietatis [*Ms.,* ebrietas] ignorantia <u>meretur. Nam et hanc lex aeterna condemnat, quae cibum et potum</u> non nisi ad salutem corporis sumere mandat.[544] Et hinc diligentius intendendum est, quantum sit ebrietatis malum; et valde timendum est illis, quibus hoc malum in usu est. Nam in crimine <u>ebrietas decipit, quem Sodoma non decepit. Uritur ille flamma mulierum, quem flamma sulphurea non ussit. Erat ergo Lot arte, non voluntate deceptus; ideo medius quidam</u> [*Ms.,* quidem] <u>inter peccatores et justos: quippe qui ex Abrahae cognatione</u> [*Ms.,* stirpe] <u>descenderat, in Sodomis tamen habitaverit. Nam et hoc quod evadit e Sodomis, sicut Scriptura indicat, magis ad honorem Abrahae, quam ad meritum pertinet Lot.</u>[545]

Comparison with Bede

Comparison: Alcuin's text only partially agrees with Bede. The only common points are the question whether Lot's behaviour was acceptable or not and the part of the answer focussing on the role wine plays in this story. According to Jones' *apparatus fontium* Bede based his commentary on Genesis 19:31-32 on Augustine's *Contra Faustum* 22.44. Alcuin also used this source for part of his answer, which probably accounts for the shared characteristics of Bede's and Alcuin's exegesis.

Text: Bede, *In Genesim*, 19:31-32 (p.229).
Potest autem excusabilis uideri Loth, quod tale scelus incesti nesciens pertulit, magisquam fecit; sed non excusatur in eo quod, tam recentis impiorum exterminii oblitus, uino tantum indulserit, ut quid erga se ageretur experiri non posset.

Lot can seem to be acceptable, because he unknowingly endured, rather than committed, so great a crime of incest. But he is not exempt from blame, in that, having forgotten the still recent destruction of the wicked, he indulged so far in wine that he was unable to know what was done to him.

Question 191 (Gen. 19:24.)

Inter. 191. Quare diebus Noe peccatum mundi aqua ulciscitur, hoc vero Sodomitarum igne punitur?

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[544] Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, 22.44 (p.636): '*quapropter culpandus est quidem, non tamen quantum ille incestus, sed quantum illa meretur ebrietas. nam et hanc lex aeterna condemnat, quia cibum ac potum ad ordinem naturalem non nisi gratia conseruandae salutis admittit.*'
[545] Origen (trans. Rufinus), *In Genesim Homiliae XVI*, 5.3 (p.170): '*Ebrietas decipit, quem Sodoma non decipit. Uritur ille flammis mulierum, quem sulphurea flamma non ussit. Erat ergo Lot arte, non voluntate deceptus. Ideo medius quidam est inter peccatores et iustos ; quippe qui ex Abrahae quidem cognatione descenderit, in Sodomis tamen habitaverit. Nam et hoc quod evadit ex Sodomis, sicut scriptura indicat, magis ad honorem Abrahae quam ad meritum pertinet Lot.*'

---*Resp.* Quia illud naturale libidinis cum feminis peccatum quasi leviori elemento damnatur: hoc vero contra naturam libidinis peccatum cum viris, acrioris elementi vindicatur incendio: et illic terra aquis abluta revirescit; hic flammis cremata aeterna sterilitate arescit.[546]

Comparison with Bede

Bede does not compare the flood with the destruction of Sodom. Therefore this exegesis is unique to Alcuin.

Manuscript variations

Of the studied manuscripts, two contain abridged versions of the answer. These versions lack the reference to sin 'with males' or 'with females'.

1. Orléans, Bibliothèque municipale, 191 (168), pp. 157-75, saec. Ix.
   Quare die**bus** Noe pecca**tum** mundi aq**ua** ulciscit**ur** h**oc** v**er**o peccatu**m** Sodomittaru**m** igne punit**ur**
   Q**uia** illud naturale libidinis peccatu**m** q**ua**si leviori elem**en**to da**m**pnat**ur** : h**oc** u**er**o c**on**tra natura**m** libidinis peccatu**m** acrioris elem**en**ti vindi**catur** incendio.
2. Munich, bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14727, fol. 53-122v and 131-138, saec ix, from St Emmeram, Regensburg.
   Quare die**bus** noe peccatu**m** mundi aqua ulciscitur hoc uero sodomatantu**m** igne punitur
   Quia illud naturale libidinis peccatu**m** acrioris elem**en**ti uindicatur incendiu et illic terra abluta acquis reuirescit hic flammis cremata **a**et**er**na stabilitate arescit.

