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## The Glossa Ordinaria on the Song of Songs

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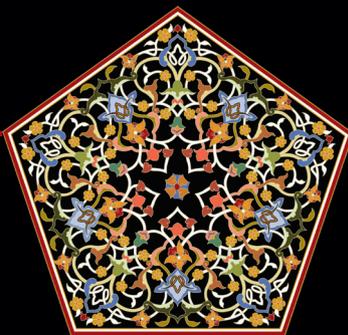
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**THE  
GLOSSA ORDINARIA  
ON THE  
SONG OF SONGS**

*Translated with an Introduction and Notes  
by Mary Dove*



**TEAMS  
COMMENTARY SERIES**

**The *Glossa Ordinaria*  
on the Song of Songs**

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**The *Glossa Ordinaria*  
on the Song of Songs**

Translated with an Introduction and Notes  
by  
Mary Dove

Published for TEAMS  
(The Consortium for the Teaching  
of the Middle Ages)

by

Medieval Institute Publications

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## Contents

Abbreviations	vii
Introduction	ix
Prefaces	1
Chapter 1	7
Chapter 2	35
Chapter 3	62
Chapter 4	78
Chapter 5	102
Chapter 6	126
Chapter 7	140
Chapter 8	157
Notes	173
Bibliography	183

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## Abbreviations

Alcuin, <i>CCC</i>	<i>Compendium in Canticum Canticorum</i> , PL 100, 641–64
Anselm of Laon, <i>EAM</i>	<i>Exceptum Anselmi Magistri</i> , Paris, BnF MS lat. 14,801, fols. 1r–33r
Anselm of Laon, <i>ECC</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Canticum Canticorum</i> , PL 162, 1187–1228
Anselm of Laon, <i>GCCS</i>	<i>Glosulae super Canticum Canticorum Salomonis</i> , Paris, BnF MS lat. 568, fols 1–64
Apponius, <i>CCE</i>	<i>In Canticum Canticorum expositionem</i> , ed. B. de Vregille and L. Neyrand, CCSL 19 (1986)
Augustine, <i>DDC</i>	<i>De Doctrina Christiana</i> , ed. J. Martin, CCSL 32 (1962)
Bede, <i>CC</i>	<i>In Cantica Canticorum</i> , ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119 B (1985), 166–375
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis (Turnhout: Brepols)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols)
Gregory the Great, <i>HE</i>	<i>Homiliae in Euangelia</i> , PL 76, 1075–1312
Gregory the Great, <i>HHP</i>	<i>Homiliae in Hiezechielem Prophetam</i> , ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 142 (1971)
Gregory the Great, <i>MJ</i>	<i>Moralia in Iob</i> , ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 143, 143A, 143B (1979–85)
Haimo of Auxerre, <i>CC</i>	<i>Commentarium in Cantica Canticorum</i> , PL 117, 295–358
Isidore, <i>EsO</i>	<i>Etymologiarum siue Originum</i> , ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911)

- Jerome, *LIHN* *Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum*, ed. P. de Lagarde, CCSL 72 (1959), 57–161
- Origen, *HCC* *Homiliae in Cantica Canticorum* (to 2:14), trans. Jerome, ed. W. A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke* 8, Die Griechische Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, 33 (Leipzig, 1925), 26–60
- PL *Patrologia cursus completus series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne
- Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC* *Commentarium in Cantica Canticorum*, PL 79, 493–548
- Stegmüller F. Stegmüller and N. Reinhardt, *Repertorium Biblicum Medii Aevi*, 11 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1950–80)

## Introduction

The *Glossa Ordinaria* is a series of *glossae* (glosses), exegetical comments relating to individual words, phrases, or short passages of biblical text. This series of glosses differs from a “continuous” commentary, which includes within it the words of the biblical text as and when the commentator discusses them, in that the *Glossa Ordinaria* is designed to accompany the books of the Bible rather than to be written separately. The format of biblical books accompanied by the *Glossa Ordinaria* is distinctive (see fig. 1): the manuscript page is divided into three columns, with the biblical text written in large letters in the central column, with lines left empty between the lines of text, and glosses written in smaller letters (typically half the size) in the left- and right-hand columns, as close as possible to the words of scripture they are glossing. Glosses are also written between the lines of the biblical text.

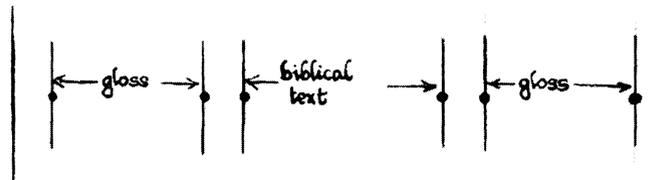


Figure 1. De Hamel, *Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Booktrade*, p. 16. Reproduced by permission.

The books of the Bible were provided with marginal and interlinear glosses by *magistri*, “masters” of schools in northern France between ca. 1100 and ca. 1130. Some

biblical books are glossed much more lightly than others (the latter chapters of 2 Chronicles, for instance, are devoid of glosses); the Song of Songs is one of the most heavily glossed books of all. Because of this, the central column of the manuscript page is narrower than the outer column, to allow more room for marginal glosses (see plate 1; Hereford Cathedral Library MS P I 8, fol. 53r).

This set of glosses integrated with the biblical text was at first called simply *Glossa* (the Gloss). In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, institutional libraries in northern Europe avidly collected glossed books of the Bible, and their catalogues contain entries such as “Glossed Psalter,” or “Glossed Song of Songs,” or *Libri Salomonis Glosati*, “Glossed Books of Solomon,” that is, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. No complete glossed Bible survives in manuscript, although the Proverbs–Apocalypse volume of a two-volume set written in France ca. 1225 is now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford (MS Laud lat. 9).

From the fourteenth century, the Gloss came to be known also as *Glossa Ordinaria*, the “ordinary” or “standard” gloss, a name confirming its normative status. The first printed edition, by Adolph Rusch of Strassburg in 1480/1, was entitled *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*: Rusch imitated the manuscript format of the Gloss as closely as possible, a highly complex compositorial task. Rusch’s text was the basis for many later reprints, the final edition appearing in Antwerp in 1634. In the preface to the Douai edition of 1617, the editors imagine the plight of Catholic readers who might be unwise enough to follow the example of their Protestant fellow-Christians by trying to read the Bible “bare,” unaccompanied by the *Glossa Ordinaria*. The words put into these benighted readers’ mouths are “when scripture speaks with [its usual tongue]

we understand, but when we read the sacred words without it we think we hear a language which we do not know.” The writers of the preface are playing on the hyper-literal meaning of *Glossa Ordinaria* (normal tongue). For five hundred years the “ordinary gloss” had been a tongue giving voice to the meaning of the Bible and had become as familiar as the words of scripture themselves.

A word of warning: be wary of the so-called *Glossa Ordinaria* included in Jean-Paul Migne’s *Patrologia Latina* (vols. 113–14, 1852). Migne’s text is based on a reprint of Rusch, but (following late-medieval German bibliographers) he wrongly attributes the compilation of the Gloss to the German Carolingian scholar Walafrid Strabo of Fulda and regards the interlinear glosses as being a twelfth-century addition to Strabo’s text. (The old version of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, online at [www.newadvent.org/cathen](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen), repeats this error.) The *Patrologia Latina* therefore omits every interlinear gloss and also those parts of the marginal gloss and the prefatory material that postdate Strabo. With the exception of my edition of the *Glossa Ordinaria in Canticum Canticorum*, there is no modern edition of any glossed book of the Bible. Fortunately, Rusch’s 1480/1 edition has been reproduced in a handsome facsimile, and Rusch’s is certainly the most reliable text of the *Glossa Ordinaria* to work with.

### **Anselm of Laon and the *Glossa Ordinaria***

The *Glossa Ordinaria* on the Song of Songs was compiled by Anselm of Laon, perhaps assisted by his brother Ralph; both men were masters at the cathedral school at Laon in Picardy (Mary Dove, *Glossa Ordinaria in Canticum Canticorum*, 33–39). In Anselm’s time (from ca. 1080

until his death in 1117), this school had the reputation of being the best place in northern Europe to study theology. Because of its reputation, the philosopher Peter Abelard went there in 1113, but he was disappointed by Anselm. He boasts in his *Historia Calamitatum* (story of misfortunes) that with minimal preparation he lectured brilliantly on Ezechiel, whereas “when [Anselm] lit the fire he filled his house with smoke, not with the light of illumination.” Abelard had the ability to grasp a subject rapidly and make unexpected connections between ideas: evidently he did not appreciate Anselm’s strength, which lay in his extensive knowledge of biblical scholarship and his minute attention to the details of the biblical text.

As well as the Song of Songs, the following books were in all probability glossed at Laon, by Anselm and/or Ralph (who died 1131 or 1133): Psalms, Matthew, John, and the Pauline Epistles. Genesis, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Minor Prophets, the Canonical Epistles, Luke, and the Apocalypse may also have been glossed at Laon. According to Peter the Chanter, writing ca. 1170, Anselm would have glossed the whole Bible if he had not been distracted by administrative duties.

Anselm almost certainly invented the idea of a *Glossa Ordinaria* for all the books of the Bible, although the Song of Songs and the Pauline Epistles had been glossed in the eleventh century, and in the tenth century the Song of Songs, Daniel, and Isaiah were accompanied by glosses in manuscripts written in Germany for Otto III. The Laon project originated in the desire to yoke the text of the Bible with a guide to how it should be read, and as more and more libraries began to want copies it must have become clear that the difficulties for scribes of ensuring that the glosses were correctly aligned with the biblical text would

lead to an unwillingness to add or alter glosses, and therefore to the standardization of glossed books of the Bible (just as happened with the printed Gloss). The Song of Songs was glossed again, very extensively, by William of St. Thierry (ca. 1120–30), who drew on the mystical works of Ambrose of Milan (not, unfortunately, used by Anselm). Several manuscripts of William’s gloss survive, but it was the Laon gloss that became the *glossa ordinaria*.

### **Authors of the Glosses**

The marginal and interlinear glosses comprising the *Glossa Ordinaria* are selected by the compilers from biblical commentaries and exegetical works by a range of authors from the patristic period onwards. The compilers of the *Glossa Ordinaria* often abbreviate or summarize the original text. In the case of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on the Song of Songs, the works of the authors listed below are the most important sources of glosses, although the authors’ names are almost never acknowledged (see further below).

#### **Origen of Alexandria, ca. 185–254**

The *Glossa Ordinaria* preserves throughout the late Middle Ages and beyond the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs originating with Origen. According to Origen, the *sponsus* (bridegroom) is Christ and the *sponsa* (bride) is Christ’s beloved, that is, the church or the individual soul in the state of perfection. The alternative identifications of the bride are apparent in prefaces to the glossed Song of Songs deriving from Origen: in preface 2 the bride is “the church *without stain or wrinkle*”; in prefaces 3 and 4 she is “a beautiful soul.”

In the glossed Song of Songs there are forty-four glosses drawn from Origen's *Homiliae in Cantica Cantorum* (244 CE), translated from Greek into Latin by Jerome (ca. 383), who regarded these homilies as the finest work of an excellent exegete. (No use is made of Origen's commentary on the Song of Songs, intended for more advanced readers than the homilies; the commentary may not have been available at Laon.) Unfortunately, Origen's homilies only comment on the Song of Songs as far as 2:14, and it has to be admitted that there is a richness and diversity in the first quarter of the glossed Song of Songs that is lacking later. Origen has a high regard for the literary qualities of the Song of Songs as an epithalamium (marriage-song) in the form of a drama, which he explicates on the literal level as well as allegorically (see for example ch. 1, glosses 10 and 157).

Allegorically, the bride in the glosses derived from Origen is nearly always the church (he says more about the bride as soul in his commentary). His representation of the history of the people of God and Christianity's Judaic origins is profound and subtle (see for example ch. 1, gloss 21). His discussion of Christ's divine nature (ch. 2, gloss 16) centers on the Neo-Platonist concept of *profectus*, "advances" towards truth, and reminds us that Origen was posthumously (in 553) declared a heretic; ironic, then, that this becomes one of the "standard" glosses on Song of Songs 2:3.

Origen was not the first to allegorize the Song of Songs. He knew that for Jewish interpreters the bridegroom was God and the bride the people of Israel, and that Jews read the Song of Songs as Solomon's prophecy concerning aspects of the history of God's dealings with his chosen people. As E. Ann Matter says, two exegetes influ-

enced by Origen, Gregory of Elvira, in the fourth century, and Apponius, ca. 400, “pass on to [Christian] medieval exegetes a vision of the Song of Songs as a narrative about the true, pure and ultimately triumphant Church led through persecutions by the Bridegroom Christ” (*The Voice of My Beloved*, 91–92). Apponius appears sporadically in the glossed Song of Songs (at ch. 3, gloss 53 in the seventh-century abbreviation of his commentary attributed to Jerome).

### **Gregory the Great, ca. 550–604**

The final book of Bede’s commentary (see below) is a compendium of the comments of Gregory the Great on the Song of Songs. This book is the source for the 23 glosses in the glossed Song of Songs deriving from Gregory’s best-known work, *Moralia in Job* (ca. 595), the thirteen glosses deriving from his homilies on Ezechiel, and the four glosses from his homilies on the Gospels. Gregory’s commentary on the Song of Songs, however, was not known to Bede, and it appears in the glossed Song of Songs only in one gloss in Rusch’s edition (ch. 1, gloss 42).

Gregory’s glosses contribute to the glossed Song of Songs the moral realism of a man at the center of the institutional church in sixth-century Italy (elected pope in 590), witness his comment on “like a lily among thorns” (2:2): “In the church there cannot be bad people without good people or good people without bad people; there has been no good man who has not been able to tolerate wicked men” (ch. 2, gloss 7). Other glosses on this verse have the “thorns” as tribulation (Alcuin), heresies (Fulgentius Ruspensis), or the devil (Anselm), but for Gregory they are fellow churchmen who enable him to practice pastoral

forbearance. Because the mysteries of the nature of God are beyond human comprehension, “the best understanding of God that can be had in this temporal life is in accordance with his [marvelous] works alone” (ch. 5, gloss 173).

Moral realism is by no means the only Gregorian tone. The church mediates grace, and the “young girls” (1:2), the separate churches of which the one church is comprised, are “not old through sin but new through grace,” not old and sterile but spiritually youthful and fruitful (ch. 1, gloss 26). There is erotic fervor, too; the saints glow more and more ardently the longer they yearn for the absent object of their desire (ch. 1, gloss 147). The bride is also, as for Origen, the soul; the double identification is made explicit in chapter 8, gloss 118. The soul turns towards her creator when she remembers, “placed among sinners,” that she is made in his image (ch. 1, gloss 111), and “a certain initial sweetness from the eternal life of blessedness” encourages her to advance towards contemplation of God, Gregory’s monastic ideal (ch. 2, gloss 89).

### **The Venerable Bede, ca. 673–735**

The commentary of the Northumbrian Benedictine Bede on the Song of Songs, *In Cantica Canticorum* (ca. 720–30), is the primary source of the glossed Song of Songs, appearing in every verse and contributing about 450 glosses (not including the glosses derived from Gregory the Great that comprise the final book of Bede’s commentary). As well as what he takes from Gregory the Great, Bede borrows comments on the Song of Songs from Origen, Gregory of Elvira, and Apponius. He also makes use of Jerome’s *Interpreting Hebrew Names* and Isidore of Seville’s encyclopedia *Etymologies or Origins* for the properties of animals, birds, trees, and so on.

The first book of Bede's commentary, a refutation of a lost treatise by Julian of Eclanum which apparently vindicated human sexuality, is not represented in the glossed Song of Songs, but the following five books supply it with what continuity it has as a narrative. In medieval biblical exegesis, narrative continuity was normally provided by means of literal interpretation and there was no expectation that allegorical interpretation would make continuous sense. In the exceptional case of the Song of Songs, however, Bede emphasizes that there is a continuous allegorical sense replacing the usual continuous literal sense by providing a synopsis of the narrative in thirty-nine *capitula* (chapters) before the commentary on Song of Songs 1 begins (ch. 1, gloss 114, and ch. 6, glosses 5 and 67, derive from these "chapters"). It must be admitted that if the "chapters" are read by themselves, in isolation from the commentary, their relationship to the text of the Song of Songs is highly obscure.

Bede's commentary begins with the voice of the synagogue "awaiting the incarnation of the savior," joined at "draw me after you" (1:3) by the voice of the church, that is, Jewish converts to Christianity after the time of the incarnation (ch. 1, gloss 36). The first gloss insists that both *synagoga* and *ecclesia* share "the inheritance of the just." "My mother's sons have fought against me" (1:5) refers to the persecution of the church by the Jews (as Origen says also, although another glossator reads this as the Jews complaining that the apostles have destroyed their "sect" [ch. 1, gloss 78]). The story of the joys and vicissitudes of the church of converted Jews continues until the gentile church comes in saying "on my bed, night after night I have sought him" (3:1). The Jewish church regards with wonder the gentile church, appearing before her in the form of

Solomon's litter (palanquin) (3:6, 9; the allegory is explained in gloss 79). Christ praises the gentile church just as he had formerly praised the church of the Jews (4:1). The gentile church in turn experiences joys and vicissitudes until the Jewish church, aware of her own "sluggishness," asks the gentile church about her beloved, Christ, wishing once more to "burn with the fervor of the divine love" (5:9, gloss 96). The gentile church responds with praise of Christ (5:10–16), and he with praise of her (6:3). At "there is one dove, my perfect one" (6:8), there is "great praise of catholic unity" (gloss 47).

The latter part of the Song of Songs, according to Bede, tells of eschatological events. "At the end of time," the synagogue regards the church with wonder (6:9, gloss 56), repents ("I did not know," 6:11), and is converted (7:10). The church in her turn regards the converted synagogue with wonder (8:5), and asks Christ how the new young church will survive hardship (8:8–9). Finally, the conjoined church asks Christ to "flee" (8:14), not "of her own volition—for who would want the one she loves to flee?" (gloss 126), and waits patiently until she is finally united with Christ in heaven. Throughout the Song of Songs, as Bede reads it, the loving and admiring relationship between Jewish and gentile Christians counterpoints the mutual love of Christ and the church. Love and praise predominate, and there is always the possibility that an individual lover of Christ may become "sublimely drunk with the richness of the house of God" (ch. 7, gloss 57), but at every stage of her history the church is in danger from within and from without.

Anselm of Laon very often begins the marginal glosses on a verse of the Song of Songs with a gloss derived from Bede, in the place where a medieval reader would normally expect to find a literal reading. Bede's continuous

allegorical sense is therefore firmly written into the glossed Song of Songs, although his name is never mentioned. But the glosses from Bede are characteristically shorn of their allusions to other books of the Bible, so that his sense of the centrality of the Song of Songs in the canon, an important aspect of his commentary, is not fully present.

#### **Alcuin, ca. 735–804**

Alcuin's *Compendium in Cantica Canticorum* is an early forerunner of the glossed Song of Songs in that Alcuin adopts Bede's continuous allegorical sense but simplifies and considerably abbreviates Bede's commentary. Alcuin, servant and schoolmaster to Frankish kings, did this in the interests of a church that knew that the average reader wanted his biblical exegesis compendious, digestible, and relevant to his circumstances. About half of the 104 glosses derived from Alcuin in the glossed Song of Songs derive in turn from Bede or Gregory, including material from Gregory's writings not used by Bede. The other half do not have a direct source. We see Alcuin's moral and pedagogic imagination at its best in his comment on "with all the finest perfumes" (4:14): "that is, with the most excellent gifts of virtues, and [there is] a pleasing conjunction of plants and trees with perfumes [in the verse as a whole], because when we hold back the flesh from unchaste acts the consequence is that we receive greater spiritual gifts" (gloss 137).

#### **Hrabanus Maurus (Raban Maur), ca. 780–856**

Hrabanus Maurus is the specter haunting the glossed Song of Songs. This Carolingian exegete is known to have commented on the entire Old Testament (except Baruch);

he appears elsewhere in the glossed Bible and the first gloss of chapter 1 of the glossed Song of Songs is attributed to him in one manuscript (Oxford, New College Library MS C 21, fol. 78r). Unfortunately, no copy of his commentary on the Song of Songs has yet been located. It is a distinct possibility that many of the glosses here attributed to Bede, abbreviated or summarized, are in fact derived from Hrabanus, and some unattributed glosses may also be his.

#### **Haimo of Auxerre, fl. mid-ninth century**

Haimo of Auxerre's commentary on the Song of Songs has an eclectic range of sources, including Bede and Alcuin but also Plato and Aristotle. The glossed Song of Songs derives far less from Haimo than from Alcuin (twenty-five as against 104 glosses), but it notably incorporates some of Haimo's comments against the Jews. Of "I raised you [the synagogue] up under the apple-tree" (8:5) Haimo comments, in the bridegroom's voice, "which was a deed of great good will, because by that same tree your mother [the Jewish people] was inwardly blinded, and consequently said *his blood [be] upon us and upon our children*" (ch. 8, gloss 41; see also ch. 3, glosses 91 and 95). There is very little anti-Jewish comment in Bede, where *synagoga* is always about to become one with *ecclesia*. Unfortunately Anselm seems to have gone to Haimo to look for material less sympathetic to Judaism as well as contributing further anti-Semitic material on his own account.

#### **Robert of Tombelaine, ca. 1010–ca. 1090**

Given that Anselm of Laon had access to Robert of Tombelaine's commentary on the Song of Songs, or at

least to part of it (the earliest of the eleven glosses derived from Robert is at 4:8), it may be somewhat surprising that he did not make more use of Robert's comments on the pervasive corruption of the eleventh-century church. Robert, a Benedictine, wrote his commentary while living as a hermit, although after 1066 he played an active role in church reform. I suspect that Anselm, a secular (that is, not a member of a religious order), was unsympathetic to Robert's desire to make monastic life a pure, protected enclave, believing that holiness was equally possible within every estate of the church.

One of the glosses from Robert's commentary included in the glossed Song of Songs is a reminder that Christ's summary of the law applies to the whole church equally. He comments that the "breasts" of the bride (that is, the church [4:10]) are "love of God and neighbor, by means of which the holy mind nourishes its senses when it is glued to God with charity and devotes itself to neighbors as much as it can" (gloss 94). The mind glued to God like a child glued to the breast is a striking image, but the "holy" mind does not forget fellow Christians.

#### **Anselm of Laon, ca. 1050–1117**

Anselm of Laon (perhaps with his brother Ralph) is the compiler of the glossed Song of Songs, but we can only confidently ascribe to his authorship about a sixth of the 1,440 glosses. These are the glosses that are shared with surviving *reportationes*, "written reports" of lectures on the Song of Songs which Anselm gave at Laon ca. 1100–10. No doubt he (or Ralph) is also the author of many of the glosses for which no source has been found: he seems to have wanted every phrase of the Song of Songs to be supplied with a gloss.

Although the first of the two commentaries of Honorius Augustodunensis on the Song of Songs, interpreting the bride as Mary (*Sigillum Beatae Mariae*, ca. 1100) predates the glossed Song of Songs, there is no sign of influence. For Anselm, the bride is nearly always the church. Anselm's glosses show a concern with commonsense order and logic in the narrative at the literal level: "you ask *who is this one?* Most certainly [she is] my garden, to which *I went down*" (ch. 6, gloss 69). He offers moral-semantic, even punning, readings (for instance, *eyes* are "those who provide for ['see for'] you" [ch. 4, gloss 13]; see also the note on ch. 8, gloss 32). Anselm seems less charitable towards post-incarnation Judaism than is Bede, perhaps because his anticipation of the conversion of the synagogue is less visionary. Where Bede speaks of the wonder of the gentile church at the converted synagogue (8:5), Anselm recalls the "punishment" of the Jews for crucifying Christ, the "vengeance of Titus and Vespasian" (ch. 8, glosses 42–43; see also note on ch. 7, gloss 105).

Anselm is concerned to maintain the ecclesiastical hierarchy whereby the *maiores* (greater ones), such as himself, renounce the world and the *minores* (lesser ones) are permitted worldly things such as marriage (see for instance ch. 5, gloss 147). The two "estates" of the church, he believes, should live harmoniously together, recognizing each other's differences. The "lesser ones" have the right to expect the "greater" to take responsibility for them, but in return they should allow their superiors time for contemplation. The final appeal for Christ's presence he puts in the mouth of the church, "although you fix your feet on the mountains, deign to move down to the valleys" (ch. 8, gloss 129), sounds as close as the serene and courteous Anselm comes to a *cri de coeur*.

## Reading the Glossed Song of Songs

Some modern theologians and literary scholars (including Mary Daly and David Aers) have no patience with the medieval tradition of allegorizing the Song of Songs, regarding it as self-evident that human love and sexuality are the subject-matter of this collection of Hebrew poetry. On the other hand, if medieval commentators had allowed themselves to share Aers's opinion that the subject of the Song of Songs is "carnal and very literal love" (*Medieval Literature*, 63) they would never have written about it at all. In their view, "carnal desires" (preface 7; Isidore of Seville) did not merit adult intellectual attention, and could not conceivably be the *materia* of a book belonging to the biblical canon. Even Nicholas of Lyra, famous for reading the Bible literally, says in his commentary on the Song of Songs (ca. 1330) that "the description of [carnal] love does not seem appropriate to the canonical books of sacred scripture."

Matter argues that the medieval Song of Songs commentary is best regarded as a distinct genre, "provid[ing] an unparalleled opportunity for finding the truth hidden beneath the figures of the text" (*The Voice of My Beloved*, 10). As well as creating a genre, Song of Songs commentators created a poetics of the erotic. Commentators felt licensed to explore to the full the *affectio* and *desiderium* (emotion and desire) the bridegroom and bride express because they believed that the *finis* (end, goal) of the Song of Songs is *dilectio dei* (love of God) (preface 6; perhaps by Anselm).

Medieval readers of the glossed Song of Songs must have read the biblical text and the glosses in all manner of different sequences, moving slowly, as the complexity of

the format makes inevitable, but also moving much more flexibly than modern readers from one kind of meaning to another. The biblical text is the signifier at the center of a constellation of signifieds. Rather than separating the literal aspects of the bridegroom and bride's roles as lovers from the other-than-literal (Christ and the church, or the individual soul), as modern readers feel obliged to do, the medieval reader was apparently content with, or positively desired, a very mixed bag of meanings indeed.

He (or she, but male readers far outnumbered female readers) might have been tempted to construct a hierarchy of authority among the glossators, had the separate glossators been named, but although the glossed Song of Songs is a compilation it represents itself as speaking in a single voice. Only three of the glosses in the glossed Song of Songs are regularly attributed to their authors (one to Gregory, one to Jerome, as translator of Origen, and one wrongly to Augustine). The authors of continuous commentaries did not normally name their sources, either, but every medieval reader was aware that each *auctor* (author) was heavily dependent on earlier authorities.

The glossed Song of Songs invites the reader to take control of his own interaction with the text. When, for example, the medieval reader of the glossed Song of Songs arrives at the verse "a little bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he will remain between my breasts" (1:12), it is up to him to identify the speaker as the bride. He may recall from a gloss positioned next to Song of Songs 1:11 that Christ "is compared with a little bundle of myrrh since for our sake he endured the agonies of the cross" (gloss 148, commenting on 1:11–13) and may then read the marginal gloss written closest to this verse, "the death of my beloved, which he underwent for my salvation, will always

remain in my memory” (ch. 1, gloss 154), in which case he needs to identify the speaker as the church (of converted Jews), or the soul. Alternatively, he may first read the interlinear gloss on “a little bundle of myrrh,” in the voice of an impersonal glossator, “everything associated with the passion” (gloss 159). Although all these glosses evoke the death of Christ, the reader must come to each gloss with a fresh act of attention, since there can be no expectation of continuity between the speaker or content of the glosses.