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[546] I could not locate a text with any word-for-word correspondence to Alcuin's text. However, as argued in chapter two, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* might have influenced Alcuin's exegesis. Cf. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae libri très,* Lib.1,Cap.10 (col. 2161):' *Quae vindicta hactenus eorumdem terram non deseruit, dum quali poenae, qui talia agunt subjacebunt, ostendit. Inter istas vero duas primarias in saeculo poenas, diluvii scilicet et Sodomitanam, talis differentia deprehenditur, quod aqua una terra, igni altera punita videatur: una coeli rore, et abyssi unda diluitur; altera igneo imbre, et sulphuris superfusione damnatur. Una anni circulo unius permanente, terra retegitur; per alteram terra et adhuc cessatione maceratur: in una naturale scelus in hominibus punitur, per alteram adinventio concupiscentiae contra consuetudinem facta vindicatur, In ista vero Sodomitana poena nil contra naturam Deus facere cernitur, cum desuper aereo ignito illo spatio, insoliti desiderii ardor inflammatur.'*

Overview of the place of the questions in the manuscripts

Q.nr.	A: Einsiedeln 60	B: Orleans 191 (168)	C: BNF 1764	D: BNF 1862	E: BNF 13373	F: CLM 14760	G: CLM 14727	H: Cod.B3	I: Pal. Lat. 289	J: BNF 13187
178	P. 42-43	P. 172	Fol. 18v.-19r.	Fol. 70v.-71r.	Fol. 61r-61v.	Fol. 57v.-58r.	Fol. 88v-89r	Fol. 50v-51r	Fol. 28v-29r	Fol. 99v-100r
179	P. 43-45[547]	P. 172	Fol. 19r.	Fol. 71r.	Fol. 61v.-62r.	Fol. 58r.-59r.	Fol. 89r-90r	Fol. 51r-51v	Fol. 29r-29v	Fol. 100r-100v
180	P. 45	P. 172	Fol. 19r.	Fol. 71r.	Fol. 62r-62v.	Fol. 59v.	Fol. 90r-90v	Fol. 51v-52r	Fol. 29v	Fol. 100v-101r
181	P. 45	P. 172-173	Fol. 19r.	Fol. 71r.	Fol. 62v.	Fol. 59v.	Fol. 90v-91r	Fol. 52r	Fol 29v-30r	Fol. 101r-101v
182	P. 45	P. 173	Fol. 19r.	Fol. 71r.-71v.	Foll. 62v.-63R.	Fol. 59v.-60r.	Fol. 91r	Fol. 52r-52v	Fol. 30r	Fol. 101v
183	P. 45-46	P. 173	Fol. 19r.-19v.	Fol. 71v.	Fol. 63r.	Fol. 60r.-60v.	Fol. 91r-91v	Fol. 52v	Fol. 30r-30v	Fol. 101v-102r
184	P. 46	P. 173	Fol. 19v.	Fol. 71v.	Fol. 63r-63v	Fol. 60v.-61r.	Fol. 91v-92r	Fol. 52v-53r	Fol. 30v	Fol. 102r-102v
185	P. 46-47	P. 173	Fol. 19v.	Fol. 71v.	Fol. 63v	Fol. 61r-61v	Fol. 92r	Fol. 53r	Fol. 30v-31r	Fol. 102v
186	P. 47	P. 173	Fol. 19v.	Fol. 71v.	Fol. 63v	Fol. 61v	Fol. 92r	Fol. 53r-53v	Fol. 31r	Fol. 102v
187	P. 47	P. 173	Fol. 19v.	Fol. 71v.	Fol. 63v	Fol. 61v	Fol. 92r	Fol. 53v	Fol. 31r	Fol. 102v
188	P. 47	P. 173	Fol. 19v.	Fol. 71v.-72r.	Fol. 63v	Fol. 61v	Fo. 92r-92v	Fol. 53v	Fol. 31r	Fol. 103r
189	P. 47-48	P. 173-174	Fol. 19v.	Fol. 72r.	Fol. 63v-64v.	Fol. 61v-62v	Fol. 92v-93r	Fol. 53v-54r	Fol. 31r-31v	Fol. 103r-103v
190	P.48	P. 174	Fol. 19v.	Fol. 72r.	Fol. 64v.	Fol. 62v-63r	Fol. 93r-93v	Fol. 54r-54v	Fol. 31v-32r	Fol. 103v-104r
191	P.48-49	P. 174	Fol. 20r.	Fol. 72r.	Fol. 64v.	Fol. 63r.-63v.	Fol. 93v-94r	Fol. 54v	Fol. 32r	Fol. 104r

[547] The pagination of this manuscript is incorrect, the person numbering the pages skipped number 44. In this table, I follow the pagination in the manuscript.