Having learnt (or been reminded) to associate this verse with the Crucifixion, and having learnt (or been reminded) of the properties of the myrrh tree (gloss 156), the reader may (or may not) return to the biblical verse before encountering marginal glosses that draw attention to the erotic potential of female breasts: “in a nuptial song it was fitting to speak of *mammās*, breasts rather than *pectus*, chest” (gloss 157), and “it is not the breasts of chaste women but the breasts of harlots that are damaged, wrinkled with slack skin” (gloss 158), inviting consideration of the smooth, seductive perfection of chaste women’s breasts. To demand of the medieval reader “are you reading these glosses literally or allegorically?” would be to attempt to do just what Aers argues the church attempted to do, that is, to “control the interaction between the readers’ imagination and the text’s diverse potentials” (*Medieval Literature*, 64). If the church had really wanted to exercise this kind of control (and I find no evidence for this), it should have suppressed the *Glossa Ordinaria*.

The bride and bridegroom are glossators, too. The bride offers three variant interpretations of her own words “my beloved is mine and I am his” (2:16; gloss 165). The bridegroom’s “your face is beautiful” (2:14) is glossed, interlinearly, “I ask for [your] face because as [your] face

is so your life is" (ch. 2, gloss 152): he is as it were glossing himself, in the moral sense. The glossator then continues in the third person, "because he is satisfied through seeing her face" (gloss 153). The implication seems to be that the bride or bridegroom would draw out the same significances from the words they speak as the glossator draws out from them, and it therefore does not signify whether we read the glosses as being in the glossator's voice or in one of theirs. But to speak of "the glossator" is always a metaphor. As we know, there are many separate glossators, as well as a compiling glossator. The voices of the lovers in the glossed Song of Songs embrace all the multifarious significances all these glossators draw out from them.

The success of the glossed Song of Songs in terms of the number of manuscript copies surviving (more than seventy) indicates that there were plenty of readers who enjoyed the challenges it offered. On the other hand, some teachers at the new university of Paris evidently had no understanding of how to read it at all. Stephen Langton comments ca. 1175 that because the interlinear gloss on *me*, in *osculetur me* (let him kiss me) (1:1) is "human nature" (ch. 1, gloss 13), some people expound "me" as relating to human nature only, and not to *synagoga*, the speaker, as well.

The absence of any scholarly apparatus puts in question Margaret Gibson's claim that the *Glossa Ordinaria* was "first and foremost a work of reference" ("The Twelfth-Century Glossed Bible," 243–44). A manuscript of the glossed Song of Songs written in the Gilbertine convent of St. Katherine in Lincoln describes the Song of Songs as being *de arte amandi deum*, "about the art of loving God," as though it were the Christian equivalent of

Ovid. But, unlike Ovid, the glossed Song of Songs takes *amor* profoundly seriously. In the twenty-first century, the *Glossa Ordinaria* is the first place scholars go in order to find out about medieval biblical interpretation. Many surprises await the reader of the glossed Song of Songs who does not expect it to yield up all its meanings in short order.

### Using This Edition

The Latin text translated here is the text of the glossed Song of Songs found in manuscripts written from ca. 1125 to ca. 1175 (the base text is a manuscript written in England ca. 1135–45, Hereford Cathedral Library MS P I 8, fols. 51r–74r) and reproduced in my edition and translation published by Brepols in 1997. The manuscripts exhibit a high degree of textual uniformity, the main difference being that certain relatively short glosses are in some manuscripts written in the margin and in others interlinearly, extending into the margin where necessary. There are twenty-five glosses in the first printed edition (Rusch 1480/1) not found in early manuscripts; they are included here, but marked with an asterisk (\*).

The biblical text of the glossed Song of Songs, printed in bold in this edition, is my translation of the text of the late-medieval Latin Bible, as it appears in the glossed manuscripts. It differs in some details from modern critical editions of the Vulgate, since the editorial history of the biblical text, or rather of the variant texts, has been hugely complex (Alcuin was one of the early editors of the Latin Bible). Bede suggests a revised reading of Song of Songs 5:11, which was not adopted (see note on ch. 5, gloss 117). At Song of Songs 7:5 the glossed Song of Songs has a reading which was prevalent in the Middle Ages but has never been recorded in modern editions (see note).

Because the commentators from whom the glosses derive did not all have exactly the same biblical text, the glosses do not always match the biblical text in the central column (see for example the note on ch. 8, gloss 71). Origen's writings on the Song of Songs predate Jerome's Vulgate and supply important evidence for the Latin Song of Songs prior to Jerome (see the notes on ch. 1, glosses 130, 139, and 172, and ch. 2, glosses 5, 71, and 106).

The distinctive format of the *Glossa Ordinaria* is not reproduced in this edition, as it is in Lesley Smith's translation of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Ruth (*Medieval Exegesis in Translation*, 11–29). Instead, the marginal glosses on each verse are printed first, followed by the interlinear glosses. The order of the glosses follows the order of the words in the Latin text, which is often different from the word order of the English. This is more noticeable in the shorter interlinear glosses than in the marginal glosses. Where the same word or phrase occurs more than once in the same verse of the biblical text, I indicate with a [ii], [iii], and so on, which occurrence is being glossed.

In this edition, the marginal glosses have the words of the biblical text they are glossing printed in italics above and the interlinear glosses have the words of the biblical text they are glossing printed in italics as part of the gloss itself. The manuscripts hardly ever include these lemmata, the exact relation between gloss and biblical text being left for the reader to interpret. As indicated in the lemmata, the longer marginal glosses frequently gloss more than one verse of the biblical text, since the Bible was divided into chapters but not verses in this period (the division into verses here is purely for convenience). The glosses are numbered throughout each chapter to enable easy reference to the Latin text.

Within the glosses, biblical quotations are italicized, direct speech is in double quotation marks, and words singled out for comment are in single quotation marks.

The translation offered here is a work of interpretation as well as translation. It is often difficult to determine whether glosses are spoken in the first person (in the voice of the bridegroom or bride) or in the third person: in the marginal glosses direct speech is often indicated by *quasi* (as if; in other words), but this pointer is rare in the interlinear glosses. Quotation marks indicate where I think direct speech begins and ends. Where the glosses are obscure, I have attempted to clarify the meaning in square brackets rather than resort to multiple notes.

The translation is not elegant, but the original is not elegant either. The constraints of space on the page make it inevitable that the originals from which the glosses are derived are abbreviated as much as possible. Only rarely is the wording of the gloss identical to the wording of the named source. Sometimes this leads to clumsiness and sometimes it makes it impossible for the reader to understand how the gloss relates to the biblical text (in these cases I have supplied the necessary context in notes, see for example ch. 7, glosses 5 and 6). A superscript “n” indicates the existence of a note in the Notes section, which is ordered by chapter and verse. The interlinear glosses are often phrases rather than sentences, relying on the grammar of the words being glossed, and this can be difficult to convey in translation (see for example the notes on ch. 6, glosses 14–15).

Where the gloss has more than one traced source, the source named first is closest in wording or is most likely to be the immediate source of the gloss. The absence of a “cf.” indicates that the wording is at least similar; “cf.”

indicates that the source is similar in thought to the gloss but not similar in wording.

The bibliography includes the most important writings on the *Glossa Ordinaria* as a whole and on the history of interpretation of the Song of Songs, as well as works cited in this introduction.

**The *Glossa Ordinaria*  
on the Song of Songs**

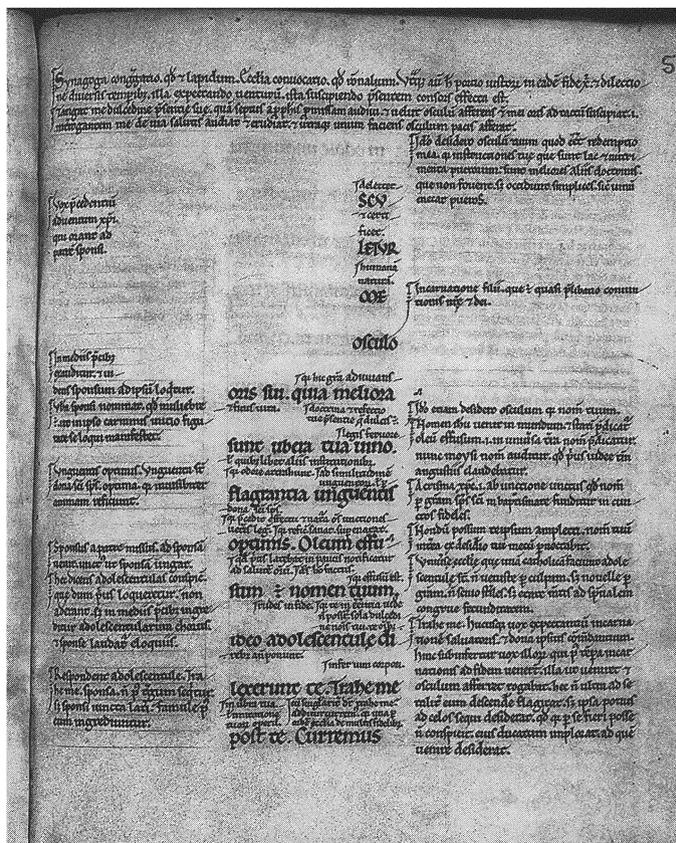


Plate 1. Hereford Cathedral Library MS P I 8, fol. 53r. Reproduced by permission of the Dean and Chapter of Hereford and the Hereford Mappa Mundi Trust.

# The Glossed Song of Songs

## Prefaces

1 It should be noted that the bride is always at home, either in a bed or in some inner place, since she desires to remain with the bridegroom, as befits women. The bridegroom, as is customary for males, calls the beloved outside, to the vineyards or to other works of this kind, because it is no wonder if the church wishes, if at all possible, to bring up offspring for the Lord in peaceful tranquillity. But the bridegroom in this temporal world afflicts the bride with frequent tribulations, by means of which she may attain to the everlasting realm in a state of greater purity, lest, if she meet with prosperity, delighted with dwelling in this present exile, she may sigh less sorely for her heavenly fatherland. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 15), 732–44]

2 In this work I seem to have found four personages: the bridegroom and his companions, the bride and young girls with her. Some things are said by the bridegroom, others are said by the bride, some by the young women, certain things by the bridegroom's companions. It is appropriate enough that at the celebration of a marriage there should be a large number of young girls with the bride and a crowd of young men with the bridegroom. Understand the bridegroom to be Christ, the bride the church, *without stain or wrinkle* (cf. Eph. 5:27).<sup>n</sup> Understand the bridegroom's friends to be angels and those who *attain to the perfect man* (Eph. 4:13).<sup>n</sup> The young girls are the throng of

potential brides, to some degree having obtained salvation. From this book, moreover, the Gentiles have appropriated to themselves the epithalamium, and this song is classified as belonging to this genre [epithalamium], that is, ‘concerning the marriage-bed’, in other words a song for a wedding. Poets write comedies based on epithalamia. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 28:19–25 and 29:1–18]

3 *God the creator* (Hebr. 11:10) established all the impulses of the soul for good [ends], but in our usage it often happens that things which are naturally good lead us to commit sins when we evilly abuse them. One of these impulses of the soul is love, which we use well if we love wisdom and truth, but ill if [we love] flesh and blood. You therefore [o reader], *as a spiritual being* (1 Cor. 3:1), spiritually hear sung [these] words of love, and learn to transfer the impulse of your soul and the fire of natural love to better things. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 1, 42:15–22]

4 If you wish to ascend to the Song of Songs,<sup>n</sup> it is necessary to go forth from Egypt, so that after the crossing of the Red Sea, and after your enemies have been drowned, you may be able to sing the first of the songs.<sup>n</sup> But because up to now you are a long way from the Song of Songs, traverse the desert land spiritually and it follows that, situated on the bank of the Jordan, you will sing the second song.<sup>n</sup> [Origen, *HCC*, I, 27:20 and 28:1–7] And when you have crossed the whole world climb up to the heights so that you, a beautiful soul, may be able to sing with the bridegroom this Song of Songs. [Stegmüller, no. 466, prologue on Song of Songs; Origen, *HCC*, I, 28:16–18]

5 Solomon, that is, ‘peaceful one’, because in his kingdom there was peace, and by means of this was prefigured the

future peace of the church. Edida, that is, ‘beloved’, and signifies the one concerning whom it is said *in form beautiful beyond the sons of men, and therefore God has blessed you for ever* (Psalm 44:3, Septuagint).<sup>n</sup> Ecclesiastes, that is, ‘one who addresses an assembly’, and signifies the one who was to speak reasonably and assemble together the church. In accordance with the number of terms [for him] he composed three books:<sup>n</sup> Proverbs, in which book he teaches young men, not so much young in age as young in wisdom, about a composed way of life in the world, that is to say, how the things of this world may permissibly be enjoyed; Ecclesiastes, in which he instructs men more advanced in age to despise transitory things; and the Song of Songs, in which he teaches the man in his perfect age about love of God alone, so that he may rest within the arms of the bridegroom. For this reason it is called the Song of Songs, surpassing in its worth all other songs; through those [other songs] vices are avoided and the enemy is kept at bay, through that [Song of Songs] we are enriched with virtues and united with the Lord. In like order, moreover, they [the three books] place their philosophical affiliations: first they teach ethics, then they teach natural history, and they lead the man whom they see to have benefitted from these to theoretical<sup>n</sup> wisdom. [Stegmüller, no. 465, prologue on Song of Songs; Alcuin, *Commentaria super Ecclesiasten*, PL 100, 668C–669A, derived from Jerome, *Commentarius in Ecclesiasten*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 72 (1959), I, 13–30]

6 The subject matter is the bridegroom and bride, that is, the church and its head. The method, with what desire the limbs cleave to the head and strive to please him, and what gifts are received from him in the present and anticipated from him in the future, and with what passionate love the

bridegroom loves the church, praising, admonishing, and comforting her. The end [is] love of God.<sup>n</sup> [*magister*, “the master” of the glosses, i.e., Anselm of Laon, according to Durham Cathedral Library MS A II 8, fol. 128v]

7 Solomon, son of David king of Israel, produced three volumes, in accordance with the number of terms for him.<sup>n</sup> The first of them is [in Hebrew] Masloth, which the Greeks call Parabolae and the Romans Proverbs, and therefore in that book he reveals the forms of words and the figures of truth beneath a likeness involving the comparison of two things; he has, moreover, left it to the wit of his readers to apprehend that truth. The second book he has named Coeleth, called Ecclesiastes in Greek and Contionator, ‘public speaker’, in Latin, and therefore he directs his speeches not only to one person in particular, as he does in Proverbs, but to everybody in general, teaching that all things we perceive in this world are empty and transitory, and therefore not to be desired at all. The third book he has designated Sirasirim [Sir ha-Sirim], which in the Latin language becomes Songs [Cantica] of Songs, whence in the manner of a marriage-song he sings mystically of the union of Christ and the church. It is also called ‘the Song of Songs’ because it is esteemed above all other songs, just as in the [books of the] law<sup>n</sup> certain things are said to be holy, but the greater things are said to be ‘the holy of holies’. [Stegmüller, no. 11,804, 1; “just as in . . . holies,” Origen, *HCC*, I, 27:7–8]

In these three books he has put in order three different branches of learning, by means of which knowledge of things is reached: in the first, ethics, that is, moral science, then physics, the science that understands what the natural world is like, and lastly theoretics, that is, contemplative

science. In Proverbs, teaching morals by way of common forms of speech he has adduced higher understanding, and has concentrated into succinct words and short sentences observance of the law and education in heavenly doctrine. There are also some proverbs that explain things through words that are foreign to them, and are not to be understood literally; these proverbs have more force of meaning than the sound of the words would suggest—the Greeks call these *paroimiai*. Ecclesiastes, discussing the natures of things, censures all things in the world for being empty and labile, and in the face of the frailty of all things he has counseled renunciation of the world. In the Song of Songs, having moved beyond visible things, contemplating those things that are heavenly or divine, he reveals the unity of Christ and the church in the likeness of the bridegroom and bride, and arousing the soul to the love of heavenly things he incites her to attain to union with God. Nor should we overlook what our scholars tell us was the custom among the Jews:<sup>n</sup> they did not allow anyone to read this book unless he was complete in knowledge and confirmed in faith, lest perhaps on account of childish weakness and inexperience in faith study might not so much refine wavering minds as the text pervert them to carnal desires. [Isidore, preface to the Books of Solomon, PL 83, 164A–165A]

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## Chapter 1

### **1:1 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth because your breasts are better than wine**

[marginal glosses:]

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth* [glosses 1–9  
all gloss these words]

1 Synagogue, ‘assembling together’, as of [inanimate] stones; church, ‘congregation’, as of rational creatures. Both, however, are part of the inheritance of the just, having the same faith in and love for Christ in different ages, the former awaiting his presence still to come, the latter, receiving it, made his bride. [cf. Bede, *CC*, I, 9–15; Hrabanus Maurus, according to Oxford, New College Library MS C 21, fol. 78r. The sources of the glosses are very rarely named in the manuscripts.]

2 The voice of those heralding the coming of Christ, who pray to the father of the bridegroom. [Stegmüller, no. 11,804, 10; cf. Bede, *CC*, I (i, 1), 25–30]

3 [The bride says:] “Let him touch me with the sweetness of his presence [Stegmüller, no. 11,804, 11; Bede, *CC*, VI, 34–35, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XXVII, 17, 45], which I have often heard promised by the prophets, and as if bringing a kiss let him also receive the touch of my mouth, that is, questioning me concerning the way of salvation let him hear and instruct and bring the kiss of peace, making two people one. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 1), 33–36]

4 I desire a kiss, which was my redemption, because your teachings, the milk and nourishment of your children, are better than other forms of instruction, which kill rather

than foster the simple, just as wine kills children.” [also in Honorius, *Expositio in Canticum Cantorum*, PL 172, 360D]

5 The number of precepts she knows from his preaching are as it were the number of kisses she receives from his mouth. [Stegmüller, no. 11,804, 12; Gregory, *MJ*, XIV, 43, 9–11]

6 (\* gloss only in Rusch’s 1480–81 edition, not in manuscripts) For just as two different bodies are joined in a kiss, so in the incarnation the two substances of divinity and humanity, utterly different, are united in an inseparable conjunction.

7 (\*) ‘To kiss’ is put in place of ‘to reconcile’, in the likeness of those who have withdrawn from their lords because of conflict but return, kiss and are kissed, and are perfectly reconciled, like the synagogue.

8 (\*) This race, distanced from its God through sin, wishes to be reconciled with him through the incarnation of the Son. [Apponius, *CCE*, V (iii, 8), 474, and Augustine, *Enchiridion de fide, spe et caritate*, CCSL 46, 28, 69]

9 (\*) She speaks in the fashion of a lover who for the very fervor of her love cannot avail herself of the accustomed order of speech.<sup>11</sup>

*because your breasts are better than wine* [glosses 10 and 11 gloss these words]

10 As she prays, her prayer is answered, and seeing the bridegroom she speaks to him [*because your breasts*, etc.] [Stegmüller, no. 11,804, 10; Origen, *HCC*, I, 1, 29:19]

11 He speaks of the ‘breasts’ of the bridegroom, a female term, so that from the very beginning of this song he may reveal himself to be speaking figuratively. [Bede, *CC*, I (i,1), 70–72]

[interlinear glosses, following the syntactical structure of the Latin text:]

- 12 *let him kiss* let him delight and assure [Anselm, *ECC*, 1189D]
- 13 *me* human nature
- 14 *with the kisses of his mouth* with the incarnation of his son, which is as it were a foretaste of our union with God
- 15 *because your breasts are better than wine* because here [there is] assisting grace and the end is [eternal] life<sup>n</sup>
- 16 [the bride says:] “*your breasts*: the teaching and refreshment of your presence, which is sweet” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1189D]
- 17 *than wine* than the fervor of the Old Law [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 1), 50–51], or any other code of instruction

**1:2 Fragrant with the best perfumes  
your name [is] oil poured out  
therefore the young girls have loved you**

*Fragrant with the best perfumes*

18 Perfumes are the best gifts of the holy spirit, because they invisibly refresh the soul. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 2), 83–86]

*your name is oil poured out*

19 [The bride says:] “I desire a kiss because *your name [is oil poured out]*.” [Anselm, *GCSS*, fol. 4v]

20 The bridegroom sent by the father came anointed to the bride so that he might anoint her also. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 2, 30:9–12]

21 The name of Jesus comes into the world and at once it is preached [like] *oil poured out*, that is, the name of Christ is preached throughout the world. Now the name of Moses is heard, a name which was formerly enclosed within the confines of Judea. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 4, 33:12–13, 29–30, and 34:1–2]

22 The name Christ derives from ‘chrism’, that is, ‘anointed with oil’, because that name is poured out on all the faithful in baptism through the grace of the holy spirit. [Alcuin, CCC, 643A]

23 [The bride says:] “I am not yet able to embrace you; meanwhile because of my desire for you *your name* will spend the night with me.”

*therefore the young girls have loved you*

24 While saying this, she sees the young girls, who were not present when she began speaking but who enter in a chorus in the middle of her entreaties, and sing the bride’s praises. [Origen, HCC, I, 5, 34:9–13]

25 (\*) [The bride says:] “And because you [the bridegroom] have eliminated all the griefs caused by sins by the oil of your grace *therefore the young girls have loved you.*”

26 The churches which constitute one catholic church are young girls, not old through sin but new through grace, not sterile in extreme old age but of the age of mind consonant with spiritual fruitfulness. [Bede, CC, VI, 594–97, derived from Gregory, MJ, XIX, 12, 13–17]

27 *fragrant* because they attract by means of smell [Anselm, ECC, 1190A]

28 *with the best perfumes* in the likeness of perfumes, or through the gifts of the holy spirit [Anselm, GCCS, fol. 4r, and ECC, 1190A]

29 *with the best perfumes* because it surpasses all the anointings of the old law in nature and in effect

30 *oil* because it refreshes [Anselm, GCCS, fol. 6r], heals [Anselm, GCCS, fol. 4v, and ECC, 1190B], and overflows

31 *poured out* that which first lay hidden in lowly things is made known for the salvation of all

32 *your name* God made man

33 *therefore* because it has been poured out

34 *the young girls* those unripe [Apponius, *CCE*, I (i, 2), 380] in faith

35 [the bride says:] “because they are not able to see you as you really are, *they have loved you*, regard you more highly than all other things for the sweetness of your name alone”

**1:3 Draw me after you, let us run in the scent of your  
perfumes  
the king has led me into his storerooms  
we shall exult and rejoice in you  
mindful of your breasts surpassing wine, the  
righteous love you**

*Draw me after you*

36 To this point, the voice [is the voice] of those awaiting the incarnation of the savior and commending his gifts; here is added the voice of those who became believers after the time of the incarnation. The former asked that he should come and bring a kiss; the latter does not ask him to descend as far as her in this way, but rather she desires to follow him into the heavens. But because she sees that she cannot do it by herself she begs for the one whom she desires to come to lead her. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 3), 136–37, 142–49]

37 The young girls reply *draw me after you*. The bride does not follow behind him but is joined to the bridegroom’s side. The handmaids enter after him. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 5, 34:16–18]

*in the scent of your perfumes*

38 By the scent of perfumes the renown of virtues is customarily signified. [Gregory, *MJ*, XXXIV, 17, 11–12]

39 *In the scent of your perfumes*, that is, in contemplation of your miracles. [also in Honorius, *Expositio in Canticum Cantorum*, PL 172, 365D]

*the king has led me*

40 The bride, having entered the inner rooms of the bridegroom, returns to the young women and says to them *the king has led me into his storerooms*. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 5, 35:4–5] *into his storerooms*

41 Or: “through hope in everlasting blessedness he has led me into more than one [storeroom], by virtue of supplies of all manner of good things,” in other words [she says]: “I have already had a foretaste of the sweetness of the heavenly kingdom, which I knew by his revelation has been prepared for me in heaven.” And soon, having turned to the one who reveals these things, she thanks him for his gifts. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 3), 170–74]

42 (\*) In a house there are four things: the gate, the stairway, the dining-room, the bedroom. By the gate we understand faith, by the stairway, hope, by the dining-room, love, and by the bedroom, blessedness. [Gregory, *Expositio in Canticum Canticorum*, ed. P. Verbraken, CCSL 144 (1963), 26, 504–12] *we shall exult and rejoice in you . . . the righteous love you*

43 *We shall exult*, in other words [the young girls say]: “we do not extol you on account of the gifts we have received in themselves, but mindful in all things of the great loving-kindness with which you deigned to mitigate the austerity of the law with the grace of the faith of the Gospel. For this reason we shall rejoice not in ourselves but in you, because *the righteous love you* and have taught that you are to be loved above all things.” [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 3), 176–77, 179–85]

44 The bride having once again withdrawn into the inner rooms, the young girls, awaiting her coming, sing joyfully because of the bride’s perfection. *Mindful of your breasts* and *the righteous love you* are to be read as praise of the bride. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 5, 35:9–13]

45 [The young girls say:] “She who is greater [the bride] is now already enjoying the milk of your breasts. We for our part say not ‘we do love’ but ‘we shall love.’” [Origen, *HCC*, I, 5, 35:15–16, 19–20] Then to the bridegroom they say *the righteous love you*.

*the righteous love you*

46 All those whose hearts are righteous love you above all things. Those who put anything before your love, by which alone they have whatever good things they have, are not righteous. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 3), 182–85]

47 Those who despise the commandments of the creator vainly believe that they love him. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 3), 193–94] Those who are truly just abuse God neither in deed nor word nor thought.

48 [the bride says:] “*draw me*, impart strength to [my] body

49 *after you* in your shadow, or else through imitation of your works” [Haimo, *CCC*, 296A]

50 although *draw* is put in the singular *let us run* is added [plural], because the church is one throughout the world but made up of many faithful people [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 3), 160–62]

51 *in the scent of your perfumes* in the renown of your name, which is likened to perfumes, or trusting to have everlasting good things, which are comparable to perfumes

52 *the king has led me* in other words [the bride says]: “run, young girls, because he has led me in, running, and he will lead you in, too” [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 6v]

53 *into his storerooms* not yet for [eternal] rest, but into the church on earth, where [there are] the necessities of life

54 *we shall exult* in body, with the testimony of good works [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 7r]

55 *and rejoice* in spirit, when we shall labor with good will [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 7r]

56 *in you* not in ourselves [Alcuin, *CCC*, 643C]

57 *mindful of your breasts* [the young girls say:] “*we shall exult* as long as we are mindful of your gifts or teachings”

58 *surpassing wine* being above the austerity of the [old] law [Haimo, *CCC*, 295B], or of carnal desires that inebriate

**1:4 I am black but beautiful, o daughters of  
Jerusalem  
like the tents of Cedar, like the hide-tent of  
Solomon**

*I am black but beautiful*

59 Once again the bride replies to the young girls [Origen, *HCC*, I, 6, 35:23], on the subject of overt temptation.

60 After the church has been led into the storerooms, that is to say, through knowledge and through hope of good things to come, and after she has learnt to love him in righteousness of heart and to rejoice in his grace, that which remains is to show what conflict she may undergo and what affliction she may bear for the love of him and for the attainment of the good things she has tasted. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 3), 196–201]

61 In other words [the bridegroom says]: “you promise you will go with me, and the tribulation I endure could deter you; but neither affliction nor ill repute may hold you back, because these things bestow the beauty of virtues, and after love patience remains for love to be put to the test.”

62 [The bride says:] “I appear worthless in the eyes of those persecuting me, but I shine brightly in the glory of belief before the God of truth.” [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4), 209–11]

*like the tents of Cedar, like the hide-tent of Solomon*

63 Here ‘like’ is said not to signify a true likeness but in accordance with the opinion of the ignorant who judge the bride to be the habitation of vices or evil spirits. *Like the hide-tent [of Solomon]* is said as a true likeness. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4), 240–43]

*Cedar*

64 Cedar was the son of Ishmael; *his hand was against all, and the hand of all was against him* (Gen. 16:12). [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4) 214–16] He had no dwelling among men but lived the whole time in tents because of his wickedness. Thus the just also for their rightful deeds are believed to be cast out and afflicted and judged to be the enemies of all, whence it is said *you will be hated by all people for the sake of my name* (Matt. 10:22). [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4), 232]

*like the hide-tent of Solomon*

65 Solomon made a tent for himself out of skins dyed red, and he took delight in it. [Anselm, *ECC*, 1192A]

66 The church, mortifying in herself carnal desires [Alcuin, *CCC*, 644A] and adorned with virtues, becomes a dwelling place for the true peaceful one [Christ].<sup>n</sup>

67 (\*) The flesh of the incarnate Christ is called ‘hide’, because it is stretched like a tent over him lest he should be burnt by the sun, and thus the flesh of Christ on the cross was stretched out for us as a shelter for our vices.

68 [the bride says:] “*I am black* through afflictions [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4), 203], or through penitence

69 *but beautiful* in the loveliness of virtues [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4), 203]

70 *o daughters of Jerusalem* who now sigh for a dwelling place in the celestial country [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4), 212–13]

71 *like the tents of Cedar* I am reckoned black and, as it were, the filth of the earth, having no dwelling place among men but always fighting and in exile”

72 *Cedar* that is, darkness [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4), 235, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Gen., 63, 7]

73 beautiful *like the hide-tent of Solomon* [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 4), 229]

74 *the hide-tent of Solomon* our army [the church], delighting the true peaceful one [Christ]<sup>n</sup> [Anselm, *ECC*, 1192B; Jerome, *LIHN*, Matt., 138, 5]

**1:5 Do not gaze upon me because I am dark, because  
the sun has discolored me  
my mother’s sons have fought against me  
they have made me a guard in the vineyards  
I have not guarded my own vineyard**

*the sun has discolored me*

75 The property of the sun is to burn and to illumine, and so the true sun burns the church outside with persecutions, and illumines her by giving strength to resist.

*my mother’s sons have fought against me*

76 The church shows from what source she will endure the first frenzy of persecutions, which seems all the more severe in that it comes from people of her own race. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 5), 292–93]

77 (\*) And as if answering an objection from the weak and doubtful the church replies *my mother’s sons*, etc.

78 (\*) [The Jews say:] “*The sons*, that is, the apostles, have destroyed our sect.”

79 Paul, persecutor of the church, was the son of his mother [the synagogue] according to the flesh and his up-

bringing, but repenting and having turned to the ensigns of his sister [the church] he preached the faith which formerly he had destroyed. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 7, 38:20–21 and 39:1–3]

80 [The bride says:] “The bitterness of the persecution of the sons of the synagogue caused me to fail to guard the vineyard [Alcuin, *CCC*, 644A–B], because once I had forsaken the teaching of the Gospel they compelled me to observe the distinctions of the Law.” [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 5), 323–27]

*they have made me a guard in the vineyards*

81 In Jerusalem Christ had a vineyard, in other words the primitive church, which was founded by the coming of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost. At that time the apostles were its guardians, but once persecution had taken place *they were dispersed throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles* (Acts 8:1), and thus it came about that there were many vineyards, that is to say, in many places, and while the Jewish persecutors wished to trouble the church they scattered the seed of the word, without intending to, more widely, and by persecuting one church they caused many to be founded. When, therefore, the church said that she had been assaulted by the synagogue’s parricidal hatred, she soon adds how much she has been advantaged by that affliction, adding in the person of those to whom the responsibility of preaching is committed *they have made me a guard in the vineyards*. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 5), 300–07, 314–22]

*I have not guarded my own vineyard*

82 Our [humankind’s] vineyards are the actions which we cultivate in the practice of our daily labor. But as the guards placed in the vineyards, we do not guard our own vineyard, because we are taken up with extraneous actions and fail to attend to our own actions. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 61–64, derived from Gregory, *HE*, 1146B]

83 [The bride says:] “While I guard many vineyards in order to win profit for others, in so doing I myself have sustained losses.” [Origen, *HCC*, I, 7, 39:10–12]

84 *do not gaze upon me* [the bride says:] “do not look solely at what I am suffering, but consider the reward that follows [Haimo, *CCC*, 297A]

85 *I am dark* I am indeed black, but do not be surprised if I am publicly shunned by men on account of the heat of temptations [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 5), 261–63]

86 *the sun has discolored me* this blackness is not intrinsic, but the glory within is veiled from the world outside [Haimo, *CCC*, 297A]

87 *the sun* the pressure of tribulations, or Christ, for love of whom I suffer these things [Haimo, *CCC*, 297B]

88 *my mother’s sons* the Jews, who to this day persevere with the rites of the synagogue

89 *have fought* with disputations and persecutions

90 *against me* in order to restrain me”

91 *they have made me* the reason was their [the sons’] malice

92 *a guardian* of the fruits

93 *in the vineyards* of nations, to be made fruitful

94 *my own vineyard* at first established in Jerusalem by Christ and the apostles, but [now in] many [places] throughout the world [Haimo, *CCC*, 297C]

**1:6 Show me the man whom my soul loves  
where you feed where you rest at midday  
lest I begin to wander after the flocks of your  
companions**

*Show me the man whom my soul loves, etc.*

95 The voice of the emerging church of the nations speaking to the bride. Because many false prophets go into the world saying *lo, here is Christ, lo, there* (Mark 13:21; Matt. 24:23; Luke 17:23), she prays that she may be able to discern in what kind of avocation and labor he may be found. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 6), 364–68] “*Show me*, she says, my shepherd whom I love with all [my] soul, and thereby it may have food and rest lest, troubled by the heat of temptations, I should begin to seek him through his companions, that is the sects of the heretics.” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 644B]

Or, the voice of preachers asking the bridegroom to enable them to discern in what ways they ought to administer the words of life.

96 Then she sees the bridegroom, but once seen he again removes himself. This he does often in the song as a whole, as anyone who has experienced it has proved for himself. Often the bridegroom is in one’s grasp, often he slips away until [finally] he will be held securely. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 7, 39:15–23]

*at midday*

97 *At midday*, that is in the splendor of your [God’s] majesty, for neither morning nor evening are fitting for perfect things. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 8, 39:25–27] Or ‘midday’, that is, in the extreme heat of tribulations which the devil sends, grieving that the world has been snatched away from him.

98 The quality of events is habitually indicated by the time [they happened]: at midday Abraham welcomed the angels (cf. Gen. 18:1), at midday Joseph dined with his brothers (cf. Gen. 43:16, 25). [Origen, *HCC*, I, 8, 39:29–30 and 40:1–2]

*your companions*

99 The companions are heretics, because they proclaim the mysteries of his name and of faith. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 60), 378–80]

100 the voice of the young girls saying to the bridegroom *show me*, etc.

101 *show me* concerning the hidden tribulation which is caused by heretics

102 *whom my soul loves* she aptly calls him beloved, because the graver the danger the more she loves the man who frees her from it

103 [the bride says:] “*where you feed* where you may give or receive food, that is [good] works [104] so that I may be able to be conformed to them” [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 101r; *EAM*, fol. 4r]

105 *where you feed* that is, in active life

106 *where you rest* in other words, in contemplative life, rest after activity

107 *at midday* in other words, clearly and openly

108 *lest I begin to wander* [the bride says:] “unless you have declared [where you feed and rest], I shall begin, wandering [Origen, *HCC*, I, 8, 40:6–7], to go astray and leave the [right] way”

109 *the flocks of your companions* that is, the wanton crowds following the broad road

**1:7 If you do not know yourself, o beautiful among  
women  
go forth and depart in the footprints of the flocks  
and feed your goats beside the tents of the  
shepherds**

*If you do not know yourself, o beautiful among women, go forth and depart*

110 Because the bride, while she was asking for the helping presence of God in her tribulations, added in the person of the feeble *lest I begin to wander* (1:6), at once

the bridegroom hears her plea and contradicts that fear of hers with gracious scolding, according to the words of the Gospel *why have you doubted, o you of little faith?* (Matt. 14:31) [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 6), 394–99], in other words [he says]: “you are afraid of being deserted by me in tribulation, and lament that you are blackened in tribulation’s heat; but I have ordained that you become more beautiful as a result of tribulations. If perhaps you do not know or remember that *nobody receives the crown except for the one who has lawfully striven* (2 Tim. 2:5), depart from my company.” [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 405–08]

111 When the soul placed among sinners remembers that she has been made in the image of her creator, she follows after him according to the order of perceived similarity. The one who does not know herself goes forth from the secret of her heart into external lusts and, once led to the broad road, follows other nations’ examples. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 73–77, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XXX, 17, 13–20]

*your goats*

112 [The bridegroom says:] “*Your goats*, because they are established not according to the rule of my commandments but according to your mistakes. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 423–24]

*beside the tents of the shepherds*

113 In the tracks of the shepherds you will be the most recent one, not among the sheep but among the goats.” [Origen, *HCC*, I, 9, 40:27 and 41:1]

114 (\*) The Lord, rebuking the fearful church, instructs her concerning the grace given to her in the face of the wiles of the enemy. [Bede, *Capitula in Cantica Canticorum*, III]

115 (\*) “You do not need to begin to wander (1:6) when you have me to comfort you, and leaders of the church upon whom you depend and through whom you have your being.”

116 [the bridegroom says:] “*if you do not know*, beset by temptation of this kind, that you are betrothed to me” [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 419–20]

117 (\*) *women* the souls of heretics giving birth to the devil [cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 17), 1019–20]

118 *go forth* he does not instruct but allows, and he foretells what the outcome will be [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 425–27]

119 *in the footprints of the flocks* to follow the various actions of those who wander [Alcuin, *CCC*, 644C, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 409]

120 [the bridegroom says:] “*feed your goats* nourish the depraved motions of your flesh” [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 80, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XXX, 17, 21–22], or *goats* the damned hearers [Alcuin, *CCC*, 644C, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 412–13] who are placed at his left hand

121 *beside the tents of the shepherds* in accordance with the teachings of foolish masters [Alcuin, *CCC*, 644C, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 413]

122 or *beside* “that is [the bridegroom says] so that you may [truly] be like the true shepherds, because hypocrites seem to follow good people”

**1:8 To my cavalry in the chariots of pharaoh I have compared you, my beloved**

123 Because the Lord does not wish the church to be ignorant of herself, but wishes her diligently to pay attention to the gifts she has received and the suffering she has to undergo, after his accusation he flatters her [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 7), 431–34] saying as it were “if you want to understand how you ought to consider who you are, understand what it is I have compared you with. Then you will know yourself to

be the sort of person who ought not to be perturbed, on account of the benefits I have bestowed on you.” [Origen, *HCC*, I, 10, 41:3–6]

124 Just as the people [of Israel] were terrified by the chariots of pharaoh coming upon them, but were saved by heavenly protection [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 8), 445–47] and led into the promised land, their enemies having been submerged beneath the waters, so the wave of death which has to be encountered by all mortals hurls the wicked into destruction but lays open to the good the way to salvation [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 8), 457–59] and all those things that are there fulfilled bodily but here only spiritually.

125 The cavalry is the bridegroom, in the words of the prophet *and his saving victory is* [won by his] *cavalry* (Hab. 3:8). [The bridegroom says:] “By as much as my cavalry differs from the horses of pharaoh, by so much are you superior to all other daughters.” [Origen, *HCC*, I, 10, 41:7–12]

126 (\*) He rebukes the doubting church graciously, and for fear she should despair he comforts her forcefully in the following [*to my cavalry*, etc.] with faithful love, when he compares her with the cavalry of pharaoh.

127 *to my cavalry* to the people of Israel [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 117r, and *EAM*, fol. 4r]

128 *in the chariots of pharaoh* [the bridegroom says:] “just as I once freed the people [of Israel] from slavery in Egypt, so I shall free you from the hands of those persecuting you [Alcuin, *CCC*, 644C], if you know yourself to be my bride”

129 *in the chariots of pharaoh* that is, in the time of the chariots, and [chariot] denotes ‘pride’ [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1194A], pharaoh [denotes] ‘destroying’

**1:9 Your cheeks are beautiful like a turtle-dove's  
your neck [is] like jewels**

*your cheeks are beautiful*

130 The bridegroom describes her beauty. [Origen, *HCC*, I, 10, 41:16–17] After this, the bridegroom takes his rest (1:11). While he is sleeping, his companions, who are angels, comfort her (1:10): “we have no gold, *but we shall make you the likeness of gold* until he rises *with stigmata of silver*.”<sup>n</sup> [Origen, *HCC*, I, 10, 41:23–25 and 42:1–6]

131 Now it has been shown in what way the Lord protects the church in adversity, it remains to be shown how much, in adversity, the love of that same Lord preserves the church, and this is why there follows *your cheeks*, etc. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 8), 463–66] [The bridegroom says:] “I have decorated you to such an extent with the saving virtue of modesty that no teaching of heretical doctors, by whom you were afraid you might be seduced into error, may damage the chastity of your promised faithfulness to me.” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 644D, cf. Bede, *CC*, I (i, 8), 483–85]

*like a turtle-dove's*

132 Although widowed by the death of her bridegroom, the church preserves his memory so steadfastly and for so long that she cannot by any means accept any extraneous partners [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 8), 469–72], but weeps for her own and others' sins.

*your neck [is] like jewels*

133 By going on to say *your neck is like jewels* the bridegroom shows who by grace has the guardianship of the bride's modesty. [Bede, *CC*, I (i,9), 485–87] For through the neck we both cast food into the body to refresh it and bring forth words by means of which we make known the secrets of our heart to those close to us; that is [‘the neck’ is] learned men who both instruct by their words and infuse

the food of salvation into the limbs entrusted to them. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 9/10), 489–94] They are likened to jewels because they are beautiful in their behavior and because they enclose the breasts of virgins both with words and by example, so that no impure person may handle them. [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 12r–v, and *ECC*, 1194B]

134 *By neck* [is signified] learned men, by *jewels* [is signified] the works of those who do those things which they teach verbally. By *necklaces* (1:10) [is signified] holy scripture, which inwardly shines with the gold of spiritual senses and outwardly glows with heavenly eloquence. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 645A] Through the edification of learned men and through meditation on holy scripture the guardianship of modesty comes about.

135 *your cheeks are beautiful* the beauty of a woman is said to be greatest of all in the cheeks [Origen, *HCC*, I, 10, 41:18–19]

136 *your cheeks* in the cheeks is seen the sign of modesty, just as in preachers is seen the righteous way of life [cf. Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 4r, and *ECC*, 1194A]

137 *or cheeks*, preachers who grind up the food of the scriptures and make it edible for its hearers [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 11v, and *EAM*, fol. 4r]

138 *your neck* through the neck the limbs are joined to the head [*De Proprietatibus*, PL 177, 142B]

### **1:10 We shall make you necklaces of gold with intricate decorations in silver**

*necklaces of gold*, etc.

139 Another translation [the angels say]: *we shall make for you likenesses of gold with divisions of silver, as long as*

*the king is in his bedchamber* (cf. 1:10–11).<sup>n</sup> [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 10), 523–25] In other words [the bridegroom says]: “you will not be able to see gold, that is, my face, in this present life, but you will see the likeness of heavenly brightness through the illumination of the scriptures, as in a glass darkly, until what now lies hidden in the godhead is revealed to all.”

140 (\*) Shining within and without with the gold of divine wisdom and with the silver of divine eloquence.

*we shall make*

141 [The bridegroom says:] “I and my workmen whom I have above all trained to pass on the seeds of the word.”

142 *necklaces* all manner of good institutions, as if ornaments made of gold

143 *we shall make* [the bridegroom says:] “I and those who, illumined by the holy spirit, administer the scriptures to others”

144 *with intricate decorations* that is, distinct and diverse according to the varieties of people

145 *in silver* with the shining of eloquence [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 12v, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (i, 11), 576–77]

**1:11 When the king was in his bedchamber my nard  
gave forth its perfume**

*When the king, etc.*

146 The church, having received from her founder so many gifts and promises, shows she has accepted these with the devotion of good works by saying [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 10), 562–65] *when the king was [in his bedchamber my nard gave forth its perfume]*, meaning that when the son of God appeared in the flesh the church increased in the fervor of heavenly

virtues as a result of that very mystery of the incarnation. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 11), 576–77] Or, when he was enduring the humiliation of the cross the people redeemed by his crucifixion sprinkled the perfume of sweetness, the practice of good works.

147 With Christ the king at rest in the blessedness of the heavenly sanctuary, the virtue of the saints of the church administers to us the grace of great sweetness [Alcuin, *CCC*, 645A]. The longer the saints do not see the one whom they desire, the more ardently they glow in their yearning. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 87–90, derived from *MJ*, XXX, 17, 33–38]

*When the king . . . Engaddi* (1:13)

148 The order of the words deserves to be admired, with the king resting *my nard gave forth its perfume* [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 13), 661–62], since on account of the very great love with which he loved us the son was made man [born] of a woman. Another thing: he is compared to a little bundle of myrrh (1:12), since for our sake he endured the agonies of the cross, [and then] to a cyprus [henna] plant (1:13), since he rose from the dead [see gloss 163], and [lastly] he is *among the vines of Engaddi* (1:13), since he shared out spiritual gifts among the faithful. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 13), 663–68; see glosses 164–65]

*nard*

149 (\*) *Nard* is said to destroy tumors, banish cold, and restore heat. The incarnate Christ is likened to nard, who humbled himself by taking on human flesh and in humbling himself removed the whole tumor of pride, took away the cold of unfaithfulness, and instilled the fervor of charity. Also, the more this plant is trodden down the greater the perfume it releases, and this is just as true of Christ.

150 *when the king was [in his bedchamber]* the reason already given [is] that he loves so very much

151 *in his bedchamber* in the humility of the incarnation, or in the bosom of the father

152 *in his bedchamber* or, while he was with the father, his nard, that is *the love with which he first loved us* (1 John 4:19) gave forth its perfume because, through love, for our sake he took on human flesh

153 *nardus*, ‘nard’, is a lowly herb, hot in its nature, by which [is understood] charity [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 5v, and *ECC*, 1195A]

**1:12 A little bundle of myrrh [is] my beloved to me  
he will remain between my breasts**

*A little bundle of myrrh, etc.*

154 [The bride says:] “The death of my beloved, which he underwent for my salvation, will always remain in my memory.” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 645A]

155 Christ became *a little bundle of myrrh* when, having been taken down from the cross, he was anointed with myrrh and aloes. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 12), 598, 601–02]

156 Myrrh is a tree found in Arabia. It grows to five cubits and is like the thorn tree called acanthus; its sap is green and bitter [Latin ‘amara’], whence it gets its name, myrrh. Its sap is more precious when it flows spontaneously, less valuable when the bark is cut. It is helpful in healing the sick, and for this reason wine mixed with myrrh is given to [wounded] soldiers. [Isidore, *EsO*, XVII, viii, 4; also Bede, *CC*, I (i, 12), 621–23]

*my breasts*

157 In a nuptial song it was fitting to speak of ‘breasts’ rather than ‘chest’. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 3, 46:3–4]

158 It is not the breasts of chaste women but the breasts of harlots that are damaged, wrinkled with slack skin, and this

is why Ezechiel says *your breasts were broken in Egypt* (Ezech. 23:3).<sup>n</sup> [Origen, *HCC*, II, 3, 46:10–11, 9–10]

159 *a little bundle of myrrh* everything associated with the passion [of Christ]

160 *to me* imitating the passion

161 *between my breasts* in front of the heart [Origen, *HCC*, II, 3, 45:28]

162 *he will remain* [the bride says:] “now I, who once feared I should stray (1:6), embrace him with constant love”

### **1:13 My beloved [is] to me a cyprus plant among the vines of Engaddi**

*a cyprus plant*

163 Because the glory of the resurrection followed soon after the mediator’s death, *a cyprus plant* appropriately comes next [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 12), 610–12], because he who was *a little bundle of myrrh* in the bitterness of the passion showed himself to be a cyprus plant in the sweetness of the resurrection, [for] myrrh causes sadness while wine brings joy. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 645A–B, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (i, 13), 625–27]

*among the vines of Engaddi*

164 The balsam trees growing in Engaddi are called vines because they are cultivated in the same way as vines. The bridegroom, therefore, is *among the vines of Engaddi* because coming in human flesh, full of the holy spirit, he gave the gifts of that same spirit to believers by means of the anointing with the chrism [at baptism]—during the making of the chrism, balsam is mixed with oil. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 13), 643–44, 640–42, 634–35]

*Engaddi*

165 Engaddi, ‘the spring of the goat’ [Alcuin, *CCC*, 645B, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Jos., 93, 17–18], on account of the gifts of grace which after the resurrection were bestowed on his adherents in baptism. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 13), 667–70]

166 Engaddi, that is ‘eye of temptation’. *Temptation is the [whole] life of man on earth* (cf. Job 7:1). [Origen, *HCC*, II, 3, 46:23, 25–26]

167 *cyprus* flowering [Origen, *HCC*, II, 3, 46:15–16]

168 *my beloved* she repeats herself [‘my beloved’, 1:12, 13] out of very great love

169 *to me* [the bride says:] “by his flower I am made worthy”

170 *among the vines of Engaddi* among the assemblies of the nations who are washed in the spring of baptism [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 14v, and *EAM*, fol. 6r]

**1:14 Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, behold  
you [are] beautiful  
your eyes are [the eyes of] doves**

*Behold, you are beautiful*

171 To this point, the church bears witness to the pledges of love she has received from the bridegroom. He soon repays her by replying *behold you are beautiful* [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 13), 676–78], in other words [he says] “the very fact of your loving me makes you become beautiful.”

*my beloved*

172 Another translation [is] *my near one*,<sup>n</sup> that is, [the bridegroom says]: “the fact that you are near me means that you are beautiful, and afterwards you will begin to be beautiful without any addition, *you are beautiful* [without

the addition of *my near one*]. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 4, 47:20–21]  
*your eyes are [the eyes of] doves*

173 Further praise of the beautiful bride, so that we too may labor to become beautiful. [The bridegroom says:] “*Your eyes are [the eyes of] doves*; you see God simply because you seek nothing else except him.” *He who looks at a woman to lust after her* (Matt. 5:28) does not have the eyes of a dove, but he who does have sees with chaste eyes and understands the Law and the Gospel spiritually.<sup>n</sup> [Origen, *HCC*, II, 4, 47:22–25 and 48:12–14] It was in the form of a dove that the holy spirit appeared, and therefore both spiritual understanding and all spiritual gifts are signified by the word ‘dove’. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 14), 688–89]

The dove is lacking in anger, does not cause harm with its beak, nests in the crannies of rocks, nurtures others’ offspring, stays beside flowing waters, chooses the best grains, utters a groan in place of a song, flies in company with others, defends itself with its wings, and recovers its sight. Thus holy men sitting beside the flowing waters of doctrine choose the best judgments, nurture for God’s ends people separated from Christ, do not put aside any good opinions they find in heretical writings, are lacking in irrational anger, take refuge in faith in the wounds of Christ, and groan for their sins. [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 15r–v; *EAM*, fol. 6v; and *ECC*, 1195D–1196A; also the anonymous *De Proprietatibus*, PL 177, 142B, and elsewhere]

174 [The bridegroom says:] “*Your eyes are [the eyes of] doves* because your senses are endowed with spiritual understanding.” [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 14), 686–87]

175 *behold, you are beautiful . . . behold, you are beautiful* in simplicity of heart and in purity of works [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 14), 681–84], or twice in order to win both

peoples [Jews and Gentiles], or in soul and in body  
[Anselm, *ECC*, 1195C]

**1:15 Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, and lovely  
our bed [is] flowery**

*Behold, you are beautiful*

176 The bride, hearing that through her love of the bridegroom she has deserved to be praised by the bridegroom himself, speaks in her turn the praises of the bridegroom, not in order that what he does not have may be given to him by her praising, but realizing the beauty of the one through whom she herself has been made beautiful she says *behold, you are beautiful*. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 4, 48:21–24]

*our bed [is] flowery*

177 Sometimes the church rests quietly in bed, as it were, with her bridegroom, in other words in times of peace when she perceives the beauty of God more clearly and gives birth by water and the holy spirit to a progeny of the faithful, redolent with the flower of faith. Sometimes, temptation rising up, she takes her place alongside her bridegroom in the line of battle. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 15), 713–15, 728–29] Or *bed*, the feeble faithful who are at peace with God and his representatives on earth, the reason being only that they do not wish to do wrong. These people flower with the beginnings of good works [Anselm, *ECC*, 1196B], through which they provide promise of fruit, that is of greater works.

178 The peace of the church flowers with virtues and is increased with spiritual offspring. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 645C]

179 *behold, you are beautiful* [the bride says:] “by virtue of your divine nature: I am beautiful through you” [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 6v, and *ECC*, 1196B, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (i, 15), 698–709]

180 *lovely* according to humanity, because born in holiness [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 16r; *EAM*, fol. 7r; and *ECC*, 1196B]

181 *our bed* peace

182 *our bed* the human body [Origen, *HCC*, II, 4, 49:1]

**1:16 The timbers of our dwellings [are] beams of cedar  
our ceilings [are] beams of cypress**

*The timbers of our dwellings, etc.*

183 [The bride], wishing to lead a peaceful life with the bridegroom, suggests what the kinds of dwellings are in which she wishes to receive him. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 15), 744–46]

184 Dwellings, diverse throughout the world, [consisting] of the different nations of the church. The *timbers*, which customarily serve to protect the house, are preachers, by whose word and example the structure of the church is held together so that it does not fall apart. The *ceilings*, which customarily serve to adorn the house, are the simpler people of the household of Christ, who adhere to and are sustained by the walls, adorning [the church] not with doctrine but with virtues. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 16), 748–63]

*of cypress*

185 The Greek word is ‘cyprus’, the head of which tree rears up from a round base to a point, for which reason it is also called ‘cone’, that is, round and elongated. For the same reason its fruit is also called a ‘cone’, so that cypresses are also called ‘conifers’ [bearers of cones]. [Isidore, *EsO*, XVII, vii, 34]

186 [the bride says:] “you making *our dwellings*, me working with you”

187 *of cedar* imperishable [Origen, *HCC*, II, 5, 49:20, and Bede, *CC*, I (i, 16), 765], and putting snakes, that is, demons, to flight by its scent [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 16), 769]  
188 *of cypress* because [cypresses are] lofty, most fragrant [Origen, *HCC*, II, 5, 49:20], apt for healing bodies [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 16), 784]

## Chapter 2

### 2:1 I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys

*I am the flower . . . like a lily among thorns (2:2)*

1 Because the state of the present time is such that labor is more fitting than rest, the bridegroom justly incites the bride, delighted with leisure, to exercise herself in toil. [Bede, *CC*, I (i, 16), 791–92] In other words [he says]: “because you wish to commend your beauty to me, you delight to flower in quietness in secret virtues, but you should know that at the present time I require beauty of a different kind, because I am the flower of virtues from which [comes forth] every fruit of the field, because I desire to make my perfume known throughout the world. This cannot be fulfilled unless you gird yourself for the duty of preaching, now that the quietness in which you delight has been interrupted.” Also, *the lily of the valleys* is greater than [the lily of] the mountains, “because I reveal the clarity of my humanity, or the splendor of the eternal godhead, to the humble [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 1/2), 2–12] and to those prepared for suffering.” In other words [he says]: “remember that I who was able to be born of a virgin, I who am God, appeared in the world in humility, proved myself to be an ally of the humble and humbly came as far as death. Stop looking, therefore, for the security of rest.” In accordance with this he adds *like a lily among thorns (2:2)*. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 1/2), 50–55]

2 “Just as the field is adorned with flowers, so the world is embellished with faith in me and knowledge of me.” [Haimo, CCC, 301D]

3 *the flower of the field* [the bridegroom says, of himself:] “the splendor of the world, the glory of the lowly [Alcuin, CCC, 646A], [born] of an unimpaired virgin, sprung from uncultivated land” [Bede, CC, I (ii, 1/2), 27–30]  
4 *and the lily of the valleys* the lowly state of Christ’s parents can be perceived in this, because he chose poor ones [Haimo, CCC, 302A, derived from Bede, CC, I (ii, 1/2), 33–35]

**2:2 Like a lily among thorns so is my darling among the daughters**

5 Having praised himself, he praises the bride like this: “just as a lily cannot be compared with the thorns among which it often springs up, in the same way *my darling*<sup>n</sup> is a lily superior to all the daughters. [Origen, HCC, II, 6, 50:6–9]  
6 You look for rest and the praise belonging to the marriage-bed, but know that you will be made more lustrous by the stings of tribulation, and that the fruit of preaching is greater than the fruit of tranquillity.” [Alcuin, CCC, 646A]  
7 In the church there cannot be bad people without good people or good people without bad people; there has been no good man who has not been able to tolerate wicked men. [Gregory, MJ, XX, 39, 35–36]

8 Because the church’s integrity is pierced by the dogmas of opposing heresies as though by thorns, let her exert herself diligently against her enemies until as lofty as a lily she is adorned with a lily’s beauty on the head of her bridegroom.<sup>n</sup> [Fulgentius Ruspensis, *Aduersus Pintam (Pro Fide Catholica)*, PL 65, 708D]

9 *a lily* which is pierced by thorns and yet retains its brightness [also Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum*, 48, 1.2, 68, 15–16]

10 *thorns* [the bridegroom says:] “pricking you when they are stirred by the breath of the devil [Anselm, *ECC*, 1197A]

11 *among the daughters* you will be pricked not only by infidels but also by the depravity of those whom you rejoiced to have received among the number of the daughters” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 1/2), 22–25]

**2:3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods  
so is my beloved among the sons  
beneath the shade of the man I was desiring I sat  
down  
and his fruit was sweet to my throat**

*Like an apple tree, etc.*

12 The bride, having been praised and having been instructed by the bridegroom’s example to be ready to suffer, extols the bridegroom with reciprocal praise, because among the good and their works he stands out as being uniquely holy. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 2), 57–61] She promises that she is ready for suffering because she suffers with him presiding, and he is rest and refreshment. [Anselm, *ECC*, 1197B]

*Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods*

13 Although the scent of perfumes may exhale sweetly, it is not, however, sweet when consumed. The apple, on the other hand, is excellent both in taste and in smell, so that it both delights the throat with sweetness and soothes the spirit with its smell. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 6, 50:11–15]

*beneath the shade of the man I was desiring I sat down*

14 [The bride says:] “The reason I prefer my beloved to all others is that I perceive that I have found rest in my

tribulations in the sole protection of the holiness of the bridegroom, with desire for whom I have been burning, and because I experience the sweetest fruit of his gifts, by which I trust I shall always be refreshed.” She had indeed been desiring to rest beneath the shade of her creator when she lamented that she had been blackened by the sun of persecutions (1:4–5), when, imploring God’s help, she cried out *show me the man whom my soul loves, where you feed, where you rest at midday* (1:6), and when, not only weary with long-drawn-out afflictions but enticed by the memory of his beauty and loveliness, she said *our bed [is] flowery* (1:15). [Now] she shows that she is in possession of her desire, saying *beneath the shade of the man [I was desiring I sat down]*. Note that she foretold above *[our] timbers are beams of cedar and [our] ceilings are beams of cypress* (1:16): she was not, however, recalling that their protection was sufficient for her but she was seeking the one and only tree of life, in whose shade she was resting and by whose fruit she was refreshed, because holy men offer opinions by their examples, teaching, intercession, but only to the savior are we able to say *the sons of men will hope in the protection of your wings* (Psalm 35:8). [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 3), 81–104]

15 In other words [she says]: “I rested from the burning of carnal desires under the protection of the coming of that one [I was desiring] [Gregory, *MJ*, XXX, 3, 18–19],” or *shade*, holy scripture.