Appendix 4: Tables to chapter three

Table 1 : An overview of the use of 'Sodom' in the Proto-Penitentials and the Irish penitentials.

Variations	Penitential	Text
Sodomitic fornication as the counterpart of natural fornication.	Praefatio Gildae (c. 6th century), c.1[548]	*'Praesbiter aut diaconus faciens fornicationem naturalem siue sodomitam…'*
Fornication like the Sodomites / in the manner of the Sodomites	Paenitentiale S. Columbani (7th century), B3[549]	*'Si quis autem fornicauerit sicut sodomitae fecerunt,…'*
	Paenitentiale S. Columbani (7th century), B15	*'Si quis uero laicus fornicauerit sodomitico ritu, id est cum masculo coitu faemineo peccauerit…'*
Committing a manly crime [*scelus uirile*] associated with the Sodomites.	Synodus Luci Victoriae (c. 6th century), c.8[550]	*'Qui facit scelus uirile ut Sodomite, .iiii. annis. Qui uero in femoribus, .iii. annis; manu autem siue alterius siue suae, .ii. annis.'*
	Paenitentiale Cummeani (late 7th century), c.2.9[551]	*'Sic qui faciunt scelus uirile ut Sodomite…'*
	Paenitentiale Umbrense (8th century), 1.2.6a-7[552]	*'Sodomite VII annos peniteant, et molles sicut adultera. Item : hoc uirile scelus semel faciens IIII annos peniteat…'*
Committing the Sodomitic sin / an act associated with Sodomites	Paenitentiale S. Columbani (7th century), A3	*'Si quis autem peccatis praeualentibus facto peccauerit, si homicidium aut sodomiticum fecerit peccatum…'*
	Paenitentiale Ecgberhti (8th century), c. 1.7-1.8.[553]	*'De minoribus peccatis[…]. Item Sodomitis, si consuetudine erit :…'*
	Paenitentiale Ecgberhti (8th century), c. 3.19	*'Item sodomitę: quidam X annos, id est qui sepe fecerit uel in gradu…'*

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[548] The *Praefatio Gildae* belongs to a group of proto-penitentials. Its author is probably Gildas Sapiens. On the date of the *Praefatio Gildae* and its ascription to Gildas, see: Constant J. Mews en Stephen J. Joyce, 'The Preface of GIldas, the Book of David and the British Church in the Sixth Century', *Peritia* 29 (2018) 1, 86-90, 87-90.

[549] The *Paenitentiale S. Columbani* consists of five originally separate penitentials, all associated with the circle of Saint Columbanus. It is likely that these originally separate penitentials slowly merged into one penitential because they were used in combination. For a reconstruction of this process, see: T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Columbanus', in: Michael Lapidge (ed.) *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge 1997) 217-239, 235-239.

[550] The *Synodus Luci Victoriae* belongs to the same group of proto-penitentials as the *Praefatio Gildae*. For the date and its relation to the other (proto-)penitentials, see: Kursawa, *Healing not Punishment*, 69-72.

[551] On the date of this penitential and its relation to the other penitentials, see: Kursawa, *Healing not Punishment,* 179-219.

[552] On the date of this penitential and its relation to the other penitentials, see: Kursawa, *Healing not Punishment,* 221-232.

[553] Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe,* 96-100.

Table 2: An overview of the structure of Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate,* Lin.2472-2543.[554]

Part	Description	Line
Part 1: Introduction to the first vice: '*Ingluviem ventris*'	Ingluviem ventris is followed by a *scelerata phalanx*, existing of: '*luxusque ciborum*', '*ebrietas*' and '*crapula cordis*'.	2472-2489
Part 2: elaboration on *gula* (gluttony)	A description of gluttony and fasting as a remedy to gluttony.	2490 – 2493
	Example: Adam fell prey to gluttony in paradise.	2494 – 2500
Part 3: elaboration on *ebrietas* (drunkenness)	A description of the consequence of drunkenness: it enfeebles ['enervare'] the mind of men.	2501
	Example 1: Noah's drunkenness caused him to expose his 'shameful genitals', which shows that the drunkard does not know how to walk the path of life.	2502 - 2514
	Example 2: Lot's incest would not have happened if he were not drunk.	2515-2524
	Example 3: Nabal almost started a war because of his drunkenness	2518-2520
Part 3: Explanation of how the virtues fight off *ingluviem ventris*	The virtue *integritas* opposes *ingluviem ventris.* Thus fasting, including avoidance of alcohol and opulent food, works against *ingluviem ventris*.	2534 - 2543

Table 3: an overview of the different translations and interpretations of Aldhelm, *Carmen de Virginitate*, Lin.2518-2520.