16 Not ‘I sit down’ but *I sat down*. Advances come about in this way: in the beginning a person desires to sit down in the shadow, at least, of the virtues, so that the body of the one who is born from the shadow may afterwards come to him. For the birth of Jesus began from the shadow and will be completed in the truth, as it is said: *the holy spirit*

*will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you* (Luke 1:35). Thus afterwards there comes a progress to better things. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 6, 50:25 and 51:1–11]

17 *an apple tree* surpasses all the woodland trees in looks, smell, and taste [Alcuin, *CCC*, 646 A]

18 *the trees of the woods* all codes of instruction are unfruitful trees by comparison with the divine teaching [Origen, *HCC*, II, 6, 50:18–20]

19 *so is my beloved among the sons* so Christ excels all the saints who are called ‘sons’ of God by grace, he himself by [his divine] nature [Alcuin, *CCC*, 646A]

20 *and his fruit* [the bride says:] “after the shade protected me I was satiated with his fruit,” that is, with celestial sweetness [Alcuin, *CCC*, 646B], or with his body [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 8r, and *ECC*, 1197B]

21 *sweet* because in it [the fruit] the soul understands the source of life, while she also perceives it bodily

22 *to my throat* [the bride says:] “to my heart” [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 18v; *EAM*, fol. 8r; and *ECC*, 1197B]

**2:4 The king has led me into his wine-cellar, he has set love in order in me**

*The king has led me into his wine-cellar*

23 How much sweetness and how much strength there is in this refreshment is shown when the bride continues *the king has led me into his wine-cellar* [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 3), 109–10], that is, “he has so gladdened [me] with the hope of future glory that already I do not feel the labors of this world.”

*The king has led . . . in order in me.*

24 “As soon as my throat tastes the sweetness of his grace, I feel myself recreated in spirit and carried away from love

of earthly things into the realms above, as if, led into the wine-cellar, I am refreshed with the smell of new wine and with drinking.” Allegorically, by ‘wine’ is signified the grace of the holy spirit. The wine-cellar is the church, in whose unity the holy spirit is customarily given and received, so much so that God has built for himself a house, the church, gathered together from the whole world, which he has consecrated with the gifts of his spirit. Because he has established the fabric of the church on the foundation of supreme love, with himself as workman, she appropriately continues *he has set love in order in me*. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 4), 112–27] Many people’s love is disordered: what is first of all they put third or fourth. First, God is to be loved, secondly parents, then sons [and daughters], and afterwards servants. Even if the servants are good, bad sons are to be preferred. [This is] in accordance with the Gospel, concerning the appropriate placing of love of anyone: *love the Lord [your God] with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself* (Matt. 22:37, 39). Not ‘with all your strength’ [love your] enemies, not with all your strength as [you love] yourself: it is simply enough that we love [them] and do not hate them. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 8, 52:2–5, 24–27, and 53:5–12] Or [the bride says]: “first he loved me, and loving he gave [himself] so that I might know how to love him.” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 4), 148–49]

*he has set love in order in me*

25 Or [the bride says]: “*he set love in order [in me]*, that is, he embraces with love set in order all my individual members, that is, all the elect whom he has joined to himself, the more eminent with a greater degree of love.” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 4), 141–43]

26 *into his wine-cellar* among the assembly of the peoples who already, by example and by preaching, give others the wine with which he makes them drunk with love [Anselm, *ECC*, 1197B]

27 *he has set love in order in me* [the bride says:] “he has caused me to have appropriately ordered love [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 4), 128]

28 *he has set love in order in me* he shows me how God should be loved and how my neighbor should be loved” [cf. Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 8r, and *ECC*, 1197C]

## **2:5 Support me with flowers, cram me with apples because I am languishing with love**

*Support me, etc.*

29 The bride shows to what an extent spiritual love distracts from love of transitory things the mind which has absorbed it as perfectly as possible, when there follows *support, etc.* [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 4), 173–75] Now, comforted by the above, she burns with the love of God to such an extent that with superabundance of love, or sufferings inflicted, languor of the flesh comes upon her.

30 Or *support, etc.*, that is [the bride says]: “you others, either perfected or beginning in good works, be to me a source of recreation, so that I, who up to now have not been able to find rest in contemplating the face of God, may rest in your good works.” [Bede, *CC*, VI, 107–08, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, II, III, 193–95]

*because I am languishing with love*

31 The more she is kindled with love of the bridegroom, the more weary she grows of the love of temporal things. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 5), 176–81]

32 *support me with flowers, cram me with apples* [the bride says to the young girls:] “comfort me, too, with examples of those who are beginning to do good works [Alcuin, CCC, 646B], or who are running the race, or who finish the course of salvation, the race already run, so that by recalling their examples to mind [Bede, CC, I (ii, 5), 186–88] I may not faint  
33 *because I am languishing with love* in the pilgrimage of this world, I languish with love of the celestial vision” [Alcuin, CCC, 646B–C]

**2:6 His left hand [is] beneath my head and his right hand will embrace me**

*His left hand, etc.*

34 *His left hand [is beneath my head]* when the hearts of the faithful are comforted in this life by participation in the sacraments, by the pledge of the spirit, by the solace of the holy scriptures, which God gives as assistance in the pilgrimage [of this life]. *His right hand will embrace [us]* when after this life we receive heavenly rewards. [Bede, CC, I (ii, 6), 205–10] *His left hand*, that is, the present time and the temporal gifts of God, is given for consolation beneath the head when he strengthens the mind through hope, and *his right hand*, that is, eternal life, *will embrace [us]*, as it were protecting [us], when as recompense he glorifies us. [Alcuin, CCC, 646C] In other words [the bride says]: “the temporal benefits of God, in whom I seek to rest for a little while from the desires and troubles of the world, help in this place of pilgrimage, and the promise of eternal [benefits] delights more fully.” [Bede, CC, I (ii, 6), 235–39]

*His left hand [is] beneath my head*

35 [The bridegroom says:] “Do not seek rest for [your] head elsewhere, for if you have my left hand [beneath your

head] all things that are mine are yours.” [Origen, *HCC*, II, 9, 54:22–24]

36 *his left hand* [the bride says to the young girls:]  
“*support [me with flowers, cram me with apples, 2:5]*  
in order that you may have help both now and in the  
future, just as I do in my weariness” [cf. Anselm, *ECC*,  
1197D]

37 *head* mind [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 19v; *EAM*, fol. 8v; and  
*ECC*, 1197D]

38 *will embrace* but not yet

**2:7 I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the  
gazelles and stags of the fields  
not to arouse my beloved or cause her to awaken  
until she wishes**

*I adjure you, etc.*

39 The primitive church, having turned to the nations and having spoken as if in the person of the nations up to this point, is now suffering weariness within her body because of love. The bridegroom warns the new church not to disquiet herself by sinning.

40 How amiably the Lord regards the repose of this church, or of any individual faithful soul, is revealed in the bridegroom’s answer. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 7), 239–41]

*by the gazelles and stags of the fields*

41 That is [the bridegroom says]: “if you wish to be comparable with gazelles or stags in loftiness of virtues, in very delicate feeding, and in knowledge of what remedies are appropriate for your wounds, if you are wounded.”

42 Gazelles and stags [which are] clean animals, hostile to hunters, ruminants, signify the works of spiritual virtues

opposing the snares of the virulent enemy. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 7), 257–60]

43 Stags leave their native country at breeding time, and they hold themselves up with the head of one placed on the haunches of another, traveling in single file, the first carries and the last is carried, and when the first is tired the last takes its place. Unharméd, they escape hounds pursuing them with thickets of antlers turned back to front; [in old age, see ch. 3, gloss 42] they eat the serpent with darkened [sightless] eyes, they recover their sight by drinking from the spring and they lay down their superfluous parts [skin and horns]. In the same way, saints renounce earthly things for the love of God; one supports the burdens of another, for those less burdened by sins alleviate those who are burdened by condoning [their sins] and praying for them. When they are incited by wicked men, they place upon their mind the strength given by the holy spirit, and thus they escape unharméd. They eat the devil, that is, they destroy him in themselves, and having drunk from the spring, that is, Christ, they recover their inward sight and they lay down the [old] skin, that is, they become immune from sin. [Anselm, *GCCS*, fols. 21r–22r; *EAM*, fol. 9r; and *ECC*, 1198C–D]

*not to arouse my beloved or cause her to awaken*

44 If those under authority sin in such a way that they compel the doctors [of the church] to rise from their rest, they do not just incur the punishment for that sin but are also punished on account of the disturbance to the doctors; for whoever presumes to disturb the doctors, intent on the things of heaven, loses even the virtues which he thought he had. [cf. Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 7), 254–56]

45 May one person not hinder another, but let each rejoice in the success of his neighbors, just as in his own. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 646C]

46 *I adjure* [the bridegroom says to the young girls:]  
“I call you to witness” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 646C, derived from  
Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 7), 267]

47 *daughters of Jerusalem* already born in faith, minis-  
tering to those who see God more nearly

48 *by the gazelles and stags of the fields* he well says  
that the gazelles and stags are *of the fields* [Bede, *CC*, I  
(ii, 7), 256–57], since that denotes the pure simplicity of  
minds flowering in pure faith, in which virtues spring  
up and are nourished [cf. Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 7), 262–64]

49 *not to arouse* so that your guilt makes it necessary  
for them to labor

50 *not to arouse* that is, do not cause a disturbance, so  
that you interrupt someone else’s peace

51 *my beloved* [the bridegroom says:] “at peace in my  
love”

52 *until* this denotes that the bride is at some time  
going to rise of her own accord

53 *she wishes* by her own spontaneous wish, if she  
sees an appropriate time [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 20v]

**2:8 The voice of my beloved  
behold, he comes leaping on the mountains,  
jumping over the hills**

*The voice of my beloved, etc.*

54 The bride willingly receives the bridegroom’s conjur-  
ation [“I adjure,” etc.] [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 7), 273–74], and hearing  
the conclusion appended to it, *until she wishes* (2:7), notices  
that she is being implicitly instructed that she should wish  
voluntarily to rise. Therefore she promises that she is about  
to rise, and puts forward the kind of bridegroom for whose  
sake she wishes [to do so], and an appropriate time [for

doing so]. For after the apostles positioned in the primitive church of the nations had led themselves and others into such a state of perfection that they then took time off for contemplation, they once again realize[d] the duty imposed on them, that of traveling throughout the world and establishing new churches.

*The voice of my beloved*

55 [The bride says:] “This is [the voice] I heard adjuring the daughters of Jerusalem not to arouse me. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 8), 275–77] Hearing his comforting voice, I rejoice: while I cannot yet see his face, nevertheless with my soul looking up to heaven I taste in advance some of the sweetness of future blessedness, even in this present time.” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 8), 284–85]

*behold, he comes*

56 He who is invisible visited us clothed in flesh, or ‘came upon the mountains’, made himself visible in the scriptures, and from time to time has visited the hearts of the faithful with illumination.

*leaping on the mountains, jumping over the hills*

57 He made leaps from heaven to womb, from womb to cradle, from cradle to cross, from cross to tomb, and from the tomb he returns to heaven. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 129–32, derived from Gregory, *HE*, 1219D] He it is who is elevated above all mountains and hills, that is, [all] saints both greater and lesser in stature. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 646D–647A]

58 Those people who rise by exceptional purity of mind above the ordinary way of life of the church, as it were flat, flowery fields, are mountains and hills, and leaving the lowly things behind them they contemplate higher things from nearer at hand. God leaps on them [the mountains and hills] because he illumines the hearts of the lofty ones with visits from time to time, and he does not stay but leaps or

jumps, because the sweetness of this contemplation is brief and rare on account of the heaviness of the flesh, because *life on earth weighs down the senses, thinking about many things* (Wisdom 9:15). [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 8), 289–93 and 300–08]

*leaping on the mountains*

59 The bridegroom leaps on the mountains and places his feet [on them], as it were, by which sign he is known to have been there, because the saints imitate him through suffering and through their way of life. [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1199B]

*jumping over the hills*

60 The signs of his feet do not appear on the hills, but the hills receive the shadow of the one flying over them, because even though they are not like those [who are] greater they yet imitate them to some extent, and are visited by him. [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1199B]

61 *the voice of my beloved* the speech<sup>n</sup>

62 *of my beloved* [the bride says:] “of the one who loves me”

63 *behold*, etc. this is about the contemplative [life]

64 *behold*, etc. [the bride says to the young girls:] “and so that you others may know how to find him with me, look for this sign”

**2:9 My beloved is like a gazelle and the young of stags**

**see him, he stands behind our wall**

**looking down through the windows, peering through the lattice**

*My beloved is like a gazelle*

65 [The bride says:] “And although he thus transcends all men through his divinity, yet he was made man for my

sake, born of the blood and race of the patriarchs.” Or *like a gazelle* because he is in the likeness of the flesh of a sinner.

66 Because the gazelle has very good sight, lives high up on the mountains, leaps hastily, and for these reasons is only rarely seen by us. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 9), 330–31, cf. Isidore, *EsO*, XII, i, 15–17] [Likewise] from his birth onwards he was always ascending to the bosom of the father.

*and the young of stags*

67 He is compared with a gazelle in taking on flesh and in humility, and with the young stag in the variety of his virtues and miracles. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647A]

68 The stag extracts the snake from its caves by the breath of its nostrils and, the harmfulness of its venom overcome, is delighted by the food. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 11, 57:1–2, cf. Isidore, *EsO*, XII, i, 18]

*see him, he stands*

69 Because the sublimity of the contemplative life is expressed in the preceding verses (2:7–8), it remains to show the perfection of the active life, which is common to the whole church, and for this reason there follows *see him, he stands*, etc. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 9), 363–65]

*he stands behind our wall, looking down through the windows, peering through the lattice*

70 The wall which takes us away from his sight is the condition of mortality we deserved by sinning, for we are so created that if we did not sin all of us, the elect, would perceive the divine light without tiring. This kind of seeing is now achieved by very few of the more perfect ones, laboriously, purified by faith, but in this wall the grace of God has made windows and lattices, through which he may look upon us, because he has opened the grace of knowledge of himself to minds albeit oppressed, and from

time to time he refreshes us with the light of his hidden inspiration. Because God acts with his mighty power to the end that he may call us away from earthly things to the promised things of heaven through the prospect afforded by this inspiration [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 9), 376–88], appropriately there comes next *and my beloved says to me* (2:10). [The bride says:] “He who earlier warned the daughters of Jerusalem to guard my time of rest now, seeing the opportunity, sends me to cultivate my vineyards.”

71 Jerome [translating Origen]: If you have made a building for God, he will come behind your wall and gaze solicitously, *looking out through the windows*, that is, through the five senses. For when the bridegroom does not look out death comes up, as Jeremiah puts it: *behold, death has come up through our windows* (Jer. 9:21). *Being visible through the nets*:<sup>n</sup> all things are full of the nets of the devil, in which you would be snared had the bridegroom not subjected himself to the nets of the world. He was visible [in the nets] and, breaking them, made a way out for you, as when you say *my soul has been snatched like a sparrow from the snare of the hunters* (Psalm 123:7). [Origen, *HCC*, II, 11, 57:17–25, and 58:1–6]

72 Just as the sun entering through the windows lights up the house, so Christ has illumined us by the example and teaching of the apostles. Just as through lattices, that is, through small openings, only a little light enters, so it is obscure knowledge that [reaches us] through the prophets.

73 *my beloved is like* he put on true flesh from the patriarchs [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 9), 342–48], and he is swifter than them, because he is free from the oppressive weight of sin

74 *caprea* [Latin], that is, gazelle [Origen, *HCC*, II, 11, 56:24]

75 *a gazelle* according to sight [Origen, *HCC*, II, 11, 56:27]  
 76 *the young of stags* according to his works, because  
 he has opposed hostile forces [Origen, *HCC*, II, 11, 57:3–5]  
 77 *see him* [the bride says to the young girls:] “he  
 comes and behold [*he stands*]”  
 78 *he stands* in his bodily presence, ready to give help  
 [Anselm, *ECC*, 1199C]  
 79 *wall* clothed with the wall of our flesh, he remains  
 in us in such a way that he cannot be seen by us [Alcuin,  
*CCC*, 647A, cf. Gregory, *HHP*, II, I, 454–56]  
 80 *our [wall]* resisting us but not resisting him, or com-  
 mon to us, which [flesh] he put on for all, not for us  
 alone  
 81 *looking down* openly doing [acts of] mercy, through  
 miracles and through preaching [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647A, and  
 Anselm, *ECC*, 1199D]  
 82 *looking down* as if from on high  
 83 *windows* that is, apostles [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 23v; *EAM*,  
 fol. 9v]  
 84 *peering through* formerly  
 85 *peering through* from afar  
 86 *through the lattice* that is, prophets [Anselm, *GCCS*,  
 fol. 23v; *EAM*, fol. 9v; *ECC*, 1199D]  
 87 *through the lattice* through inspiration

**2:10 And my beloved speaks to me  
 arise, hurry, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful  
 one, and come**

*arise*

88 *There is a time for all things* (Eccl. 3:1). He who pre-  
 viously adjured the daughters of Jerusalem not to disturb  
 his beloved, now—behold!—invites her to work. [Haimo,  
*CCC*, 305D, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (ii), 390–93]

*arise, hurry . . . the time for pruning has come (2:12)*

89 When [the soul] is led forth from the body of corruption the rain has departed (2:11) from it, because the lethargy of the present life has gone away and he is led forth to contemplate God in his own substance. Streams of words [uttered] in order that he should be filled with the rain of preaching are no longer necessary, for in that he has been able to hear less he will be able to see more. Flowers appear on the earth (2:12) when the soul begins to taste in advance a certain initial sweetness from the eternal life of blessedness, as if, going forth now, she already smells in the flowers what she will have more richly in the fruit, when she goes forth later on. *The time for pruning has come (2:12)*, and our pruning comes when we abandon the unfruitful and harmful corruption of the flesh so that we are fit to reach the fruit of the soul [Christ] [Bede, *CC*, VI, 169–82, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, II, IV, 418–34], he who [is] for us the ripest fruit. In pruning, the unfruitful branches are cut off so that those which are healthy may bear fruit more richly.

*come*

90 *Come* to devote yourself to the salvation of your neighbors through sedulous attention to preaching [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 10), 417–18], so that you may be worthy to be received with the great company at the wedding [the heavenly banquet], in other words [the bridegroom says]: “you believe you will quickly come [to me] if you go apart in contemplation; but a better way of coming [to me] is through work of this kind.”

91 *and my beloved* [the bride says:] “he comes and stands and so teaches me about converting others”

92 *he speaks* by inspiring

93 saying *arise*

94 *arise* that is, [the bridegroom says]: “break off contemplation and labor to gain other [converts]” [cf. Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 9v; *ECC*, 1199D], or “arise from the love of earthly things

95 *arise* and you must arise because I love you and you me”

96 *hurry* because the time is short [Anselm, *ECC*, 1199D–1200A]

97 *my dove* pure of heart, not envious, illumined by the holy spirit

98 *my beautiful one* through beauty of morals

**2:11 For already the winter has passed, the rain has gone away and departed**

*For already, etc.*

99 [The bridegroom says:] “Arise, therefore, because I, suffering for you, calmed the floods.” [Origen, *HCC*, II, 12, 58:17–18]

100 “It is necessary for you to preach, because while there is knowledge in you there is also the opportunity for receiving [knowledge] in those to whom I send you.”

101 It is somewhat easier to preach after some people have already been converted than earlier on when nobody as yet believed. [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1200A]

*the rain has gone away*

102 [The bridegroom says:] “In rising from the dead I have curbed the storm and restored tranquillity.” [Origen, *HCC*, II, 12, 58:22–23]

103 *the winter* the frozenness of infidelity [104] *has passed* now no longer has a place, [frozenness] which

once covered the earth, until the time of the incarnation [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647B, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 11/12), 425–27]

105 *the rain* persecution [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 10r; *ECC*, 1200A]

106 *has gone away and departed* not only do they cease persecuting but also, obedient, follow<sup>n</sup>

**2:12 Flowers have come forth upon our earth, the  
time for pruning has come  
the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land**

*Flowers have come forth upon our earth*

107 *Flowers have come forth*, etc., in other words [the bridegroom says]: “you can give as an example to others those who already believe and are already doing good works.”

*the time for pruning has come*

108 “You can put forward as an example to others those who now suffer the sickle shearing away vices.”

109 With the useless branches of futile religion cut off, the hearts of men are now prepared for the fruit of future faith [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647B–C], and vices are now cut off because the time for the remission of sins has come.

*the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land*

110 When the hidden sacraments and the things which many do not understand are talked about, the holy spirit is signified under the name of turtle-dove, and thus it appears to Moses and to one [of the prophets].<sup>n</sup> When lowly things that concern all people [are talked about], the holy spirit is represented as a dove, and thus it appeared to the many people standing around the river Jordan not as a turtle-dove but as a dove [Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32]. [Origen, *HCC*, II, 12, 59:7–15]

111 You must not cease preaching for the sake of quietness, because Christ, who was in great quietness with the father, to an extent interrupted quietness for the sake of preaching.

112 Or the voice of those preachers, whoever they are, who by their song announce the departure of winter and the arrival of spring, who utter humble groaning in place of a song, who are lovers of modesty, who linger always on the ridges of mountains or in the tops of trees [Origen, *HCC*, II, 12, 59:10–11] and flee the company of men. While placed bodily in the world they have their way of life in heaven, mindful of their habitation and of the fatherland promised to them. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 11/12), 441–48, 453–61]

113 *flowers* the beginnings of good works, or faith [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 10r; *ECC*, 1200A]

114 *have come forth* previously

115 *have come forth* they give light to others in the growing church [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647B]

116 (\*) *our earth* of the heart

117 *our earth* [the bridegroom says:] “you protect and rule [the earth] to which I give increase”

118 just now *the time for pruning has come*

119 *of the turtle-dove* of Christ [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647C]

120 *is heard* [the bridegroom says:] “therefore you must not despair, seeing that you may hear it too

121 *in our land* in those who were once at sea and [therefore] unstable [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 24v]

122 *our land* which began to be ours when it received the word of faith”

**2:13 The fig tree has put forth its shoots, the vines in  
flower have given forth scent  
arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come**

*The fig tree has put forth its shoots, the vines in flower  
have given forth scent*

123 He gives the name *shoots* to the early and immature figs that are not in a condition to be eaten, and that fall off if they are struck with a light touch. And so when the turtle-dove gave voice, that is, when the apostles began to preach, the synagogue *put forth shoots*, that is, put away immature understanding of observance of the Law. Or thus: the synagogue gave birth to the apostles who administered sweet food to believers [Apponius, *CCE*, IV (ii, 13), 416–18], and because when the synagogue put forth the apostles the faith and salvation of the whole world followed, *the vines in flower* appropriately comes next. By ‘in flower’ [is signified] the beginning of the multiplying churches from that [church-vineyard] which was first planted in Jerusalem, from the flower of which the juice, pressed out, makes a kind of drink conferring health and conducive to pleasure, for it *makes glad the heart of man* (Psalm 103:15). [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 13), 462–84]

*arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come*

124 In other words [the bridegroom says]: “take the Jews and Gentiles already converted as a pattern.”

125 *put forth* put out, or produced

126 *its shoots* the assembly of the nations

127 *in flower* and thus they can easily be ruined

128 *scent* the renown of a holy way of life [Anselm, *ECC*, 1200C]

129 and therefore *arise*

130 *arise* for judgment, or to work [Anselm, *ECC*, 1200C]

131 *my darling* [the bridegroom says:] “to whom I have offered such great gifts” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647C (but Alcuin has *bona*, good things, not *dona*, gifts)]

**2:14 My dove in the holes of the rock, in the caverns  
of the wall  
show me your face and let your voice sound in my  
ears  
for your voice [is] sweet and your face [is] lovely**

*in the holes of the rock*

132 The church sits and nests in the wounds of Christ when she places her hope of salvation in the passion of the Lord, and by this means trusts to keep herself safe from the snares of the hunter, that is, the devil, and in the same [place] she gives birth to others. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii), 14), 497–503]

*in the caverns of the wall*

133 Do not be ashamed to preach the cross of Christ, although it may seem folly to the unbelievers (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18), because the apostles themselves, who are the wall and the fortification of the church, preached [the cross of Christ]. Or, the prophets and patriarchs [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 10v] are the wall in which the apostles take refuge. [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 25v]

134 A wall is a heap of stones compacted together with the same cement, and in the same way the apostles are united by the same faith and the same sacraments.

*show me your face and let your voice sound in my ears*

135 The bride has not up to now had faith that she might contemplate the glory of God with her face unveiled (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18), but because she has already been adorned it is said [to her by the bridegroom] “show [your] face and also now [your] sweet voice.” [Origen, *HCC*, II, 13, 60:10–12]

136 “Show forth in public action for the benefit of others that beauty which you have within, and that which you have learnt in quietness and in secret. For I perceive private things, and from my point of view I consider your

face to be shown to me at the time when I observe good actions shown for the benefit of [your] neighbors.” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 14), 544–49]

137 The face is shown to the Lord in acting justly; the sound of the voice is shown in preaching wholesomely. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 14), 553–55]

*your voice*

138 “Your voice is not strange; it is that in which you promised to serve me on the day of our betrothal.” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 14), 559–61]

*in my ears*

139 “*In my [ears]*, not in strange [ears],” that is, “expend your labor and your voice in love of me, not in love of anyone on earth.” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 14), 563–65]

140 *my dove* [the bridegroom says:] “nourishing offspring for me, by the infusion of the holy spirit” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647C]

141 *in the holes* in faith [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 25r]

142 *in the holes* of the hands

143 *in the holes* in the wounds of Christ [Alcuin, *CCC*, 647C], or in the capacity in which the faithful, positioned away from enemies, are safe

144 *of the rock* that is, of Christ, who is the firm foundation

145 *in the caverns* of the side of Christ, or of the apostles

146 *in the caverns* because some [caverns] have room for more, some [holes] less

147 *your face* [the bridegroom says:] “not strange, but the one I created in you”

148 *voice* in praise or in preaching [Alcuin, *CCC*, 648A]

149 *in my ears* [the bridegroom says:] “having the power to grant what you request

150 *for your voice [is] sweet* I desire preaching because such is [your] voice [sweet]

151 *for your voice [is] sweet* because it meditates on the praise of God

152 *your face [is] lovely* I ask for [your] face because as [your] face is, so your life is [lovely]”

153 *your face [is] lovely* because he is satisfied through seeing her face [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 14), 578–79]

**2:15 Catch for us the little foxes that destroy the vineyards  
for our vineyard is in flower**

*Catch for us the little foxes*

154 Inasmuch as it is not enough for us to put our life forward as an example to others and to carry out good preaching unless we also correct those who err, and defend the weak from the snares of others, it is appropriate that what is said is *catch* not ‘for you’ but *for us*. [The bridegroom says:] “You serve me in this, and for this I shall reward you.” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 14), 581–83; (ii, 15), 609–15]

155 Foxes hide in holes, and when they come out they never run in straight lines [Isidore, *EsO*, XII, ii, 29], just like heretics. [cf. Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 15), 604–08]

156 Or *little*, that is, [catch them] in the very beginning of [their] trickery, lest greater acts should harm more considerably. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 15), 592–94]

*our vineyard*

157 Aptly, while *vineyards* is in the plural above [*that destroy the vineyards*], here [*our*] *vineyard* is singular, because many vineyards are made one through faith and love. Those, therefore, who wish to disunite it [the vineyard] must be driven out. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 15), 569–603]

158 a voice countering heresies *catch*, etc. [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1201B]

159 *catch* seize and subdue [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 15), 593]

160 *little foxes* schismatics and heretics [Alcuin, *CCC*, 648B, derived from Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 15), 586–87] who are cunning and make themselves out to be humble [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 10v; *ECC*, 1201B]

161 *that destroy* that is, make incursions

162 *the vineyards* individual churches [cf. Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 11r; *ECC*, 1201C]

163 *for our vineyard is in flower* the foxes are to be captured because they are harmful to the vineyard in flower

## **2:16 My beloved [is] mine and I [am] his, he who feeds among the lilies**

*My beloved [is] mine and I [am] his*

164 His darling soon responds to such affection from her beloved with dove-like simplicity of heart [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 15), 616–17], and promises that she will be obedient to the duty enjoined upon her, as if she says: “he not only exhorts but helps as well.”

165 [The bride says:] “He is coupled with me and I with him in sincere love,” or “my beloved makes a plea of this kind to me [*show me your face and let your voice sound in my ears*, 2:14] and I show him my face and my voice,” or “my beloved is mine and not anyone else’s, for in truth he proffers grace and is requited with fruit, and I am glued to him, not to any other man nor to a crowd of men, but with complete obedience and devotion.” In all these senses what comes next, *he who feeds among the lilies*, follows aptly. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 16), 621–33]

*he who feeds among the lilies*

166 He *feeds among the lilies* when the faithful, who are members of him, are perfected in love, following the examples of earlier believers now in heaven. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 16), 660–62]

167 He feeds within us because we are his body and members of that member. He who is our head feeds us. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 16), 664–65]

168 Lilies are customarily applied to scorched limbs, just as the saints apply the refreshment of consolation and exhortation if they happen to see the hearts of their neighbors scorched with the flame of vices. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 16), 645–51]

169 *he who feeds among the lilies* [the bride says:] “who delights in the brightness and fragrance of my virtues” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 648B]

**2:17 Until the day will breathe and the shadows  
incline  
turn back, my beloved, be like a gazelle or like  
the young of stags  
on the mountains of Bethel**

*Until the day will breathe*

170 Because this feeding of the Lord, which is done for the advantage of his saints, continues to the end of the age, for where they reach the sight [of him] there will be nothing that may advantage them any further, *until the day will breathe*, etc., appropriately comes next. [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 16), 669–73]

*turn back, my beloved, be like a gazelle or like the young of stags*

171 [The bride says:] “And because you provoke me to establish and cultivate churches (2:10–12), and to abort the

tricks of the little foxes (2:15), and to show you my face (2:14), although as yet I cannot see your face clearly and I am not sufficient in myself, illumine more brightly my heart and the hearts of those to whom I am about to preach, I beseech you.” [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 712–20]

172 “Mark lofty minds with your tracks [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 722–73], and when descending from them appear also to the lowlier [minds] that are in the valley.” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1201D–1202A]

173 *until the day will breathe* until the light of the coming age, which will be a refreshing breeze to the righteous, arises [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 673–74]

174 *incline* so that they pass by and grow faint [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 676–77]

175 *shadows* the ignorance of this present life, or errors [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 674–75]

176 *turn back* [the bride says:] “condescend through grace, you who are at peace in heaven”

177 *like a gazelle* on account of acute vision

178 *or like the young of stags* on account of agility in running

179 *on the mountains of Bethel* “you, I say, existing on the mountains of Bethel,” mountains on account of the height of contemplation [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 726–27], not on account of pride

180 *Bethel* the house rising up, or the house of vigil [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 728–29], or the house of God [Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 733, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Gen., 62, 18]

## Chapter 3

**3:1 On my bed, night after night I have sought him  
whom my soul loves  
I have sought him and not found [him]**

*On my bed . . . I held him and I shall not let go (3:4)*

1 While the preachers from Judea are praying, behold the people of the Gentiles, filled with the holy spirit, has come to the knowledge of [the one who is] her salvation and, having found him, she holds him with firm love, for which reason her voice, fully entering, follows [*on my bed*, etc.].

[Bede, *CC*, I (ii, 17), 747–49]

2 After Adam sinned, man began to rest in earthly things, and nevertheless, with reason as a guide, understanding true blessedness as though in a dream, he thought it consisted in earthly things.

3 The soul seeks God in her bed at her leisure when she has a desire to see God and longs to go forth to him from the prison of the flesh. But this is not permitted, and the bridegroom hides himself so that, not having been found, he may be sought the more ardently. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 214–18, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, II, VII, 355–58]

*On my bed . . . the watchmen found me (3:3)*

4 The holy soul makes a bed for herself at night when she prepares for herself a secret place in which she rests, fleeing all the perturbations of the world. In this bed she seeks the beloved, because while she is free from anxieties she rests by inquiring in what way she may come to him, but while she lives in the world she cannot fully banish from

her the darkness of the world, and the more seriously she suffers from that the more frequently and fervently she seeks him, for once he is found she does not suffer the darkness anymore. But because she does not find him in this world she then adds *I have sought him and not found [him]*, [also Thomas the Cistercian, PL 206, 325C–D] because she really is burning with extreme desire, and whatever she possesses is insufficient, in her view, until she finds the beloved.

She therefore continues to persevere in her questioning, *I shall arise and go around the city* (3:2). The *streets* are spiritual men who hold to the narrow way while they journey to the heavens, the *squares* are men of this world who pursue many pleasures and walk in the broad way. She goes right around [the city] because she observes and imitates all the saints there are and all that there have been, and sometimes even in laymen she finds something that avails her in seeking for the bridegroom. But after this twin labor of questioning she again shows the difficulty of finding [him] when she continues *I have sought him and not found [him]* (3:2), but while she seeks and does not find she herself is sought and is found, and for this reason is said *the watchmen found me* (3:3).

5 *on my bed*, etc. behold, *the fulness of the nations comes in* (Rom. 11:25) [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1203A]

6 *night after night* the manifold obscurities of ignorance [Bede, *CC*, I (iii, 1/2), 1, 8–9]

7 *I have sought* now openly, whom formerly she sought unknown

8 *him whom* the greatest good

9 *soul* natural reason

10 *I have sought* [ii] on many occasions, according to various teachings

**3:2 I shall arise and go around the city  
through the streets and the squares I shall seek  
him whom my soul loves  
I have sought him and not found [him]**

*I shall arise*

11 [The Gentile church says:] “Because no angel, no prophet, no learned man whosoever reveals to me, the Gentile people, in [my] doubts the light of divine knowledge, and so I have not found where is to be learnt that which could not be found on my bed, I have proposed in my soul to rise up from the bed of carnal pleasures and to gird myself for the work of investigation into the means of salvation, and by land and sea, publicly and privately, throughout the world, to attend councils of men whom I have heard to be wise.” [Bede, *CC*, I (iii, 1/2), 9–16]

*I have sought him and not found [him]*

12 “Having journeyed through the world with much labor, and having discussed the words of the wise, I have learnt nothing certain concerning the way of truth.” [Bede, *CC*, I (iii, 1/2), 18–20]

13 *I shall arise* from the bed of the world

14 [*I shall*] *go around* [the Gentile church says:] “I shall search diligently” [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 27v]

15 *the city* the church [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 27v]

16 *streets* those living narrowly [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 27v, cf. *EAM*, fol. 11v], that is, the greater spiritual [ones]

17 (\*) *squares* the less wise

18 *squares* those holding to laxer [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 11v; *ECC*, 1202C] precepts, that is, lesser men, making use of what is allowable in the world

**3:3 The watchmen who guard the city found me  
have you seen the one whom my soul loves?**

*have you seen the one whom my soul loves?*

19 [The Gentile church says:] “When I was inquiring in this way, the Lord, seeing this perseverance in asking, at length deigned to be revealed, and he allowed the one whom he inspired to search—[he allowed] me, searching, to find him.” [Bede, *CC*, I (iii, 1/2), 35–38]

20 She speaks first, burning with very great love, to those who are willing to teach her.

21 [the Gentile church says:] “those who are ready to teach [*found me*]” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1202D]

22 *found me* Philip found the eunuch, Peter found Cornelius [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 3), 54–57]

23 *the watchmen* solicitous heralds [24] *who guard the city* because with holy solicitude they keep watch to guard the church with the word of preaching [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 3), 49–51]

25 *have you*, etc. the church questions the watchmen when she receives preaching intently and bears fruit within herself by manifesting good works

26 *have you seen* [the Gentile church says:] “by what street shall I be able to catch up with him?”

**3:4 Very shortly after I had run through them  
I found the one whom my soul loves  
I held him and I shall not let go  
until I have led him into the house of my mother  
and into the bedroom of the woman who bore me**

*after I had run through them*

27 She passes through them because she sees in them the form of him whom she seeks and yet she passes through because she begins to imitate and perceive God, who is beyond.

28 Peter passes by the watchmen when he scorned the prophets, saying to the Lord of the prophets *you are the Christ, the son of the living God* (Matt. 16:16).

*until I have led*

29 (\*) At the end of time the Gentile church will call back the synagogue, which formerly called her through the apostles.

30 *very shortly* because as soon as anyone seeks God with true perception he finds him immediately

31 *after I had run through them* [the Gentile church says:] “after I had intermingled with the hosts of them and run through their sayings [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 4), 75–77]

32 *I held him* the more intently I sought [him] the more fervently I held him, once found [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 4), 85–86]

33 *I shall not let go* faith in him, or action in the event of some time of trial

34 *until* until at the end of the world I shall concern myself with calling back to faith in him the synagogue, through whom I received the hearing of faith and the ministry of regeneration” [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 4), 88–90]

35 *into the house* into the assembly [of the nations], [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 28r; *EAM*, fol. 12r] because all Israel will then be saved

36 *into the house* so that he may dwell in them

37 *of my mother* who gave birth in faith [Alcuin, *CCC*, 649A]

38 *into the bedroom* so that he may rest in the perseverance of their goodness

39 *of the woman who bore me* of her who gave instruction in how to live [cf. Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 4), 98–99]

**3:5 I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the  
gazelles and stags of the fields  
not to arouse my beloved or cause her to awaken  
until she wishes**

*I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem*

40 Hearing himself led in by means of these words (3:4), Christ adjures them [the daughters of Jerusalem] not to present an obstacle to her.

41 The reason why this verse is repeated in the song of love is because the Lord does not take less care of the assembled church of the Gentiles than of the church of the Jews, but contrives to take equal pains over the peace of both [Alcuin, *CCC*, 649B–C], for this *queen of the south* (Luke 11:31; Matt. 12:42)<sup>n</sup> is no less captivated by the bridegroom's love than the first Jewish beloved.

*and stags*

42 It is the stag's habit in its old age to eat a serpent and, on account of the thirst provoked by the poison, to hurry to a spring and to rejuvenate itself by drinking from it, and by dropping off its [old] skin and horns there, which corresponds to the believer in the water of baptism. [see ch. 2, gloss 33]

43 *daughters of Jerusalem* who have led the way from Judaism into faith

44 *not to arouse my beloved or cause her to awaken*  
not to deny that those who have come from circum-

cision to [Christian] faith are saved, and not to disturb them [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 5), 166–68]

45 *until she wishes* to arise, showing that the church gathered from the nations will of her own free will subject herself to vigils and labors on the Lord's behalf [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 5), 169–70]

**3:6 Who is this one who comes up through the desert  
like a column of smoke  
from perfumes of myrrh and incense and all the  
powder of the perfume-maker?**

*Who is this one*

46 The converted Jews, seeing the Gentiles also converted and equally received into the love of the bridegroom, ask whether this may be the salvation promised to the Gentiles, not out of envy but because there was great doubt, as if wondering and rejoicing in the fellowship of brothers.

47 Furthermore, this has to do with the church converted from the nations, the way in which, having received its foundation from the apostles, it was afterwards multiplied through the sequence of time and on account of movements from place to place.

48 At one and the same time the church both sleeps when she alienates herself from carnal desires (3:5) and hastens to the vision of her creator with good works. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 260–64]

*through the desert*

49 *Through the desert*, that is, through the midst of the nations, none of which were fertile with the fruit of virtues and among which no prophet or angel had established the worship of God. Or *through the desert* because the church, separated from the enticements of the world, was dedicated

to heavenly commandments. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 183–86, 194–95]

*like a column of smoke*

50 Smoke born from fire, rising up into the heights, gradually removes itself from human sight, just as the church, kindled by the fire of the holy spirit into the love of God, does not cease to ascend until, drawn away from earthly things, it is ravished into the invisible things of heaven.

[Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 202–07]

51 Smoke at one and the same time partly rises up and partly (that which had risen up before) is accustomed to disappear into the higher regions. In the same way the church, among whose limbs there is continually new birth, is continually being born in some of its members, [and] in some, who were born before, it is always being assembled for the heavens. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 207–12]

*from perfumes of myrrh and incense, etc.*

52 Note that, bringing to mind perfumes, first he puts myrrh, then incense, and afterwards all the powder of the perfume-maker, because first it is necessary to mortify the concupiscence of the flesh, then to offer to God the pleasing vows of the heart [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 232–38], and afterwards as a consequence to grow in humility in every kind of virtue.

*and all the powder of the perfume-maker*

53 Pigments reduced to powder are in a condition to be mixed together, just as virtues, when they do not elevate the spirit but are in the opinion of the doer regarded as dust, lead to perfection. [pseudo-Jerome (abbreviation of Apponius, 7th century), *In Canticum Canticorum expositionem*, CCL, 19 (1986), hom. 5, 85]

54 The perfume-maker, or a man who pays attention to virtues, or God, who bestows virtues. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 230–32]

- 55 *who is this one* worthy of so much praise and wonder [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 174]
- 56 *comes up* from the lowest pleasures to the heights of virtues, even to God himself [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 180–81]
- 57 *like* behold the manner of [her] ascension
- 58 *a column* upright and extenuated [Anselm, *ECC*, 1203C]
- 59 *a column* on account of agility
- 60 *of smoke* brought forth
- 61 *from perfumes* from many virtues [Anselm, *ECC*, 1203D]
- 62 *of myrrh* of the mortification of flesh [Alcuin, *CCC*, 650A], which is part of perfumes
- 63 *of incense* of the sweetness of prayers [Alcuin, *CCC*, 650A, derived from Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 242–43]
- 64 *all the powder of the perfume-maker* [the church of the Jews says:] “and I shall not run through all the virtues one by one”

**3:7 Behold the bed of Solomon, around it go sixty of the strongest men in Israel**

*Behold the bed of Solomon*

65 The church of the Gentiles replies to the earlier beloved [the church of the Jews] wondering [at her, 3:6], determining where she is ascending to, that is to say to the bed, and by what means she is ascending, that is to say because they are *in the middle* of a litter *strewn with love* (3:10) [cf. Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 6), 264–66; (iii, 7), 273–74], and the church of the nations proves that she has achieved the same degree of love of the bridegroom the earlier [beloved] has achieved, because she has a comparable nuptial array and preachers, whom God would not have sent to [the two of] them had he not chosen them above all others.

*Behold the bed of Solomon, etc.*

66 The bed of the true peaceful one [Christ]<sup>n</sup> is eternal blessedness, in which the king rests with his saints. The church makes her way gradually to this bed, day by day through the desert, at length arriving there for good, or also the bed of God is the peaceful way of life of the saints in this world. The strongest men go around each of the two beds, because preachers guard both the peace of the secular world and the peace of the church against attacks, and those who are more perfect look with fixed gaze upon the eternal rest of the kingdom of heaven. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 7), 278–81, 286–87, 294–98]

*Israel*

67 Israel, that is, ‘man seeing God’ [Jerome, *LIHN*, Exodus, 75, 21], by which name are called all the righteous who pay heed to the joys of the divine vision, among whom the strongest [are] those who are either raised up by the gift of heavenly speculation or accept the ministry of preaching. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 7), 300–01, 305–09]

68 *sixty* by ‘sixty’ we understand the preachers throughout the world who fulfil the decalogue of the law with the perfection of works [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 30r; *EAM*, fol. 13r] and who await the penny of reward on account of the perfection of works [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 7), 310–11]<sup>n</sup>

69 *men* chosen for rule

70 *strongest* according to faith, or physical strength

**3:8 All holding swords and most experienced in  
making war  
each one’s sword is on his thigh because of  
alarms by night**

*All holding swords and most experienced in making war*

71 They hold the word of God, and they are experienced in the way in which they make use of it as much against themselves as against others in fighting off vices. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 650A]

*because of alarms by night*

72 Lest the snares of the tempter should discover them if they come upon them confident and unarmed, and lest, after they have been defeated, the bed which they ought to have guarded is polluted, which is to say lest the temporal peace of the church is violated, and thus future blessedness is forsaken. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 8), 332–36]

73 The saints are always confident in hope but suspicious of temptation. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 273–74, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XX 3, 84–85]

74 *all holding swords* because they unceasingly have the word of God ready to cut away excesses in themselves and in those subject to them, and to drive back and confute enemies [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 30r; *EAM*, fol. 13r]

75 *most experienced* because they have fought against the devil for so very many years in the frailty of the flesh, they are experienced as a result of assiduous practice [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 30r; *EAM*, fol. 13r]

76 and because good preaching does not avail them if an evil life ensues, *each one's sword*, etc., comes next

77 *on his thigh* on his human flesh, so that he may be dominated by [the word of God's] impulses [not by impulses of the flesh], lest when they preach to others they are themselves found reprobate

78 *alarms by night* that is, in this world, as long as the enemy wields power

**3:9 Solomon the king made a litter for himself from  
the trees of Lebanon**

*Solomon the king made a litter for himself*

79 [The church of the nations says:] “Not only because of these things—that in this temporal world I rest in the bed of Solomon, and hasten towards the future bed, and have very strong guards—does it appear that salvation is promised to the Gentiles, but also because of the fact that he made from us as it were a litter, that is, a litter which might carry the promulgators of his word from place to place, or in which he himself may be carried [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 9), 367–70] throughout the world. Or thus: the peaceful one [Christ] towards whose bed I hasten has strengthened me in this way, and has done this by means of a litter, that is, by means of the apostles whom he sent for our salvation, and by whom he is carried as if on a throne.”

80 *a litter* in which he sits judging individual cases, and by means of which he raises others to the banquet of eternal blessedness [Anselm, *ECC*, 1204C, derived from Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 9), 371]

81 *from the trees of Lebanon* that is, from the strong [Alcuin, *CCC*, 650B], the lofty, the beautiful, the scented [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 9), 375–76], the incorruptible [Bede, *CC*, VI, 292, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, II, III, 285], the whitened [Haimo, *CCC*, 313A]

**3:10 He made the columns of it from silver  
the couch from gold, the steps from purple cloth  
in the middle he strewed it with charity  
for the sake of the daughters of Jerusalem**

*the couch from gold*

82 *The couch*, that is, those who, full of divine wisdom, look upon him, or he makes a couch in the litter when he promises the hope of everlasting rest to the faithful. *Gold*, because he prepares the quietness of the vision of him, gleaming with glory. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 10), 381–86]

*the steps from purple cloth*

83 The steps are those people by means of whom a person is able to climb first to the virtues and afterwards to the holy of holies, and they are purple-colored, that is, ready to be martyred; or the virtues themselves are the steps which are the true purple with which faithful souls are decorated; or Christ himself is the stairway by means of whom both the church and heaven are entered, *purple*, because *he washed us in his blood* (Rev. 1:5), and nobody enters the church unless he is imbued with the sacraments of the passion of the Lord. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 10), 391–93]

*in the middle he strewed it with charity for the sake of the daughters of Jerusalem*

84 Or *with charity* with which he suffered for us *in the middle*, that is, he has prepared the hearts of the church like couches, where faithful souls rest comfortably, because he has filled the whole of it with love of the things that are above, whence he adds *for the sake of the daughters of Jerusalem*, for the sake of the souls burning with desire for heavenly things, because the more he has loved us the more he sets us on fire to suffer for his sake. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 10), 402–08]

85 Here is a consolation: he who is unable to shed his blood for the Lord may love his neighbor *for the sake of the daughters of Jerusalem*, for they are not called ‘sons’, that is, firm ones, but ‘daughters’, who by means of love are not strangers to the house of God. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 318–22, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, II, III, 324, 331–38]

86 *in the middle he strewed it with charity* that is, he made all these things worthless by comparison with the thing that is in the middle, that is, the ornament belonging to all other things, and he designates it by the proper word [charity]. Except for charity the other virtues are nothing, and when all other things are destroyed charity alone does not disappear.

87 *columns* supporters [Anselm, *ECC*, 1204C] of others, also leaders of the church, such as *James, Peter and John* (Gal. 2:9) [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 10), 377]

88 *from silver* learned in the clarity of the divine word [cf. Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 10), 380]

**3:11 Go out, daughters of Sion, and see Solomon the king wearing the diadem with which his mother crowned him on the day of her/his betrothal<sup>a</sup> and on the day of his heart's joy**

*Go out, etc.*

89 In a beautiful order, after the king's gifts have been detailed the church of the nations begins also to preach about his beauty and his array, and she invites [the church of the Jews] to see him. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 10), 430–32] What should also be observed is the order and sequence of this church. It was first established among the Jews, and now, lukewarm for the first time after the period of the apostles, the church of the nations admonishes its prelates, judges, and other ranks, so that she in turn may give back [preaching] to their successors and to the people of their own race, by whom she herself had been preached.

*Solomon the king*

90 As if lying low in human form, by which means he [Christ] conquered the devil, and human flesh was the cause

of this victory. Had God not shadowed himself in flesh, the devil would not have assailed him.

*wearing the diadem with which his mother crowned him*

91 Wearing the diadem, that is, wearing the thorny crown with which his mother, Judea, crowned him. [Haimo, CCC, 314C]

92 In which human form his mother made him chaste, due to the fact that she was a virgin, not disfiguring [offspring] with the stain of original sin as other women do, and [this] sends us to the Gospel narrative. [Bede, CC, II (iii, 11), 459–66] *on the day of her/his betrothal and on the day of his heart's joy*

93 If we relate *her betrothal* to [Christ's] mother, we are speaking about the time of the annunciation, if we relate it to the son [his betrothal], about the resurrection, which was especially joyful because then the human race [was] set free.

94 In other words [the church of the nations says to the church of the Jews]: “believe in the nativity, the passion and the resurrection.” [Haimo, CCC, 314A]

95 *go out* from the ignorance of infidelity [Haimo, CCC, 314C]

96 *see* [the church of the nations says to the church of the Jews:] “understand” [Haimo, CCC, 314D]

97 *daughters of Sion* the Jews

98 *Solomon the king* the true God, making peace between man and God [Haimo, CCC, 314A]

99 *his mother* Mary [Anselm, GCCS, fol. 32r; EAM, fol. 14r]

100 *on the day of her/his betrothal* that is, in the annunciation, which was the beginning of illumination, when Christ was betrothed to the church, or when that same virgin [Mary, was betrothed] to the godhead

101 *of her/his* of the mother, in respect of God, or of  
the son, in respect of the church

102 [the church of the nations says to the synagogue:]  
“see him *on the day of his heart’s joy*”

103 *heart’s* because [his joy is] rational

## Chapter 4

**4:1 How beautiful you are, my beloved, how beautiful  
you are  
your eyes are [the eyes] of doves, apart from that  
which lies inside  
your tresses are like flocks of gazelles  
which have come up from Mount Galaad**

*How beautiful you are, my beloved, how beautiful you are*

1 When the bride converted from the nations has attained such a degree of perfection that in her turn she preaches to the Jews and praises the bridegroom, she herself also receives from the bridegroom a suitable recompense of praise. [Bede, *CC*, II (iii, 11), 500–01]

2 This description is extended on account of the multiplicity of the church.

3 [The church of the nations is] beautiful in action, because she *comes up through the desert like a column [of smoke]* (3:6), beautiful in preaching because she draws her neighbors to her spouse. [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 1), 1–5]

4 He goes on to praise her part by part.

*your eyes are [the eyes] of doves*

5 [The bridegroom says:] “Your eyes, that is, your senses, are outstanding and worthy of reverence through contemplation of spiritual things.” [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 1), 10–11]

*apart from that which lies inside*

6 Great [is] the glory of a [good] work seen to be done, but far, far longer is the eternal recompense which cannot be seen. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 332–33, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, IX, 11, 171–72]

*your tresses . . . your lips* (4:3)

7 So that all things may flow more easily, let us briefly run through the items one by one: the *tresses* are the willing poor, the *cheeks* (4:3) are the noblest prelates, the *teeth* (those within the cheeks) (4:2) other lowlier prelates, the *lips* (4:3) preachers.

*your tresses are like flocks of gazelles which have come up from Mount Galaad*

8 If the sharpness of the spiritual senses is conveyed by the eyes, in the tresses can be noted manifold thoughts [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 1), 25–27], all tending to one goal, that of celestial good. For this reason they are likened to gazelles, which are clean animals and which, by grace, seek out the high places of the cliffs as pastures. [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 1), 40–41]

*which have come up from Mount Galaad*

9 Who *have come up from* that place [Mount Galaad] which is ‘testimony’ [see gloss 21, below], by imitating him, just as he promised: *whoever has borne witness to me before men, I shall bear witness to him before my father* (Matt. 10:32).

10 He names one of the characteristics of the gazelle in order that it should be understood as relating to others, and he preaches more concerning that virtue [bearing witness to Christ through imitating him] in which he perceives the hearers to be more lacking.