Translator	Translation	Relation cinaedos - scortatores
Translation 1: Rosier and Clark	'fornicators and Sodomites, softened by baseness, who were committing vile deeds of Sodom in a heinous fashion'[555]	Scortatores: fornicators. Cinaedos: Sodomites.[556] No further explanation of the relation between both terms is provided.
Translation 2: Frantzen	'harlots and molles [effeminate men] who were performing the act of Sodom in an unspeakable way'[557]	These terms refer to 'both male and female prostitution, but 'would seem to include intramale intercourse'.[558]
Translation 3: Fulk and Monk	'whoremongers and *cinaedi* made soft by filth, who were bringing to a climax the outrage of Sodom in a scandalous manner'[559]	Cinaedos: penetratee during same-sex sex (the 'passive' role). Scortatores: penetrators in same-sex sex (the 'active' role). Both are practising the act of Sodom together. [560]

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[554] The line numbers refer to Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate* in the MGH-edition.

[555] Michael Lapidge and James L. Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works* (Cambridge 1979), 128. Although Lapidge and Rosier collaborated on the book, Rosier translated the *Carmen de Virginitate.*

[556] Lapidge and Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, 128.

[557] Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 197.

[558] Ibidem.

[559] Fulk, 'Male Homoeroticism', 14. Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Aldhelm and the "crime of Sodom"'. Monk does not provide a translation but suggests alterations to Rosier's translation. When these alterations are implemented, Monk's proposed interpretation resembles Fulk's translation.

[560] Ibidem. Monk explicitly voices the idea that the *scoratores* and *cineados* are involved with each other. Although Fulk's analysis seems to suggest the same, he does not explicitly state this relationship. Unlike Fulk, Monk is somewhat more cautious in his interpretation of this text. Although he claims 'the insinuation is

Table 4: an overview of Anglo-Saxon glosses relevant to chapter three. The glosses printed in orange were, according to Herren, Sauer and Potter, originally part of the EE-glossary.

Glossary	Cinaedus	Scortator	Molles	Nefandus
Corpus[561]	C-372 : 'chimede sunt. quos apostolus molles uocatauit'	S-156 : 'scortator. meretricum amator'	M-245: 'Molles. uani' E-63: 'effeminati. molles.'	I-222: 'infando. nefando' N-62: 'Nefanda. non dicenda' N-84 : 'Nefandi. iniqui'
Épinal[562]	-	-	-	I-110: 'infando nefando'
Erfurt[563]	-	-	E-357.29: 'effeminati molles'	Ef 367.13: 'infando nefando'
Erfurt II[564]	'Cinidi quosapos molles uocitauit' (p.277)	'Scortator meretricum amator' (p.331)	-	'Nefandi iniqui' (p.313) 'Nefanda nondicenda' (p313)

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strong', he nuances his theory by pointing out that 'we cannot state categorically that anal intercourse between the men of Sodom is the exact meaning of Aldhelm's rather inexplicit phrasing.' (Monk, *Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon Imagination*, 'Aldhelm and the "crime of Sodom"'.)

[561] The Corpus glosses are cited by entry number, following this edition: W.M.Lindsay and Helem McMillan Buckhurst (eds.), *The Corpus Glossary* (Cambridge 1921).

[562] Herren, Sauer and Potter's online edition of EE also contains an edition of the Épinal glosses. The table uses this edition and cites the Épinal glosses by entry number.

[563] Herren, Sauer and Potter's online edition of EE also contains an edition of the Erfurt glosses. The table uses this edition and cites the Erfurt glosses by entry number.

[564] The Erfurt II glosses are cited by page number, following this edition: Georg Goetz (ed.), *Placidus Liber Glossarum: Glossaria Reliqua,* Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum, vol. 5 (Leipzig 1894), 259-401. This edition uses the alternative name of Erfurt II: *Glossarium Amplonum Secundum*.

Table 5: A comparison between Tangl 73-75.