11 *how beautiful* outside, in [good] works [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 32r]

12 *how beautiful* inside, in spirit or in preaching [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 32r]

13 *eyes* [the bridegroom says:] “those who provide for [‘see for’] you [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 32r; *EAM*, fol. 14r; *ECC*, 1205D], or your external, historical way of life”

14 *of doves* because the holy spirit appeared in the form of a dove, spiritual grace is aptly signified by its name [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 1), 14–15]

15 *that which lies inside* that is, the intention [behind the work], which alone was beautiful, and on account of which those things [good works] are to be commended

16 *lies* lying open to God alone

17 *tresses* that is, those refined people who, renouncing the world, cling to God and adorn him

18 *like flocks of gazelles* in climbing speedily towards virtues, in condescending [‘coming down’] and in pure pasture

19 *which have come up* to God’s good pleasure

20 *from Mount Galaad* because they are led up into the mountain of virtues, which they attest [see following gloss] if need be, when they suffer for Christ’s sake

21 *Galaad* ‘pile of testimony’ [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 1), 75, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Gen., 67, 4]

**4:2 Your teeth are like flocks of shorn ewes which have come up from the dip all pregnant with twins and not one among them is sterile**

*Your teeth*

22 Just as the frailer members of the church, who are present in large numbers, [are signified by] the hairs, so by the teeth [are signified] the stronger ones [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 33r; *EAM*, fol. 14v], who prevail in constancy and are appropriate rulers of the church. [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 2), 84–87]

*from the dip*

23 Everyone needs to be purified by baptism, and most of all those perfect ones to whom the care of the sheep is

committed must renounce all the things they possess. [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 2), 113–16]

*pregnant with twins*

24 *With twins*, that is, with identical offspring, because they pass on to others the qualities they have themselves, or the double offspring [are] the twofold works of charity [love of God and love of neighbor] [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 2), 119–21], or the faithful converted from each people [Jews and Gentiles], or faith and works. [Anselm, *ECC*, 1206B]

*and not one among them is sterile*

25 Those who are suddenly snatched away from this life having been baptized are not to be considered ‘sterile’, for they have had offspring of faith, faith which they have testified to on their own behalf, or which others [parents and godparents] have testified to on their behalf. They have also made a vow of good work, which they would have performed in society if they had been, as expected, among Christ’s flock, and for this reason it is said *he has fulfilled many periods of time, consummated in a moment* (Wisdom 4:13). [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 2), 126–31]

26 *teeth* which gnaw sins and grind the scriptures [Anselm, *ECC*, 1206B, cf. Augustine, *DDC*, II, vii, 22–25]

27 *flocks* the innocent

28 *of shorn ewes* of sheep from whom all superfluous things, and sometimes necessary things, have been removed

29 *which have come up* because once washed in baptism they go forth to virtues

30 *all eyes* (4:1), *hair* (4:1) and *teeth* [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 14v]

31 *twins* either, indeed, in themselves or in others they beget the fruit of good works [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 2), 123–24]

32 *not one among them is sterile* but [if he is sterile he] is ejected

33 *not one among them is sterile* lest the hairs cleaving to the head [Christians cleaving to Christ] should recede

**4:3 Your lips [are] like a band of scarlet and your speech [is] sweet  
your cheeks [are] like a piece of pomegranate apart from that which lies inside**

*like a band*

34 Preachers are said to be a *band* because by their preaching they restrain the unstable thoughts in the hearts of men.

[cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1206C]

*your lips*

35 The teeth [are those] who grind, the lips [those] who release the things ground.

*your speech [is] sweet*

36 When they [preachers] do what they say, they put their preachings before men as if they were tasty dishes.

*like a piece of pomegranate*

37 The will of the martyr [is signified] by the outside color of the pomegranate. In the deep white seeds, which are seen when the rind is broken, [is signified] the brightness of virtues, which is increased when the flesh is crushed; brightness, also, because they gleam with miracles after suffering has been completed.

*your cheeks*

38 In the cheeks [is signified] modesty, in the pomegranate Christ's passion. The church therefore has red color in her cheeks when she confesses, by her words, the sacrament of the passion of the Lord, and she shows whiteness when,

oppressed by persecutions, she demonstrates the chastity of a pure heart, and by her deeds shows forth what saving grace the cross may have. [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 3), 171–74, 183–87]  
*apart from that which lies inside*

39 There may be great things externally apparent, yet greater things, which only divine eyes see, remain hidden. [cf. Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 3), 191–97]

40 All people in the church are able to hear the confession of belief in the cross that brings life. The infidels, along with the faithful, can perceive the church's persecutions or even the miracles which are divinely bestowed on that same church. The church alone, however, knows how much love she bears towards the life that cannot be seen, how much she is aflame with love for God and neighbor. [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 3), 198–205]

41 *scarlet* because the church does not cease to preach the price by which she is redeemed [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 3), 134–35], the price of the blood of the Lord, or because the holy preaching of charity is aflame with ardor [Bede, *CC*, VI, 346–47, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, II, 52, 11–12]

42 *lips* and those lips are also for receiving [things into the mouth], because this doctrine is sweet even to those who preach when they fulfil [doctrine] with good works

43 *your cheeks* that is, shamefast prelates who are the face of the church, in the sight of whom others are ashamed to do amiss

**4:4 Your neck [is] like the tower of David, which was  
built with fortifications  
a thousand shields hang from it, all the armor of  
strong men**

*Your neck [is] like the tower of David, which was built with fortifications*

44 The *tower* is the unassailable constancy of preachers, which is constructed as a building for defending the faith [and] as a weapon for repelling enemies with a strong hand and by the king ‘beloved’ [David].<sup>n</sup> *With fortifications*, that is, with knowledge of the holy scriptures, when this *opens the senses so that they may understand the scriptures* (Luke 24:45) and strengthen preaching with the sayings of those who have gone before. Fortifications [are] also the gifts of miracles, to which preaching is added, for when bodies have been healed from diseases the salvation of the soul is more easily attained. [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 4), 224–29, 232–38]

45 We stretch out the neck when we look into the distance, just as preachers do for the sake of looking at enemies a long way off. *Tower*, on account of strength and the lofty contemplation of celestial joys. Or *neck*, because [necks] pass food down into the body, or because they join the body to the head. *The Lord gives food to the disciples, the disciples distribute it to the crowds* (Matt. 14:19).

*your neck*

46 On account of one thing preachers are called eyes (4:1), on account of another, teeth (4:2), on account of another, cheeks (4:3), on account of another, the neck.

*with fortifications, a thousand shields hang from it*

47 Fortifications are those unbreakable statements in the holy scriptures by means of which those who defend themselves from incursions from a distance are safe. The shield is that most stable reason by means of which they go forth against heretics with willing trust, and defend themselves when heretics assail them.

48 *tower* protecting those taking refuge in it  
 49 *of David* of Christ, of the ‘strong of hand’ [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 4), 251–52, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, 1 Reg., 103, 2]  
 50 *your neck* the tougher ones  
 51 *was built* for the safety of the faithful  
 52 *a thousand* signifying perfection  
 53 *all the armor* all instruction either in good works or in heavenly teaching, by means of which the saints not only evade but also vanquish the battle array of those who wish them ill [Bede, *CC*, II (iv, 4), 244–46], when they haul some of them back from error or vices: all these things ‘hang from’ the prelates, because we receive from them the example of resisting and vanquishing

**4:5 Your two breasts [are] like two kids, twins of a gazelle which feed among the lilies**

*Your two breasts, etc.*

54 The same mysteries of the church are repeated through many similitudes, but repeated they always convey a certain newness, and by means of that novelty they delight the spirits of the hearers more amply. The *two breasts*, therefore, are preachers from the two peoples [Jews and Gentiles], who [are] eyes (4:1) because they look upon hidden things, teeth (4:2) because they correct the wicked and cast them into the body of the church, a neck (4:4) because they administer living breath by preaching eternal joys and also the food of doctrine, breasts because they pour milk into those who are babes in Christ—who [the church of the Jews and the church of the nations] are kids of a gazelle because they acutely discern the things that are to be done, and with the swift race of good works flee away from the vale of

tears, twins because they preach the same faith [and] the same sacraments. And, lest the milk they pass on may be lacking in them, they feed among the flowers of the scriptures and the examples of the saints, by always recalling those things to mind. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 5), 257–70, 285–93, 306–08]

*two kids [twins] of a gazelle*

55 *Two kids*, two peoples who on account of humility understand themselves to be small and to be sinners, but by running in charity pass through all the world's obstacles. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 651D–652A, derived from Bede, *CC*, VI, 382–85, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XXIV, 8, 77–82]

56 *two breasts* according to what they contain

57 *of a gazelle* born of a gazelle, that is, of Christ, or the gazelle [is] the synagogue

58 *among the lilies* because those who flower and shine with virtues find refreshment in these [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1207A]

**4:6 Until the day will breathe and the shadows incline  
I shall go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill  
of frankincense**

*Until the day will breathe and the shadows incline*

59 After that day has come, beyond time, there will be neither teaching nor learning, but, all the shadows of this earth having come to an end, *all people will shine like the sun* (Matt. 13:43). [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 5/6), 310–16]

*I shall go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense*

60 [The bridegroom says:] “[I shall go] because I shall gather together new peoples day by day,” and because this

speech is addressed to the church of the nations, it can be seen, not inappropriately, as the promised calling of the synagogue, which will happen in the future at the end of the world [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 5/6), 359–63, but not in the bridegroom’s own voice], or the calling of any nations whatever. For this reason he at once adds, with relation to the very great beauty of that one church of his which is to be gathered either from the Jews or from any other nations whatever throughout the whole world, *you are altogether beautiful* (4:7). [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 5/6), 375–79]

61 *until* that is, until the end of the age [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 5/6), 370], when they will receive the rewards they assiduously contemplate in the labor of the night

62 *I shall go* [the bridegroom says:] “and because you are such [as described] one by one (4:1–5), I shall go, that is, I shall confer as much grace on the lowly as on the eminent”

63 *the mountain of myrrh* that is, the noble ones who bear the fruit of martyrdom [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 34v; *EAM*, fol. 15v; *ECC*, 1207C, cf. ch. 3, gloss 63]

64 *to the hill of frankincense* that is, to those who emit sweet fragrance in prayers and in other good things

**4:7 You are altogether beautiful, my friend, and there is no stain in you**

*You are altogether beautiful*

65 [The bridegroom says:] “The reason I shall go is because you are altogether beautiful; your beauty invites me to [do] this.”

66 *you are altogether beautiful* [the bridegroom says:] “not only in the more select bodily parts I have enu-

merated, but also in those that seem feeble and fragile”  
[Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 7), 379–81]  
67 *stain* that is, criminal guilt [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 34v;  
*EAM*, fol. 15v; *ECC*, 1207C]

**4:8 Come from Lebanon, my bride, come from  
Lebanon  
come, you will be crowned  
from the top of Amana, from the summit of Sanir  
and Hermon  
from the dens of lions, from the mountains of  
leopards**

*Come from Lebanon, my bride, come from Lebanon, come,  
you will be crowned*

68 [The bridegroom says:] “And because I go to you, you must come to me in thought, speech and deed.” [Haimo, *CCC*, 319C] Or, the first [‘come’] in the flesh, for the sake of good works, the second [‘come’] in the absolution of the flesh, for perceiving blessedness in the soul, the third [‘come’] in the acceptance of the body [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 8), 426–32], when they [the flesh and the soul] receive twofold stoles [Haimo, *CCC*, 319D] at the resurrection (cf. *Ecclus.* 15:5).

69 [The bridegroom says:] “Come in faith, come in good works, come by leading others, or come three times on account of faith in the trinity.”

*from Lebanon*

70 Lebanon, a mountain in Phoenicia, means ‘whiteness’ in Hebrew and ‘frankincense’ in Greek, whence *I shall go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense*, above (4:6). [Haimo, *CCC*, 319C]

*you will be crowned . . . mountains of leopards.*

71 When preachers convert such people to salvation, a crown grows from the princes vanquished in the conflict with them. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 652B, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 8), 454–59]

72 In *Amana* we have those whom the devil deceives and gnaws, and through whom the devil deceives and gnaws others, by means of the watchfulness of great zeal [see gloss 80, below]; in *Sanir* [we have] those to whom ignorance flies with the wings of deception [see gloss 81, below]; in *Hermon* the kind of people who are, as it were by nature, ready for wickedness, because the devil is not lacking [see gloss 82, below]; in *dens of lions* [we have] those by whom and through whom savage persecution is imposed on others; in *leopards* heretics whom the devil deceives with separate tricks, from whose separate principalities God confers the crown of victory on his [followers].

73 *Amana*, a mountain in Cilicia, *Sanir* and *Hermon*, mountains in Judea, in which dwell lions by means of whom are signified demons who rage against us, and because those whose hearts were *dens of lions* are converted, when in turn they make their confession of faith in the Lord, they, from whom the lion [the devil] is driven out, are crowned as if *from the dens of lions*. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 405–10, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XVII, 32, 42–49]

74 *Lions* on account of pride or violence, *leopards* on account of cruelty or diversity of malign arts, the proud hearts of infidels [are signified by] the name of *mountains*. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 652B]

75 *come* approach with a great host

76 *come* at the end of whosoever's life [Robert of Tombe-  
laine, *CCC*, 511A]

- 77 (\*) *from Lebanon* in the purity of virtues [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 34v; *EAM*, fol. 15v; *ECC*, 1207D, cf. ch. 4, gloss 138]
- 78 *you will be crowned* at the untellable coming of the [universal] resurrection
- 79 *you will be crowned* as if [the bridegroom says]: “and do not fear in case you will come alone, because I shall add to you many others”
- 80 *Amana* ‘troubled’, or ‘turbulent’, or ‘the tooth of the nightwatches’, when it kills [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 35r; *EAM*, fol. 16r; *ECC*, 1207D, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Ezech., 132, 24]
- 81 *Sanir* ‘stench’, or ‘the deceptive bird of night’ [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 35v; *EAM*, fol. 16r; *ECC*, 1207D]
- 82 *Hermon* ‘excommunication’ for appropriate wickedness [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 35v; *EAM*, fol. 16r; *ECC*, 1207D–1208A]
- 83 *the mountains* the proud [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 16r]

**4:9 You have wounded my heart, my sister, my bride  
you have wounded my heart  
with one of your eyes and with one of the curls on  
your neck**

*You have wounded my heart, my sister, my bride*

84 [The bridegroom says:] “The reason why you must come and work in order to gain others is that I love you.” Or, “the reason why I shall give you the crown [taken] from all those [see gloss 72, above] is that you have prepared in yourself a place of love for me.”

*with one of your eyes and with one of the curls on your neck*

85 “All your beauty pleases me, but what pleases me most of all is the universal unity I see both in prelates and in those subject to them.”

86 *you have wounded* [the bridegroom says:] “for love of you I assumed flesh,” or “with wounds on the cross”

87 *sister co-inheritor* [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 35r; *EAM*, fol. 16r; *ECC*, 1208A–B]

88 *bride* through the pledge of faith

89 (\*) *you have wounded* [ii] with the wound of love [Alcuin, *CCC*, 652C]

90 *you have wounded* [ii] having given the causes of his love, he repeats himself [Anselm, *ECC*, 1208B], and adds other causes

91 *with one of your eyes* with the unity of preachers, [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 9), 498] because they all preach, love and seek the same thing

92 *with one of the curls on your neck* with the unity of the hearers who stand next to the doctors, whence it is said *there was one heart and one soul in the multitude of believers* (Acts 4:32) [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 9), 501–05]

**4:10 How beautiful are your breasts, my sister, bride  
your breasts [are] more beautiful than wine  
and the scent of your perfumes [is] above all  
fragrances**

*how beautiful are your breasts*

93 Above (1:1), the bride was praising the breasts of her beloved; here, the beloved praises the breasts of the bride. In this is denoted the unity of Christ and the church, because, as the apostle [Paul] says, they are *two in one flesh* (Eph. 5:31), and so each praises the other with like praise. Teaching comes from Christ, because he gives [it], and from the church, because she administers [it]. [cf. Haimo, *CCC*, 321A, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 10), 575–85]

94 *Breasts*, love of God and neighbor, by means of which the holy mind nourishes its senses when it is glued to God

with charity and devotes itself to neighbors as much as it can. The bridegroom reveals how much he loves these breasts by repeating his praise, saying *your breasts [are] more beautiful than wine*. [Robert of Tombelaine, CCC, 512B] *and the scent of your perfumes [is] above all fragrances*  
95 *Scent*, that is, the sweetest renown of faith dispersed throughout all the earth, more widely than the law of the [Jewish] fathers, which is restricted to Judea alone. [Alcuin, CCC, 652C–D]  
96 *Above all fragrances*, that is, above all good works which evil men do, for even if these sometimes please men yet they never please God, because they do not stem from charity. Or above the institutions of the Old Testament, which were figures of them.

97 *how beautiful* [the bridegroom says:] “and deservedly I love you, because your doctrine, which is contained in lofty breasts, is beautiful for the consolation of the sick and the sustenance of little ones” [cf. Bede, CC, III (iv, 10), 528–30]

98 *breasts* that is, milk, the thing containing [breasts] for the thing contained [milk]

99 *more beautiful* [the bridegroom says:] “all the things you teach are [more beautiful] more honest and more useful

100 *than wine* than legal or philosophical teachings”

101 *the scent of your perfumes* that is, the renown of spiritual virtues deriving from charity, which for this reason please and as it were ‘anoint’ God, or good works which are performed by means of the holy spirit

102 *above all fragrances* above all earthly delight

**4:11 Your lips [are] a dripping honeycomb, bride  
honey and milk [are] under your tongue  
and the scent of your garments [is] like the scent  
of frankincense**

*Your lips [are] a dripping honeycomb, bride*

103 *Honeycomb* is honey in wax. Honey in wax [is] the spiritual sense of divine sayings in the literal sense, dripping, because almost every single utterance has many senses. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 11), 610–17, cf. Alcuin, *CCC*, 655D] Or otherwise, honey lies in the honeycomb [and] is seen in the wax; the lips are therefore called honeycomb because when great wisdom is contained in the frailty of the flesh it is hidden as though it were honey in wax. [Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC*, 513A]

104 Above [ch. 4, gloss 7], by *lips* [were signified] doctors; here, by lips [is signified] the doctors' voice, and for this reason they are aptly compared to honey.

*honey and milk [are] under your tongue*

105 Whoever rebukes a sinner sharply and mixes in a certain sweetness among the sharp things has honey not 'in' his tongue but 'under' his tongue. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 417–21, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XV, 11, 14–18]

*and the scent of your garments [is] like the scent of frankincense*

106 *Scent*, that is, the renown of good works, in which they are clothed lest they be found naked, and by which the baseness of previous sins is covered, is just like frankincense, because in all his works a man prays, when he does well with the intention of coming to God, whence *without ceasing pray* (1 Thess. 5:17). [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 11), 675–78]

107 Above (4:10), by the name of perfumes is shown the infusion of the holy spirit, through which the hearts of the

faithful are enlightened and prepared for spiritual conflict. By the word *garments* are denoted the deeds of just men, which are external, and thus by an apt distinction the deeds done by men are compared to frankincense, [but] indeed gifts made by divine generosity surpass any means of comparison [*above all fragrances*, 4:10]. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 11), 689–95]

108 After the Lord preached about the individual members of the church one by one (4:1–5, 9–10), he also prudently commended with worthy praise the aromatic oils in which the whole church was steeped. There are indeed no members, great or small, who are not consecrated by the infusion of this spiritual anointing. He also praised her clothes, that is, works of justice, because the whole of her body is adorned by these. Indeed, nobody within her is worthy of [eternal] life unless he is clothed in just works which he himself has done, or which, if he was an infant, others did for him and in him. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 11), 735–43]

109 *honeycomb* in which anyone who wishes can share  
110 *lips* the same voice of preaching

111 *honey* the sweetness of wisdom, which is given to great ones [112] *milk* teaching suited to little ones [Anselm, *ECC*, 1208C]

113 *under your tongue* in the meditation of the heart [Alcuin, *CCC*, 652D]

114 *under your tongue* or, there is as much spiritual sweetness in [the church's] words as there is bodily sweetness in honey and milk, and it is 'under the tongue', that is, not available to all and sundry but only to the good

**4:12 A garden shut up [is] my sister, bride, a garden shut up, a spring sealed**

*A garden shut up . . . my wine with my milk (5:1)*

115 Christ had compared the church of the nations with a woman on account of her perfection, her beauty, the disposition of her individual aspects and the composition of her seemingly unity, but because it seems to the lover inadequate to compare the individual parts of the bride to individual precious things [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 11), 743–47], he equally compares the whole of her to many of the greatest kinds of things. He therefore compares her to a garden on account of the copious fruits of [good] works, and in relation to this process he adduces four things: first, the spring of baptism, without which no fruit ensues, secondly aromatic oils (4:13–14), that is, gifts of the holy spirit, which are the first means of nourishment enabling trees to grow and bear fruit, [for] in truth that [nourishment] is placed in the hearts of those up to now immature and tender when by means of the holy spirit they determine to renounce the world, sustain adversities, and the like. Afterwards [thirdly], those same trees, or others already growing, are now in flower, and at length [fourthly, there are] ripe fruits (4:13), by the perfection of which works Christ is now refreshed (5:1).

But he does not put this in order according to which thing follows which; rather, he begins with the worthier thing [‘garden’], so that the praise of this bride may be the more alluring to that other bride [the church of the Jews] to whom he intends to commend the church of the nations.

*A garden shut up [is] my sister, bride, a garden shut up*

116 He puts *garden* twice, by which [is signified] the two states, that of the contemplatives and that of the actives, each of which is *shut up* because they cannot be despoiled or deprived of fruit by the adversary [the devil]. There are many going about among the faithful who are in the power of the enemy, but they are not to be numbered among [those in] the fruitful garden, but thrown out like chaff.

*a spring sealed*

117 The church is a *spring* because it redounds with teaching bringing salvation, from which source it waters its neighbors, and *sealed* because the spiritual sense is hidden in unworthy things [the literal sense], and because it is not disturbed by any attack. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 12), 764–66]

118 *a garden* as if the bride were saying: “where has this frankincense (4:11) come to me from?” and he replies “from a garden”

119 *a garden* because it bears the seeds of spiritual works [Alcuin, *CCC*, 653A, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 12), 751]

120 *shut up* fortified by protection [Alcuin, *CCC*, 653A]

121 *spring baptism* [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 37v; *EAM*, fol. 17r; *ECC*, 1208D]

122 *sealed* by means of the sacraments, so that it is hidden from enemies and open to friends

**4:13 The things you bring forth are a paradise of  
pomegranates  
with the fruits of apples  
cyprus trees with nard**

*The things you bring forth are a paradise*

123 Because the church, which is called a *spring* (4:12), [was] first small in Judea and afterwards spread though all the lands of the earth, *the things you bring forth are a paradise* appropriately comes next, because that church, small among the Jews, helped by a spring, sent forth from herself a paradise. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 12), 772–75; (iv, 13), 776–80]

*cyprus trees*

124 *Cyprus trees*, that is, upright and growing to a great height, and graceful and slender in humility, by the works

of which, yoked with charity, the prince is anointed. [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1209B]

*cyprus trees with nard*

125 The cyprus is an aromatic tree growing in Egypt, with white, fragrant seed that is brewed in oil, and from it is expressed and prepared the kingly fragrance that is called 'cyprus'. Just so, in the darkness of this world the blessing of divine grace is received in the oil of charity and is assayed in the flames of temptation. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 13/14), 798–809] With these [cyprus trees] is allied *nard*, a humble plant, that is, faith in the passion of the Lord, and imitation of it. Cyprus is therefore joined with nard when divine grace strengthens us to suffer with Christ. Another thing: nard is joined with *saffron* (4:14) when for the love of Christ we freely accept death. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 653B]

126 *the things you bring forth* that is, the fruits of the garden, the works they bring forth after the planting and watering of baptism [the bridegroom says] “are to me pomegranates, that is, ripe refreshment, delighting me like paradise” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 653A]

127 *pomegranates* for martyrdom after the washing of baptism

128 *with others* [confessors]<sup>n</sup>

129 *ripe fruits* [Anselm, *ECC*, 1209A]

130 *cyprus trees* cyprus expresses divine grace, nard the Lord's passion, saffron charity

**4:14 Nard and saffron, cassia and cinnamon with all  
the trees of Lebanon  
myrrh and aloes with all the finest perfumes**

*Nard and saffron*

131 *Nard* is redolent and warming and signifies charity. *Saffron* is of a golden color and signifies those imbued with divine wisdom.

*cassia and cinnamon with all the trees of Lebanon*

132 *Fistula*, which [is] also [called] cassia [wild cinnamon], is an aromatic tree, a small one, with a tough purple bark which is good for curing internal obstructions [Isidore, *EsO*, XVII, viii, 12], and which is renowned among fragrant plants for this and for its shortness, so that it signifies the lowly in spirit who, mindful of the Lord's passion, are prepared to suffer for the Lord's sake. *Cinnamon* is a short tree, but fragrant and sweet, ashen in color, doubling up with cassia in its medicinal use, and it signifies those who consider themselves feeble. Their humility possesses praise and sweetness in God's eyes, and the ash-colored cinnamon is aptly placed after the purple cassia, because from recollection of the Lord's passion there springs up in us contempt for our virtue. [Isidore, *EsO*, XVII, viii, 10] *With all the trees [of Lebanon]*: just as cassia and cinnamon [show forth] the humble thoughts of the saints, so too do the trees of Lebanon that are lofty and robust show forth the sublime deeds and prayers of the saints. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 13/14), 839–71]

133 *Cassia* and *cinnamon* are there in the garden with all the trees of Lebanon, because in the church those who are humble and patient, together with those who protect the church by preaching or doing good deeds, await the [victor's] palm as reward. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 13/14), 874–79]

*myrrh and aloes*

134 *Myrrh* renders dead bodies incorruptible, and signifies those who by self-denial and patience render their bodies safe from the impulses of the flesh and from adversity on every side. *Aloes* do not have as much strength as myrrh, but yet they ward off putrefaction.

135 *with all the trees of Lebanon* with all things conveyed that can be figured forth spiritually

136 *myrrh and aloes* myrrh and aloes express the continence of the flesh, because their nature is such that corpses anointed with them do not putrefy [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 13/14), 880–83]

137 *with all the finest perfumes* that is, with the most excellent gifts of virtues, and [there is] a pleasing conjunction of plants and trees with perfumes, because when we hold back the flesh from unchaste acts the consequence is that we receive greater spiritual gifts [Alcuin, *CCC*, 653C]

**4:15 The spring of the gardens [is] a well of living waters  
which flow in a spate from Lebanon**

*The spring, etc.*

138 In the *garden shut up* (4:12) of the Lord, among other things is born a *spring of the gardens*, because from the primitive church there went forth into the world heavenly teaching [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 15), 925–31] which in truth gave birth to many churches. Concerning which spring is aptly subjoined a *well of living waters*, because one and the same teaching of the church is both a *spring of the gardens*, because it gives birth to spiritual fruits in those whom it instructs, and a *well* on account of the hidden mysteries that are revealed only to the saints through the revelation of the holy spirit. [*A well of] living waters* on account of words of divine eloquence proceeding from the invisible treasuries of divine grace and leading to eternal life. *From Lebanon*, that is, from that same church which is white through the purity of faith and lofty through the glory of virtues. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 653C–D, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 15), 931–41]

139 *the spring* such are the fruits of the garden, such is the spring, too

140 on each side *of the gardens* [Alcuin, *CCC*, 653C]

141 *a well* inscrutable [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 38v]

142 *of living waters* of the gifts of the holy spirit which quench thirst here and, in the future, put an end to it, concerning which things is said [by Christ] *the water which I give you*, etc. (John 4:14) [cf. Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC*, 514A]

143 *flow* from on high to those further down [Anselm, *ECC*, 1210A]

144 *in a spate* with no obstacle holding [it] back [cf. Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 15), 971]

145 *from Lebanon* because that gift [baptism] is given through the laying-on of hands<sup>n</sup> [cf. Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC*, 510C]

#### **4:16 Rise, o east wind, and come, o west wind**

**blow upon my garden and its fragrances may flow**

*Rise, o east wind, and come, o west wind*

146 The garden having been established and watered, it remained that, all things firmly put in place and in order, Christ should not deny access for the tempting of the church to any adversaries whatever, but rather should reveal her, because the more she is trodden down the more the internal sweetness of her fruits is revealed. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 15), 995–97, 1001–06]

147 By the east wind understand the hardships of the world, by the south wind blandishments, with which twin assault the church is assayed. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 653D, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 16), 1013–15] *Rise* is [said by] one permitting, not commanding. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 16), 1021–24]

*blow upon my garden*

148 Impart tribulation, either by persecuting or by flattering, so that the church, assailed and assayed by each of these, may pour forth in all directions the wonderful scent of her constancy and of hugely abundant virtue, and will satiate those present at the end of the world with the unspeakable perfume of her sweetness. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 16), 1033–37]

149 and since the garden is such, *rise*, that is, depart or attack [150] (\*) *rise* recede or assail [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 38v–39r; *EAM*, fol. 18r]

151 *o east wind* enemy

152 *come, o west wind* that is, after tribulation you, o holy spirit, create [the church] anew [Anselm, *ECC*, 1210B]

153 *blow* on the one hand harassing, on the other recreating

154 (\*) *blow* with the winds of tribulations [cf. Haimo, *CCC*, 325B]

155 *may flow* may abound [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 39r; *EAM*, fol. 18r]

## Chapter 5

**5:1 Let my beloved come into his garden and let him  
eat the fruit of his apples**

**I have come into my garden, my sister, bride  
I have mixed my myrrh with my spices  
I have eaten [my] honeycomb with its honey  
I have drunk my wine with my milk  
eat, friends, and drink, and become drunk,  
dearest ones**

*Let my beloved come into his garden*

1 The church, hearing that she is about to be tested by temptations (4:16), does not speak against her beloved's provision, but lest she should be overcome she seeks the help of the one who does not allow [us] to be tempted further than we are able. [Bede, *CC*, III (iv, 16), 1037–43]

2 Or it can be understood thus in the voice of the perfect [church]: *let [my beloved] come into [his] garden*, in other words [she says]: “just as we always love him and take care to serve him, so he does not allow us to be battered by temptations to the point of failure, but now restores to us the reward of pious devotion.” [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 22–29]

*I have come into my garden*

3 The bridegroom, replying to the church's wish, testifies that he has already done the things she requested [*I have come*, etc.], and for this reason those outside may well be set on fire with great love for this man.

*I have eaten [my] honeycomb with its honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk*

4 By *honeycomb* [understand] those who seek the sweetness of spiritual understanding in the scriptures, and enlighten others. By *honey*, those who freely taste the dishes of the divine word set before them, and insatiably desire to be fed by them. By *wine*, the robust preachers of celestial things. By *milk*, the as yet feeble hearers who prefer to diversify in various kinds of studies. Yet the judge who is above establishes for all alike one and the same hope of recompense in heaven. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 50–58]

*eat friends and drink*

5 Not only is he delighted by the pious deeds of the elect, but he also encourages the faithful to rejoice together over the kind of banquet [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 59–61] at which they may more fully show the mutual loving care between them, and [at which] the lesser ones may concern themselves with imitating what they see among the greater.

*become drunk*

6 [The bridegroom says:] “After the cup of joy, disperse the mind’s torpor by recalling goodly virtues, and kindled with the love of eternal things you should not feel temporal hardships.” He who has learnt the banquet of the scriptures and known the examples of just men, but who has not corrected his [own] life, eats and is not satisfied; he who joyfully hears how life must be lived, but remains lazy about fulfilling the commandments, drinks and does not become drunk. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 67–79, but not in the bridegroom’s own voice]

7 *let my beloved come* [the bride says:] “may he who promised that he would be with me until the end of the age [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 3–4] now visit me with the greater grace the more I am in need

8 (\*) *let my beloved come* he who established me upon the foundation of faith, hope, and charity

9 *into his garden* may he who planted me water me more fully

10 *let him eat* let him, through grace, look upon [me] and receive [me]" [Alcuin, *CCC*, 654A, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 11, cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 39r]

11 *fruit* works [Alcuin, *CCC*, 654A, cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 39r]

12 *of his apples* of his saints [Alcuin, *CCC*, 654A]

13 [the bridegroom says:] "*I have come* by correcting the wayward, raising up the infirm, strengthening the well-doers [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 37–38], putting the perfect ones at rest [in heaven]

14 *I have mixed* I have cut off [the righteous] from this life with as it were the scythe of death, and led them into the storerooms of blessedness" [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 48–49]

15 *my myrrh* martyrs who have suffered bitter things, or else all who have *crucified their flesh with [its] vices and desires* (Gal. 5:24) [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 42–44]

16 *with my spices* with all those who are distinguished by the renown of good works [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 45]

17 *I have eaten* [the bridegroom says:] "I have refreshed myself with them," or "I have incorporated into myself those worn down with work" [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 39v; *EAM*, fol. 18r; *ECC*, 1211A]

18 [the bridegroom says to his friends:] "*eat* delight yourselves [Anselm, *ECC*, 1211B]

19 *drink* in doing my commandments [Alcuin, *CCC*, 654A–B, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 64]

20 *become drunk* by embracing me in entire love" [Alcuin, *CCC*, 654B, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (v, 1), 65]

**5:2 I am asleep and my heart keeps watch  
the voice of my beloved knocking**

**open to me, my sister, my friend, my dove, my  
spotless one  
because my head is full of dew and my locks with  
the drops of the night**

*I am asleep and my heart keeps watch*

21 The church of the nations, having been commended in all sorts of ways, takes it upon herself to be strengthened by others, lest she should recklessly leave off preaching and devote herself entirely to contemplation, and this relates to the succession of the church, which has come down to our own time from that same time in which *the fulness of the nations entered* (Rom. 11:25; see also 3:1) and will continue to the end of time when the Jews will enter. Here, she does not seem to be sent to absolute heathens but rather to exhort those in the church who are lukewarm. Therefore the church says: *I am asleep [but my heart keeps watch].*

*open to me*

22 Arise from the leisure and quietness of contemplation, and open [your] hearts; with the obstacles of vices cleared away, let them clearly let in the light of truth.

*my sister, my friend, my dove, my spotless one*

23 [The bridegroom says:] “*My sister* in respect of my blood, my neighbor in respect of my proximity, my dove in respect of my spirit, my perfect one in respect of my speech, which you have learnt more fully [now] when at leisure.”

*my head is full of dew and my locks with the drops of the night*

24 *My head [is full of dew]*, that is, faith in me and love of me has grown cold and has almost completely failed in the hearts of those blinded by love of earthly things. *My locks*, that is, love of neighbors who are my hairs adhering to my head, are full of *the drops of the night*, that is, they suffer

the severe cold of the persecution of the things of darkness, that is, they are without faith in me and persecute their neighbors, and for the sake of reforming these it is necessary for you to put aside the sweetness of contemplation.”

25 *I am asleep* [the church says:] “I rest outwardly [Bede, *CC*, VI, 449–51, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XXIII, 20, 54–56]

26 *I am asleep* persecution coming to an end, I devote myself to quietness and contemplation” [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 2), 127–31]

27 *and* but

28 *my heart keeps watch* with the eyes of attention and reason she takes care and labors, lest in the time of quietness she should be deceived by flatteries

29 *voice* that is, inspiration

30 *of my beloved* [the bride says:] “that which reason leads me towards, I understand the bridegroom wishes also” [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1211D]

31 *knocking* that is, not only to warn them, now as formerly, but also wishing to compel

32 *open to me* [the bridegroom says:] “preach [concerning] me” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1211D]

33 *open to me* he provides the reasons

34 *my sister* [the bridegroom says:] “because co-heir [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 2), 174]

35 *my friend* because having left behind the yoke of slavery you are aware of my secrets [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 2), 175]

36 *my dove* because illuminated by the gift of my spirit [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 2), 176] you are not envious

37 *my spotless one* because set apart from business affairs you are raised up to visions of the divine” [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 2), 177–78]

38 *head* that is, hair, or [the bridegroom says]: “I am the head [Bede, *CC*, II (v, 2), 181–82], that is, one among those who are my limbs”

39 *of dew* that is, with vices, which are not noticed on account of the darkness of ignorance, or with frigid sloth [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 2), 184–87]

40 *my locks with the drops of the night* [the bridegroom says:] “that is, [Christians] implicated in great vices among themselves, who are to all appearances my hairs, but [are] twisted towards unlawful things”<sup>n</sup> [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1212A]

41 *with the drops of the night* that is, with depraved judgments which they arrive at through ignorance, or with those things they know to be evil but, blinded, do not shun

**5:3 I have taken off my garment, how may I put it on?  
I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?**

*I have taken off*, etc.

42 The church, not disobeying the duty enjoined on her but fearing lest in taking upon herself the care of her brothers she should fall into sin (for this life cannot complete its course without sin), replies [*I have taken off*, etc.].

43 Anyone who undertakes the responsibility of ruling souls also bears responsibility for watching over the relief of the temporal necessities of those to whom he preaches about paying heed to eternal things. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 3), 207–11]

*[how] shall I defile*

44 [The bride says:] “How can it be that I should again be defiled with the dirt of the world, forsaking the summit of contemplation? For however distinguished a teacher may

be, he finds it difficult to avoid sin once he has taken upon himself the responsibility for worldly welfare.” [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 3), 228–29, 229–36]

45 *I have taken off* that is [the bride says:] “I have departed utterly

46 *my garment* from any worldly [garment, that is] impediment” [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 40v; *EAM*, fol. 19r; and cf. Bede, *CC*, III (v, 3), 214]

47 *how may I put it on* in other words [the bride says:] “I should put that on, but how? certainly it is burdensome

48 *feet* that is, the thoughts with which I was once accustomed to touch the earth I have washed with secret tears of compunction, so that I might deserve to enter into the kingdom of heaven” [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 3), 220–23]

**5:4 My beloved put his hand through the aperture  
and my insides trembled at his touch**

*My beloved, etc.*

49 The church fears the situation, [but] because the Lord wishes our love towards him to be made known in great love for our neighbors, she aptly goes on to say *my beloved* [etc.] [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 3), 245–48], in other words [she says]: “I am very afraid of worldly affairs, but I understand that love covers a multitude of sins, and I trust in the help of my beloved, by whom their hearts are already pierced.”

*hand, etc.*

50 He *puts his hand through the aperture* when he goads the soul with his strength through the subtle intellect, and the insides tremble because infirmity, rejoicing in heavenly

intellect, is perturbed in its exultation, fearing lest it should lose what it [only]<sup>n</sup> tenuously knows. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 456–61, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, II, VII, 304–08]

*and my insides trembled at his touch*

51 *Insides*, that is, the soft and flowing part within us, or *insides* is a name designating the heart, because just as foodstuffs are melted down in the intestines so thoughts are digested in the heart. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 4), 265–67] The heart trembles if it refuses to do for its neighbors what God did for his enemies.

52 By *insides* may be understood the softness and frailty of those who undertake the office of preaching, because they recognize that they are hardly suitable, and are afraid. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 4), 251]

53 [the bride says:] “it [the actions of 5:3] must, however, be done because [*my*] *beloved*, etc.”

54 *put* by invisibly [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 4), 251] inspiring [Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC*, 519C]

55 *his hand* the working of compunction, or he has brought back to our memory the work which he worked in us, because, lacking nothing, coming from the bosom of the father, he wished to dwell on earth for our sake [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 4), 250–58]

56 *aperture* that is, the fissure open to regaining reason, however small

57 *trembled* [the bride says:] “with you inspiring, the heart was very much afraid of its deeds”

**5:5 I arose in order to open to my beloved  
my hands dripped myrrh, my fingers [were] full  
of the finest myrrh**

*I arose in order to open to my beloved, etc.*

58 [The bride says:] “*I arose* from sleep to work because it is necessary that he who determines to preach the truth should first arise in order to do those things he preaches, lest, preaching to others, he may himself be condemned.” The following words, *my hands*, etc., are consonant with that. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 5), 285–88]

59 *Fingers*, that is, discretion [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 5), 290–91], so that they may be shown to work not for the sake of human advantage but only with regard to supernal recompense. For just as there are discrete [separate] fingers in the hand, discretion needs to be shown in works; otherwise, they are worth nothing.

60 [the bride says:] “and because reliant on his help *I arose*”

61 *to open* by preaching the word of God [Alcuin, *CCC*, 654D]

62 [the bride says:] “and in order that I might open [*my hands*, etc.]”

63 *hands* works [Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC*, 520A, cf. Bede, *CC*, III (v, 5), 290]

64 *dripped* expressed [‘pressed out’] to others all around

65 [*dripped*] *myrrh* the example of suffering bitter things

66 [*of the finest*] *myrrh* which makes things incorruptible [cf. ch. 4, gloss 136]

67 *finest* because actions and intention please [cf. Bede, *CC*, III (v, 5), 312–14]

**5:6 I opened the bolt of the door to my beloved  
but he had turned aside and gone by  
my soul melted when [my] beloved spoke**

**I sought [him] and I did not find him, I called and  
he did not reply to me**

*I opened the bolt of the door to my beloved but he had  
turned aside*

68 Because she had said (5:4) that the beloved, having put his hand through the aperture, had touched her and struck her so that she trembled, vehemently inflamed by his touch, she now desires to be touched not by his hand through the narrowness of the aperture but with the door of her heart laid open to enjoy his most happy embrace, that is, the sweetness of divine illumination, which she fleetingly felt, and [desires] to be fully satisfied. But because the perfect vision of eternal things, which is kept back for another life, is not permitted to any of the elect in this life, *but he had turned aside* is appropriately added.

[Bede, CC, III (v, 6), 327–35]

*my soul melted when [my] beloved spoke*

69 [The bride says:] “Although he went by, nevertheless he spoke to me, leaving me his commandments that I should wait patiently for him, and after he spoke my soul melted.”

70 The voice of the same church who *opened* concerning those whom she opened, who were previously [called] the *insides* (5:4), or the voice of those same [insides]. [cf.

Anselm, ECC, 1213A]

*I sought [him] and I did not find him, I called and he did  
not reply to me*

71 Here now is the third stage [of the church]. The first [church] was converted from among the Jews, through which and after which the Gentile church [came into being], by which church things have up to this point been done. This Gentile church, as we have said, brought into being this third [church], from which it now follows that until

the coming-in of the remains of Israel at the end of time it will endure, with its succession of prelates and those subject to them.

72 *bolt* the cause of sin, that is, faithlessness or whatever other [cause], because just as the bolt retains the door so the cause retains the sin [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1212D], and when it is removed [the sin] is removed and, sin taken away, the way lies open to Christ

73 *but he had turned aside* [the church says:] “when I opened, he entered [turned aside] into their hearts” [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 42r; *EAM*, fol. 20r; *ECC*, 1213B]

74 *gone by* because God does not show himself fully to anybody but, incomprehensible, surpasses the senses of all people

75 *the soul* once fettered and frozen with the coldness of infidelity, touched by the true sun [Christ] is thawed into compunction

76 [the church says:] “he *spoke* made himself known to me and he made his will known to me

77 *I sought* after perfect knowledge of him”

78 *and I did not find him* because nobody [while] in the body is able to know [him] fully

79 [the bride says:] “*I called* prayed with the intention of desire and I did good works

80 *and he did not reply to me* he did not show himself because my corruption prevented him”

**5:7 The watchmen who go around the city found me  
they beat me and wounded me  
the guardians of the walls took my cloak away  
from me**

*took my cloak away from me*

81 Preachers take away the cloak when they remove from the soul whatever worldly pomp was left [Bede, *CC*, VI, 478–79, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XXVII, 2, 41–42], or when they disclose whatever sin through ignorance was contained therein.

82 *found* lest despair should cause harm, the bride receives consolation and seeks for more

83 *me* seeking [Bede, *CC*, VI, 475, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XXVII, 2, 37]

84 *the guardians* the assiduous watchmen

85 *who go around the city* by virtue of their office

86 *who go around the city* lest anyone should desert his post

87 [the bride says:] “*they beat me* moved me to much lamentation” [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1213C]

88 *and wounded me* because they extinguish whatever worldly things they disclose as having remained in the bride, and reduce her to weakness, like one senseless [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 7), 410–12]

89 *my cloak* the veil of ignorance [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 42v]

90 *my cloak* this is the same garment that was earlier called a ‘tunic’ (5:2) [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 7), 434]

91 *the guardians of the walls* the higher doctors, or others who are ‘guarding the walls’ [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 7), 417–19]

**5:8 I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find  
my beloved  
to tell him that I am languishing with love**

*daughters of Jerusalem*

92 The young girls, now advanced to a degree of knowledge, come devoutly to the servants of God who lead, they believe, an angelic way of life on earth, and beseech them to commend them to the Lord at the time when they are at prayer. *You daughters [of Jerusalem, that is] of the spirits in heaven, who now reign with God. Or, by daughters of Jerusalem we can understand also those in lowly positions in the church, whom their superiors also admonish to seek [the bridegroom] with them, because what is sought by many is sometimes found more quickly, so that the dear-ness of love may be revealed everywhere.* [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 8), 458–60, 446–48]

93 *if you find* it sometimes happens that one who began to search not long ago may find [the object sought] more quickly than one who began to search a long time before

94 [the bride says:] “*tell [him]* in the opening passage of your prayer [*that I am languishing with love*], so that he may give me, too, the grace to find him

95 *I am languishing with love* in comparison with the greatness of love [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 8), 462–63] all temporal things are a burden to me”

**5:9 What kind of beloved is yours from the beloved  
o most beautiful of women?  
what kind of beloved is yours from the beloved  
that you have adjured us in this way?**

*What kind of beloved, etc.*

96 This bride [the Jewish church], reflecting upon the secrets of her inward knowledge, grows afraid, and accusing

her own sluggishness humbly hastens to work, saying: “I beseech you [church of the nations], because you have adjured me in this way, make me also burn with the fervor of the divine love which you have [Alcuin, CCC, 655C], and with healing admonition strengthen me in his love.” [Bede, CC, III (v, 9), 470–71]

*what kind of beloved is yours from the beloved, that you have adjured us in this way?*

97 [The bride], repeating [her] desires and proclamations concerning his virtues and power with appropriate praise, is asked a second time about the kinds of minds in which traces of him are accustomed to be found.

98 those who have been adjured say *what kind of*, etc.  
99 *what kind of* [the bride says:] “we know because he is great in accordance with his nature, with which he was born from the father”

100 *beloved son* [101] *from the beloved* from the father [Bede, CC, III (v, 9), 479]

102 *from the beloved* that is, from that part on account of which he ought more to be loved than feared [Bede, CC, III (v, 9), 476–77]

103 *o most beautiful of women* [the church of the Jews says to the church of the nations:] “your beauty shows that he by virtue of whom you are beautiful is beautiful

104 *o most beautiful of women* your faith surpasses all other sects” [cf. Anselm, GCCS, fol. 43r]

105 *what kind of beloved is yours from the beloved* [ii] in accordance with his humanity, which [is] not *from the beloved* [the father] [Anselm, GCCS, fol. 43v; EAM, fol. 21r; ECC, 1213D]

106 *you have adjured us in this way* [the church of the Jews says to the church of the nations:] “the earnest-

ness of your adjuration shows how great is the one you instruct us to seek [107] *you have adjured us in this way you have adjured us to seek him*” [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 43v; *ECC*, 1213D]

**5:10 My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen from thousands**

*My beloved, etc.*

108 A fitting response on the bride’s part to those seeking [the bridegroom]. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 9), 483–84]

*white and ruddy*

109 First he came into the world pure and holy; afterwards he went away from the world bloodstained by his passion. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 10), 488–90]

110 By *white* understand the purity of divinity, by *ruddy* understand the suffering flesh, so that [*white and ruddy*] denotes God and man, *chosen* in both [natures]. [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 43v; *EAM*, fol. 21r; *ECC*, 1214A]

*chosen from thousands*

111 Because one mediator only between God and men was taken from the whole number of men and of angels, whence is said: *this is my beloved son, in whom I have taken pleasure* (Matt. 3:17) [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 10), 490–93], *because nobody else was found either in heaven or on earth who would take the book* (Rev. 5:3–4).

112 Christ suffered as a result of love alone, others deservedly.

113 [the bride says:] “this is what he is like: *my beloved, etc.*”

114 *white* because *he committed no sin* (1 Pet. 2:22) [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 10), 486]

115 *ruddy* because *he washed sinners in his blood*  
(Rev. 1:5) [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 10), 487–88]

**5:11 His head [is like] the finest gold  
his locks [are] like the shoots of palm trees, black  
as the raven**

*His head, etc.*

116 (Or) *head*, that is, divinity, because *the head of Christ is God* (1 Cor. 11:3). [Bede, *CC*, VI, 483, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XXXIV, 15, 7–8] *Locks*, that is, his holy and upright thoughts; contemptible, however, to the foolish. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 11), 502, 506–08]

*his locks [are] like the shoots of palm trees*

117 Another translation is *his locks [are like] fir trees*. In Greek, a fir tree is called ‘*elates*’, and so here *elatae* seems to come from the Greek rather than from the Latin.<sup>n</sup> [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 11), 549–52]

118 *head* that is, he who is head of the body of the church

119 *gold* full of divine wisdom [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1214B]

120 *finest* resplendent, unadulterated

121 *his locks* adhering to the head [Christ] [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 44r; *ECC*, 1214B; cf. Bede, *CC*, III (v, 11), 507–08]

122 *the shoots of palm trees* in uprightness and victory [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1214C]

123 *black as the raven* contemptible in the world’s eyes, like that noisy and wicked bird, and *as the raven* in that they should impart the sacraments of the church to nobody until they seem like their mother,<sup>n</sup> or because while they are beautiful they understand themselves to be black by their nature (cf. 1:4) [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 44v; *EAM*, fol. 21r–v; *ECC*, 1214C]

**5:12 His eyes are like doves above streams of waters  
which are bathed with milk and sit down beside  
[waters] flowing in spate**

*His eyes are like doves, etc.*

124 *Eyes*, that is, the gifts of the holy spirit which he himself gives, which do not allow those who love him to gorge like pigs but render them clear and transparent, as waters are, containing nothing dark, for which reason they are compared with streams and pure waters, not with stagnant or turbulent ones, because they see God and are filled with the light of divine graces. Because these gifts are given by grace alone, *which are bathed with milk* follows; for just as a mother provides milk for her children from natural love alone so God from pure grace gives gifts of grace to his children who *sit down beside waters flowing in spate*, because the more clearly they see, through God's grace, the more they strive to know higher things. [Bede, *CC*, III (v, 12), 573, 576–78, 592–99]

*like doves, etc.*

125 Doves are accustomed to sit down beside the flowing [waters] so that they may see the shadow of flying birds in the water and thus avoid talons. So holy men see the wiles of demons in the scriptures, and from the deceit which they heed they know the enemy as if from his shadow, and flee. The scriptures are called *[waters] flowing in spate* because concerning whatever things counsel is sought in scripture, through that [scripture counsel] is found in full. [Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC*, 522D–523A]

*streams, flowing*

126 In *streams* can be understood the erudition of the Old Law, in *[waters] flowing* the Gospel fulfilment, because preachers *bring forth both the old and the new* (Matt.

13:52). [Alcuin, *CCC*, 656A, derived from Bede, *CC*, III (v, 12), 648, 653–55]

127 *eyes* looking upon him, and through whom others look upon him

128 *doves* resting [*above streams*] [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 44v; *ECC*, 1214C–D]

129 *above streams of waters* above the scriptures, flowing with the divine spirit, certain lesser [books] [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1214D]

130 *which are bathed with milk* especially cleansed with tender doctrine or with the sweetest grace [Anselm, *ECC*, 1214D–1215A]

131 *sit down* unmoved

132 *beside waters flowing in spate* the higher scriptures, such as the Gospel [Anselm, *ECC*, 1214D]

**5:13 His cheeks [are] like gardens of spices planted  
by perfume-makers  
his lips [are] lilies dripping finest myrrh**

*His cheeks [are] like gardens of spices planted by perfume-makers*

133 *Cheeks*, that is, the modesty and piety of the savior, shining as they did uniquely in him, which are like *gardens of spices*, gardens planted by men awaiting the grace of scent and looks; thus the mediator, appearing in the flesh, delighted those present and attracted those absent with the modesty and sweetness of his teaching. *Planted by perfume-makers*, this is by the apostles and prophets who with harmonious voice have described in the sacred pages [of scripture] not only his words but also his behavior in the hidden things of his future incarnation. From modesty he

wept over Lazarus, *as a lamb he was dumb* (Isa. 53:77),  
and so forth. [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 13), 663–87]

*his lips [are] lilies dripping finest myrrh*

134 *Lips*, the words of his doctrine, promising the clarity  
of the kingdom of heaven to those suffering hardships.  
[They are] *finest myrrh* because they preach contempt for  
worldly pleasures. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 656B, derived from Bede, *CC*, IV  
(v, 13), 688–91]

135 *cheeks* modest prelates whom hearing foul things  
shames, much less doing them

136 *of spices* with the seed of many virtues

137 *by perfume-makers* by the apostles or any of the  
fathers preceding [them] [Alcuin, *CCC*, 656B]

138 *lips* declarers [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215A]

139 *dripping* by word and example

140 *finest myrrh* the pattern of the perfect bitterness of  
his [suffering] [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215A]

**5:14 His hands [are] turned gold, full of hyacinths  
his belly [is] made of ivory adorned with sapphires**

*His hands [are] turned, etc.*

141 *Hands*, that is, works, for what Christ taught verbally  
he completed in action, so that he strengthened with his  
teaching those wondering at his deeds. *Turned* [as if on a  
lathe], because he has to do the things he wishes readily,  
just as turnery is speedier than other crafts, and because he  
holds in himself every rule of justice, whence scripture says  
*all justice ought to be fulfilled in me* (Matt. 3:15). *Golden*,  
because the virtues he bore as a man he perfected in the  
glory of divinity, arousing us to love of heavenly things  
and hope for them, for the hyacinth is like air [in color].

[Isidore, *EsO*, XVI, ix, 3] *Belly*, that is, the frailty of humanity, *made of ivory* on account of the glory of chastity, because he is immune from all sin. *Adorned with sapphires*, neither all of ivory nor all of sapphire. The sapphire signifies the sublimity of the heavens [Isidore, *EsO*, XVI, ix, 2], [the belly is] *adorned*, then, because it is partly understood as human frailty, with its hunger, temptation, weariness, and death, and partly as divine loftiness, with its miracles, resurrection, and ascension. The sapphire looks like serene sky. [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 14), 717–76]

- 142 *hands* the only duty of which is to work well  
143 *turned* in no way blameworthy [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1215B]  
144 *gold* full of celestial wisdom [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 45v; *EAM*, fol. 22r]  
145 *full* working purely with hope of and desire for heavenly things  
146 *of hyacinths* on account of their airy or ethereal color [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215B, cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 14), 748]  
147 *belly* also those who make use of carnal things and wives, in accordance with [the will of] God [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215B]  
148 *of ivory* either in whiteness, or in hardness, or in coldness against passions [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215B]  
149 *adorned* because they use the world to an extent, but yet do not forget heavenly things [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1215B]

**5:15 His thighs [are] marble columns established upon  
golden pedestals  
his form like Lebanon, excellent as cedars**

*His thighs [are] marble columns established upon golden pedestals*

150 *Thighs*, that is, the steps of the incarnation, called *columns* on account of rectitude and stability, because whatever was done by him was preordained by God before time began. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 656C–D, derived from Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 15), 827–51] *Established upon pedestals*, that is, on the prophets, because when he appeared he was just as predicted by those reading in the divine dispensation, or *pedestals*, God’s dispensation, which ordained [all things].

*his form like Lebanon, excellent as cedars*

151 [The bride says:] “Why should I praise the parts of the redeemer one by one? I shall summarize all in a short space. As Lebanon is outstanding in height and size, so the Lord stands out among all those who have been born on earth, and just as that mountain is rich in noble trees so he raises up and sustains all the holy men rooted in him, and, like the cedar, excels all the glory of the woods in beauty, strength, sublimity and scent. Thus the beloved *is in form more beautiful than any of the sons* (Psalm 44:3, Septuagint) [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 15), 868–91], because he has not been measured and *we have all received from his fulness* (John 1:16).”