Contents	Tangl 73: Aethelbald	Tangl 74: Herefrid	Tangl 75: Egbert
Part 1: accusation by other Christian people and the heathens	*'Si enim gens Anglorum, sicut per istas provincias devulgatum est et nobis in Francia et in Italia inproperatur et ab ipsis paganis inproperium est,'*[565]	*'Obprobrium namque generis nostri patimur sive a christianis sive a paganis dicentibus, quod gens Anglorum'*[566]	Missing
Part 2: description of the sinful behaviour	*'spretis legalibus conubiis adulterando et luxoriando ad instar Sodomitane gentis foedam vitam vixerit,'*[567]	*'spreto more ceterarum gentium et despecto apostolico praecepto, immo Dei constitutione legitimas uxores dedignentur habere et hinnientium equorum consuetudine vel rudentum asinorum more luxoriando et adulterando omnia turpiter fedet et confudat.'*[568]	*Inauditum enim malum est preteritis seculis et, ut hic servi Dei gnari scripturarum dicunt, in triplo vel in quadruplo Sodomitanam luxoriam vincens, ut gens Christiana contra morem universe terrae, immo contra preceptum Dei descipicat legitima matrimonia et adhereat incestis luxoriis adulteriis et nafanda stupra consecratum et velatarum feminarum sequatur.*[569]
Part 3: Consequence of persisting in the sinful behaviour	*'de tali commixtione meretricum aestimandum est degeneres populos et ignobiles et furentes libidine fore procreandos et ad extremum uiniversam plebem ad deteriora et ignobiliora vergentem et novissime nec in bello saeculari fortem nec in fide stabilem et nec honorabilem hominibus nec Deo amabilem esse venturam.'*[570]	*'Igitur, [...] rogemus omnes commoniter supradictum regem, ut semet ipsum cum popullo corrigat, ne tota gens cum principe hic et in futuro pereat[...].'*[571]	Missing

[565] Boniface, *Tangl 73* (p.151), Lin. 15-17.
[566] Boniface, *Tangl 74* (p.156), Lin. 6-8.
[567] Ibidem, *Tangl 73*, (p.151), Lin.17-19.
[568] Ibidem, *Tangl 74,* (p. 156), Lin. 8-12.
[569] Ibidem, *Tangl 75*, (p.158) Lin. 2-7.
[570] Ibidem, *Tangl 73*, (p.151), Lin.20-24.
[571] Ibidem, *Tangl 74,* (p.156), Lin. 12-15.

Table 6: An overview of all references to Sodom in the Anglo-Saxon penitentials.

Penitential and canon[572]		Canon
Iudicia Theodori	Capitula Dacheriana (D-version), c.153 (p.15).	*Sodomite VII annis; molles uno anno.*
	Canones Gregorii (G-version), c.101 (p.14).	*Sodomite VII annos peniteant, et mollis uno anno sicut mulie adulteram VII annos peniteat.*
	Canones Cottoniani (C-version), c.160 (p.11).	*Pueros qui fornicationem faciunt inter semetipsos : ut uapulantur iudicant. Sodomite autem VII annos peniteant ; mollis uero I annum sicut et mulier.*
	Canones Basilienses (B-version), c.64 (p.7).	*Periures peniteant III annis. Sodomitę VII; molles uno anno sicut mulier.*
	Paenitentiale Umbrense, c.1.2.6 (p.6).	*Sodomite VII annos peniteant, et molles sicut adultera.*
Paenitentiale Ecgberhti	c.1.3 (p.10).	*Nunc igitur capitalia crimina […] explicabo[…] : 'Et Augustinus adiecit sacrilegium (id est sacrarum rerum furtum – et hoc maximum est furtum) uel idolothitis seruientem (id est auspicis, et reliqua), deinde adulterium, falsum testimonium, furtum, rapina, ebrietas adsidua, diolatria, molles, sodomita, maledici, periuri.'*
	c.1.7 (p.11).	*Item (de) sodomitis, si consuetudine erit: episcopus XIIII ann<os>, presbiter XII, diaconus X, subdiaconus VIII, clericus VII, laicus V.*
	c.3.19 (p.20).	*Item Sodomitę: quidam X annos, id est qui sepe fecerit uel in gradu ; quidam VII annos ; quidam I annum ; ut mollis ; quidam C diebus, ut pueri.*
Excarpsus Cummeani	c.2.2 (p.608).	*Item alia de sodomitis. Episcopi XIV annos peniteant, presbyteri XII annos penit. Diaconi IX, subdiaconi VIII, clerici VII, laici V annos et numquma cum alio dormiant.*

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[572] The page numbers in this tabel refer to the editions used for the text in the third column.

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