152 *thighs* that is, the weaker ones in the times following, as the thighs are an inferior part [of the body], or the apostles who carried him through the world [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 46r; *EAM*, fol. 22r; *ECC*, 1215C]

153 *columns* strong and sustaining [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 46r; *ECC*, 1215C]

154 *upon golden pedestals* upon the faith of the patriarchs and apostles [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215C]

155 *his form* that is, all his parts [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215C]

156 *his form* [the bride says:] “why [should I praise his parts] one by one?” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215C, derived from Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 15), 868–69]

157 *like Lebanon* because all are purified through him [Anselm, *ECC*, 1215D]

158 *cedars* the choicest of all beautiful [trees] [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 46v; *EAM*, fol. 22v; *ECC*, 1215D]

159 *cedars* in height, incorruptibility, and scent

**5:16 His throat [is] very sweet and all [of him is] desirable  
such is my beloved and he is my friend, o daughters of Jerusalem**

*His throat, etc.*

160 *Throat*, that is, the internal savor and sweetness of the words of Christ, which few taste, but those who do taste hunger for more. Otherwise, just as the vital breath passes through the throat to the lips so that they are able to speak, so in the lips of the Lord the words which he spoke [passed through his throat]. By *throat* can certainly also be understood the hidden dispensation of his goodness, by which it came to pass that he spoke forth to us. *All*, that is, God and man, *desirable*, not only according to divinity but also according to humanity, from the very start, the conception, through to the triumph of the passion, resurrection, [and] ascension. [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 16), 906–48] *Such is [my beloved, etc.]*, in other words [she says]: “and it is necessary, if you love him and wish to be loved by him, that you realize that he is like this and that you cleave to him with love of this kind.” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 657A]

*daughters of Jerusalem*

161 For the sake of the attractiveness of the song the persons speaking are varied, but one and the same church of

Christ is denoted both by the name of bride and by the name of daughters. When the daughter longs for the heavenly fatherland, when she does not wish for anything except to hear God or speak [to him], she is called 'bride'. [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 17), 988–1014]

162 *throat* that is, their doctrine  
163 *throat* that is, the hidden dispensation by which he speaks to us [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 16), 925–26]  
164 *very sweet* because they are helped by the spirit in filling it  
165 and thus *all*, etc.  
166 *all* in his individual parts  
167 *desirable* worthy of being sought  
168 *beloved* [the bride says:] "he whom I love  
169 *is my friend* because he opens his secrets to me and I open the secrets of my heart to him"

**5:17 Where has your beloved gone, o most beautiful of women?  
where has your beloved turned aside?  
[tell us] and we shall seek him with you**

*Where has*, etc.

170 Having heard about the nature of the beloved, which was what they were asking, the daughters of Jerusalem add another question [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 16), 986–87], because who, having heard so many praises enumerated, would not desire [him]? [Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC*, 525C] And in the unity of the holy church that [question] ought to be asked: in the heart of what kind of people, and in what kind of way of life, is the Lord most accustomed to be found?

*Where has [your beloved] gone*

171 [He has gone] not leaving [those] in whom he [already] was, but in order to unite others with them, and after those others he invites still more. Thus he is said to ‘go’ and to ‘turn aside’ in the manner of a candle, which, once lit, kindles many others around it, without, however, suffering any impairment. [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 17), 1028–40]

172 It pleases God to be in all things in a universal way, in presence, power, and substance, yet in a more familiar way he is said to ‘be in’, that is, through grace in those within whom his works seem most admirable. Those who are not permitted to have full knowledge of God may yet reflect very pointedly upon the marvellousness of the works of God. [Gregory the Great?]<sup>n</sup>

173 Know that God, who is in every place, is nevertheless not ‘localized’. Something is said to be local when it is circumscribed according to the aspects of place, above and below, before and behind, right and left. Since in fact angels and human souls cannot be circumscribed, much less can that incomprehensible being [God be circumscribed]. The best understanding of God that can be had in this temporal life is in accordance with his works alone [not his nature], because in the flesh we can more subtly consider that which is higher [than the flesh], the marvellousness of the works of God. [Gregory, *MJ*, II, 3, 24–36]

174 *gone* in respect of his incomprehensibility [Anselm, *ECC*, 1216A]

175 *most beautiful of women* in fertility

176 *turned aside* according to grace

177 *and we shall seek him with you* whoever seeks Christ without the society of the church ought not to be reckoned among the daughters [Bede, *CC*, IV (v, 17), 1052–54]

## Chapter 6

**6:1 My beloved has gone down into his garden, to the garden of spices so that he may feed in the gardens and gather lilies**

*My beloved has gone down into his garden*

1 *He has gone down [into his garden],* watering it with the spring of baptism. Coming down from on high, he has visited those placed in a lowly position so that we might ascend upwards. The Lord descended onto the mountain, Moses climbed up the mountain. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 1), 36–37]

2 The garden [is] the church, the garden [is] any faithful soul. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 1), 3–4]

*to the garden of spices*

3 After the bride had said *he has gone down into [his] garden,* she adds what kind of a garden this particular garden is, with what fruit it is fertile, when she says *to the garden [of spices].* [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 1), 39–41]

4 The garden is the faithful mind, which is learned in the discipline of correct faith. It follows that it is established with equal sides, as it were [like a square], and is as it were turned over very frequently with wise digging, superfluous seeds being eliminated. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 1), 42–45]

*so that he may feed in the gardens and gather lilies*

5 (\*) He responds to the devout desires of the saints, both delighting himself with fruitful works and gathering those perfected in the virtues of chastity to eternal joys. [Bede, *Capitula in Cantica Canticorum*, XXIII]

6 *has gone down* [the bride says:] “I do not know where he has gone, but I know where he has turned aside” (5:17)

7 *his garden* which he made

8 most of all *to the garden of spices*

9 *so that he may feed* indicates what he does there [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 1), 55–56]

10 *so that he may feed* so that he may delight in good works [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 1), 58]

11 *gathers lilies* he gathers lilies when he leads forth those achieving the purity of perfected merit, and brings them to the heavenly kingdom [Alcuin, *CCC*, 657B–C, derived from Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 1), 62–64]

**6:2 I [am] my beloved’s and my beloved [is] mine, he who feeds among the lilies**

*I [am] my beloved’s and my beloved [is] mine*

12 The bride places this little verse here for the purpose of strengthening the impulse of immense love [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 1), 64–66] with which she blazes inwardly.

13 In other words [she says]: “he *has gone down* (6:1) into me, and in me you can possess the form of the one you seek.” [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 48r; *EAM*, fol. 23r]

14 [the bride says:] “I am preparing in myself a dwelling place *for my beloved*<sup>n</sup> [Alcuin, *CCC*, 657C, derived from Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 2), 67–69]

15 *my beloved for me*<sup>n</sup> [so that] he may prepare a place to receive me with him” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 657C, cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 2), 73–75]

16 *among the lilies* among the holy desires of chaste minds [Alcuin, *CCC*, 657C, derived from Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 2), 70]

**6:3 You are beautiful, my darling, lovely and fair as  
Jerusalem  
terrible as a line of battle assembled in the camps**

*you are beautiful*

17 Up to now, the voice of the church praising and seeking her Lord, who is not far away where his lovers are concerned. What follows is that he who is sought replies, declaring himself to have been present with those speaking and to have heard what they said, and he rewards their devotion to him with praise worthy of them. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 2), 79–81, 85–87]

*terrible as a line of battle assembled in the camps*

18 Because [the church] is held together by means of the unity of charity, no place lies open, through the evil of discord, to enemies, that is, to heretics or unclean spirits. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 657D, derived from Bede, *CC*, VI, 503–08, and from Gregory, *HHP*, I, VIII, 165–72]

*terrible . . . turn your eyes away from me (6:4)*

19 The camps of the Romans were *terrible* because they oppressed the whole world, but they were not *lovely* because they did not possess true peace.<sup>n</sup> [cf. Gregory, *HHP*, I, VIII, 138–39] In the church neither does terror remove loveliness nor does loveliness remove terror, for she leads a heavenly life on earth and occupies herself with drawing the barbarous souls of all manner of nations to her way of life. Because, however, she does not yet deserve to look upon the face of the beloved whom she seeks so earnestly, she afterwards hears *turn [your] eyes away (6:4)*, in other words [the bridegroom says]: “I gave you dovelike eyes with which to discern the paths of justice, but yet you do not seek to know me perfectly in the time of your [earthly] pilgrimage, *for no man shall see me and live* (Exodus

33:20) [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 3), 137–53], nor should you seek on the journey what is kept in store for you in the fatherland.”

20 [the bridegroom says:] “*you are beautiful* by virtue of the will or desire with which you seek me [Anselm, *ECC*, 1217A]

21 *lovely* by virtue of the voice in which you arouse others to the search with mutual conversation [Anselm, *ECC*, 1217A]

22 *fair* by virtue of the external fairness of good works” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1217A]

23 *as Jerusalem* not less [fair] than the primitive church, the apostles and others who [were] in the literal sense, Jews

24 *terrible as a line of battle in the camps* not unexpectedly fighting but perpetually on the alert in the camps

25 *assembled* in a kind of wing-formation, in ranks, according to the various grades of administrators

**6:4 Turn your eyes away from me because they have made me flee [from you]  
your tresses are like a flock of gazelles which have appeared from Galaad**

*Turn your eyes away from me*

26 *Turn [your eyes away]*, not from the desire for knowledge, but in case you should place too much reliance upon the cognitive faculty, for which reason it is said *there is no limit to his greatness* (Psalm 144:3, Septuagint). [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 4), 157–77]

*they have made me flee*

27 [The bridegroom says:] “The more intently you seek to know me, the more intently you understand that I am un-

knowable [Alcuin, CCC, 657D], and if you do not know me it is not you who are at fault but the feebleness of human nature.”

*your tresses . . . the things hidden within you* (6:6)

28 In case the church should find it hard to bear being interrupted from knowledge of the beloved, there follows [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 4), 187–92] a description in which she is likened to the early [church in] Jerusalem, as a result of which there can be no doubt that she is God’s beloved friend.

29 These verses are located and glossed above (4:1–3), but because the author has not found it irksome to write them again it is not irksome to us to expound them again, for something new may be added.<sup>n</sup> [Bede, CC, IV, (vi, 4/5), 194–99]

30 *turn your eyes away* [the bridegroom says:] “[turn away] the feeble contemplation of your mind

31 *from me* from my majesty and substance” [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 4), 157–58]

32 *tresses* minutiae of thoughts [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 4/5), 203]

33 *like a flock of gazelles* on account of mounting upwards and speed [cf. ch. 2, gloss 66]

**6:5 Your teeth [are] like a flock of sheep which have  
come up from the dip  
all pregnant with twins and not one among them  
is sterile**

34 *teeth* the most firmly grounded of utterances, because teeth are covered up during speech [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 4/5), 203–05]

35 *which have come up from the dip* after the dip [baptism] they never fail to climb up [to virtues] [cf. Anselm, GCCS, fol. 49r]

**6:6 Your cheeks [are] like the outside of a pomegranate  
apart from the things hidden within you**

*Your cheeks [are] like the outside, etc.*

36 Gregory. When many men perform marvelous deeds, prophesy things which are to come and totally forsake the world, burning with heavenly desires, the cheeks of holy church are compared to the outside of a pomegranate. But all these things are nothing compared with the thing concerning which is written *eye has not seen, ear has not heard [nor has the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him]* (1 Cor 2:9). For this reason *apart from the things hidden within you* is aptly added, in other words [the bridegroom says]: “there are great things not lying hidden in you [manifest in you], but those things lying hidden in you are indeed beyond words.” [Bede, *CC*, VI, 512–20, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, II, IV, 256–65]

37 *a pomegranate* hard on the outside [but with] white seeds inside [cf. ch. 4, gloss 38]

38 *apart from the things hidden within you* apart from that which lies inside (4:3)

**6:7 There are sixty queens and eighty concubines  
and young girls without number**

*There are sixty queens and eighty concubines*

39 Queens and concubines alike have access to the marriage-bed; they bear children alike, but they do not both possess preeminence in the kingdom. Those are queens who with insight devote themselves to the teachings of the kingdom of heaven, concubines who proclaim Christ along with the love of temporal things. The reason they [the queens] are *sixty* in number is because they enjoy perfec-

tion of works through pure love of God's commandments, or because they moderate their five bodily senses in accordance with the rule of apostolic teaching.<sup>n</sup> [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 7), 325–49] *Eighty* [concubines], on the other hand, signifies when temporal cares and responsibilities are accepted as a [necessary] evil, because the course of worldly time involves four seasons, and the earth is divided into four zones, east, west, north, and south [Anselm, *ECC*, 1217C–D], or because the world is made up of four elements. [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 50v; *EAM*, fol. 24r]

40 *queens* giving birth to sons through love of the bridegroom and the kingdom [Anselm, *ECC*, 1217B–C]

41 *concubines* similarly giving birth to sons, but so that they may achieve something [in this world] [Anselm, *ECC*, 1217C]

42 *young girls* that is, the immature and recently converted who are not suited to preaching but humbly obey the church's commandments [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 7), 365–70]

43 *without number* because the total number of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven exceeds our manner of reckoning [cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 7), 377–79]

**6:8 There is one dove, my perfect one  
there is one [born] of her mother, the chosen one  
of the woman who bore her  
the daughters of Sion saw her and proclaimed her  
blessed  
the queens and concubines praised her**

*There is one dove, my perfect one*

44 Although [there are] many diverse people [in the church], among them there is one faith, one baptism, one

God, one work, not one before the [Jewish] law, another under the law, another under grace, but [the church is] established in one peace with one awe. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 8), 396–409]

*there is one [born] of her mother*

45 The *mother* [is] the heavenly Jerusalem, because *every perfect gift comes down from above* (James 1:17). This heavenly Jerusalem commends only this one kind of human life, [that is,] that the church devotes herself to serving God in the unity of her faith and love. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 8), 417–30]

46 Our *mother* [is] the grace that regenerates, choosing the simple, and protecting and raising up those chosen. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 8), 437–46]

*the daughters of Sion saw her and proclaimed her blessed*

47 [This is] great praise of catholic unity which both the mother who gave birth [to it] favors with perpetual grace and the daughters, to whom she gave birth and whom she nurtures through the spirit, next *saw*, that is, became acquainted with the chastity of her life. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 8), 451–54]

*the queens and concubines praised her*

48 Either those who are already sharers in the kingdom [‘queens’], or even those who adhere in name only [‘concubines’], yet their hope may be that in earthly things they may acknowledge her worthy of praise. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 8), 456–59]

49 *dove* in simplicity [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 8), 411]

50 *perfect one* because she is made perfect in all virtues and graces [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 8), 415–16]

51 *of her mother* like her mother, who by faith gave birth to her

52 *of the woman who bore her* who fashions and nurtures

53 *saw* they have looked upon and wondered at [her]

54 *the daughters of Sion* the young girls mentioned above [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 8), 449]

55 *proclaimed her blessed* advising others that they should model themselves on her and share in the same blessedness [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 50r; *EAM*, fol. 24v]

**6:9 Who is this one who comes up like the dawn rising  
beautiful as the moon, excellent as the sun  
terrible as a line of battle assembled in the camps**

*Who is this one*

56 [Now that] the Gentile church [is] thus firmly established and on every occasion spread abroad through her many branches and led on through her stages and successions right up to the end of time, at the end of time the synagogue now gazing at the church, so very effective in the past and in the present and so widely spread, [and gazing at] so many wise men following one faith without schism, besides miracles performed by the living and the dead and many other arguments for the Christian faith, now convinced, penitent, and remorseful, says wonderingly *who is this one*, etc.

*like the dawn rising*

57 The church becomes full dawn when she completely dispels the darkness of mortality and ignorance. Therefore at the judgment [it will be] still dawn, but in the kingdom [of heaven] there will be day, when [the church] will have full sight of the true sun [Christ]. [Gregory, *MJ*, IV, 11, 50–55]  
*beautiful as the moon, excellent as the sun*

58 In the night of this present life, in which the conditions of times are varied, [the church] is compared to the moon,

because now [the moon is] clear to the earth, now despised, now [the church is] full of the brightness of virtues, now dishonored by the vices of wicked men. In the future blessedness [of eternity], when there is no change in the state [of things], the righteous *will shine like the sun* (Matt. 13:43). [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 483–89]

*terrible as a line of battle assembled in the camps*

59 There are certain prelates ordained by the church who lay waste our faith with plausible speeches, striking terror into us.

60 The more perfectly the church arranges the order of virtues within herself, the more terrible she is to the powers of the air [the demons], or [the same applies to] any faithful soul. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 494–96]

61 the voice of the synagogue wondering at the rising church [*who is this one*, etc.] [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 463–64]

62 *comes up* extends through all parts of the world, limited neither in space nor time [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 469–71]

63 *like the dawn rising* because the rising of the true light in her after the darkness of ignorance is revealed to the world [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 473–74]

64 *beautiful as the moon* because illumined by the sun of righteousness [the church] floods the night of the world with the light of the Gospel [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 478–80]

65 *excellent as the sun* because [the church] bears the image of the true sun within her, walking in all justice and holiness and truth [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 480–82]

66 *terrible* because no adversity has been able to prevent [the church] from manifesting in herself both the beauty of the moon, in laborious travail, and of the sun, in the hope of recompense [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 490–94]

**6:10 I went down to the garden of nuts in order to see  
the apples of the valleys  
and to inspect whether the vines were in flower  
and the pomegranates in bud**

*I went down, etc.*

67 With Judea wondering at and asking about the church's tribulations, the bridegroom himself bears witness to the church. Or, these are said to be the words of the church, who looks favorably on the synagogue's praising of her and consequently discloses the cause of her military appearance, replying in the voice of the doctors, the captains, that is, to say, of her spiritual militia [*I went down, etc.*]. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 9), 309–12, cf. *Capitula in Cantica Canticoorum*, XXVIII]

68 “I [Christ], *went down* visited [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 52r] by means of grace,” or the doctors [went down] from contemplation to care for their fellow-Christians

69 *to the garden* “you ask: *who is this one* (6:9)?—most certainly [she is] my garden [to which I went down]” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1218B, cf. *GCCS*, fol. 52r]

70 *of nuts* because outside [there is] bitterness, inside sweetness [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 52r; *EAM*, fol. 25r; *ECC*, 1218C]

71 *in order to see* in order to multiply grace, or in order that the doctors might investigate and make provision for necessities [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1218C]

72 *the apples of the valleys* the fruit of humility [Alcuin, *CCC*, 658D, derived from Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 10), 532]

73 *to inspect* to examine carefully [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 10), 547]

74 *were in flower* have produced some good beginnings [Anselm, *ECC*, 1218C]

75 *the pomegranates in bud* whether any can be found who long to be bathed in their own blood in imitation of the passion of the Lord [Alcuin, CCC, 658D, derived from Bede, CC, IV (vi, 10), 551–52]

**6:11 I did not know  
my soul perturbed me on account of the four-  
wheeled chariot of Aminadab**

*I did not know*

76 While in this way the bridegroom, or the church herself, tells the synagogue, wondering at her, of her labors on behalf of the Gospel (6:10), the synagogue is pierced by health-giving penitence, and acknowledges that for a long time she had gone astray as a result of profane blindness. [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 10), 554–57]

77 [The synagogue says:] “The [Jewish] law did not advocate to me the death of God.” [cf. ch. 1, gloss 154]

*Aminadab*

78 This Aminadab was the great-great-grandchild of Judah the patriarch, who both by his person and his name signifies ‘savior’. [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 11), 583–85]

79 [the synagogue says:] *I did not know* the gifts of spiritual grace by means of which the church has borne fruit among all nations [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 11), 560–61], for if I had known I would have been a sharer

80 *my soul* carefulness and spiritual reason *perturbed me* when I reflected that the man Christ put an end to the law given by God through Moses” [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 11), 561–65]

81 *on account of the four-wheeled chariot* on account of the preaching of the Gospel throughout the four

regions of the world, speeding fast and resting upon the four wheels of faith, because [the Gospel] was written by four people but those four horses [of the four-wheeled chariot] by means of the same spirit lead one chariot to war [cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 11), 565–78]

82 *Aminadab* that is, ‘my free will’<sup>n</sup> [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 11), 595–96, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Exodus, 74, 10–11]

83 *of Aminadab* that is, of Christ, who was sacrificed for the people of his own free will, and who fills the hearts of his preachers with his grace, as if presiding over a chariot [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 11), 580–82]

**6:12 Turn back, turn back, o Shunamite, turn back  
turn back so that we may gaze on you**

*Turn back*, etc.

84 The synagogue confessing her tardiness, the church replies, comforting and exhorting her. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 11), 600–03]

85 [The church says] *turn back* four times because the Jews, now dispersed everywhere throughout the four regions of the world, are to be converted [‘turned around’] [Robert of Tombelaine, *CCC*, 533B] at the end of the age. Or, *turn back* in body, *turn back* in soul from error, so that you may turn away from evil, and again *turn back* in body, *turn back* in soul so that you may do good and not wish to be perturbed [any longer].

*so that we may gaze on you*

86 [The church says:] “So that we may perceive the appearance of your chastity and, with the love of Christ coupling us together, we may both build one house of faith on one and the same cornerstone [Christ].” [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 12), 611–14]

87 To turn back in will is not enough unless that turning back is demonstrated to the church.

88 *turn back* [i] to knowledge of the redeemer [Alcuin, CCC, 659A, derived from Bede, CC, IV (vi, 12), 605]

89 *turn back* [ii] to the peace of sisterhood [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 12), 607–08]

90 *Shunamite* that is, ‘made captive’ [Alcuin, CCC, 659A, derived from Bede, CC, IV (vi, 12), 618–19]

91 *Shunamite* [the church says:] “you who for a long time have been imprisoned in the dark on account of a discordant religion” [Bede, CC, IV (vi, 12), 620–21]

92 *turn back* [iii] in purity of faith [Alcuin, CCC, 659A, derived from Bede, CC, IV (vi, 12), 609–10]

93 *turn back* [iv] in perfection of works [Alcuin, CCC, 659A, derived from Bede, CC, IV (vi, 12), 610]

## Chapter 7

**7:1 What will you see in the Shunamite except choirs  
from the camps?  
how beautiful are your steps in sandals, o  
daughter of the prince  
the join of your thighs like jewels which are made  
by the hand of a craftsman**

*What will you see in the Shunamite except choirs from the camps?*

1 While the church counsels the synagogue, the redeemer himself, looking favorably on her exhortations, promises that he will bring them into effect [Bede, *CC*, IV (vi, 12), 624–28], for Elijah and Enoch might not labor to convert them unless, through divine scripture and apostolic witness, they possessed the conviction that they would be converted.

2 In other words [the bridegroom says]: “You grieve about the synagogue’s lack of faith, but you must know that as she is soon to be converted no lack of faith now appears in her, but rather works of spiritual tribulation and virtue.” [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 2–6]

*how beautiful are your steps*

3 In the previous descriptions (4:1–5 and 5:11–15) there is a downward movement from the higher [bodily parts] and praise is given to the higher parts only. In this [description], the lower parts are also highly praised, and it moves upwards from the lower to the higher so that it may be shown that that church, gathered most recently from those

who before were faithless, will yet have members not unequal to the higher ones. Mention is made of *steps* in this description because the first beauty she will have will be displayed not in the leisure to come in eternity but, arrayed for strife, in battle. [cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 18–24]

4 Saying these things in praise of that same conjoined church, he converts her by sweetness both so that the Jews may be more easily converted and so that the church may work harder to convert her. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 12–14]

*in sandals*

5 First of her [the conjoined church's] works constancy and the mortification of desires are praised.<sup>n</sup> [Alcuin, *CCC*, 659B, cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 30–31]

*the join of your thighs*

6 After the steps in sandaled feet, *the join of the thighs* is appropriately praised, because the harmonious conjunction of believing peoples is brought about through the ministry of preaching.<sup>n</sup> [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 80–83, cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 60–61]

*which are made by the hand of a craftsman*

7 This joining is ordained by the art of an inscrutable plan. Who, after all, can know why God blinded the Jews until that time?

8 *Which are made by the hand of a craftsman*, that is, by the unutterable and unalterable magnanimity of the creator. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 659C, derived from Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 70–72]

9 *choirs from the camps* that is, the peace militia who sing the praises of the creator and drive back the battle line of the enemy—in choirs [there are] voices of singers, in camps armed hands [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 7–8]

10 *steps* deeds backing up preaching [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 54r; *EAM*, fol. 26r]

11 *in sandals* in witnesses and examples—[cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 1), 29–30] of Enoch, before the [Jewish] law, and of Elijah, under the Old Law, and of many in the time of grace

12 *daughter* already one through faith and chastity

13 *of the prince* of God [Anselm, *ECC*, 1219D]

14 *the join* the joining in one of two peoples, the offspring of the faith and fertility of the church<sup>n</sup> [Alcuin, *CCC*, 659B]

15 *jewels* most secure [in possession] when these [people] do not dissent from those [people] but agree in all things, and shine with the witness of good works

16 *by the hand of a craftsman* the excellence of the work denotes the imposition of the divine hand [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 54v; *EAM*, fol. 26v; *ECC*, 1219D]

**7:2 Your navel [is] a turned bowl never lacking in  
[liquid for the] cups  
your belly like a heap of wheat fortified with lilies**

*Your navel [is] a turned bowl never lacking in [liquid for the] cups*

17 *Navel*, that is, the frailty of our mortality<sup>n</sup> becomes a *bowl* when we labor so that others, through us, may reflect upon the human frailty proven in us, or when we give alms. *Turned*, that is, round and perfect. The *bowl* of anyone who gives a drink to someone thirsty, or reaches out the cup of the divine word to someone going astray, and as a result looks for a reward from God, whether worldly goods or worldly wisdom, is not made by ‘turning’, because the work of mercy he has done he did not for the sake of offering up his frailty to God but looking for earthly recompense. [cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 2), 86–92]

*your belly like a heap of wheat fortified with lilies*

18 Our belly is a *heap of wheat* when, mindful of our frailty, we prepare for ourselves in this present life the fruits of good works with which we are refreshed in perpetuity. A heap is wider at the base and grows narrower at the top, and so [it is] with our [human] actions; the higher they are in merit, the fewer laborers there are found to do them. There are many workmen on the lower level; many people give alms from their possessions, few people give up their possessions altogether. [We are] *fortified with lilies* when we do all the good works we do by grace in order to see the radiance of eternity, and in so doing hinder on all sides the enemy's deceitful approach to our hearts. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 2), 127–43]

19 By *heap of wheat* can be understood the alms we expend on the poor, and after *bowl* the parts of the bride's body are aptly compared to a *heap [of wheat]* so that giving both food and drink to the poor may be signified, which can be interpreted equally as bodily or as spiritual refreshment. The cup is instruction in public matters, the bread is instruction in the mysteries. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 2), 143–53]

20 *navel* those frail ones who bear children, and yet proclaim the faith well, cleaving to the world in an allowable way

21 *bowl* giving doctrine to drink

22 *turned* not retaining any harmful superfluity—the feebler they seem the more they are honored

23 *never lacking* even though it is one of the soft parts

24 *your belly* not bearing the fruit of doctrine [but bearing children], such as chaste married people [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1219D–1220A]

25 *a heap of wheat* although it is lowly in kind, [a heap of] wheat will nevertheless be refreshment for

God, because in the lower part there are many, in the higher part few [see gloss 18, above]: we are not, however, saying in the depths [signifies] in sin  
26 *with lilies* with good though not yet perfected works  
[cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 55r; *EAM*, fol. 26v]

**7:3 Your two breasts [are] like two kids, twins of a gazelle**

*Your two breasts, etc.*

27 *Two kids*, because the teachers of the unlearned do not preach their [own words] but draw on the eloquent content of both Testaments, which were brought forth by a single author, so that one and the same shepherd fills one sheepfold with sheep from two flocks. [The bride's breasts are] likened to [kids of] a gazelle because that is a clean animal with remarkable vision and speed and cloven hoof, which relates to the discernment of good and evil; it also ruminates, a process which is necessary after discernment. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 3), 195–217] *Twins*, on account of harmony [between them]. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 659D]

28 *two* on account of two peoples [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 3), 193]

29 *breasts* those giving milk to the unlearned, who convert solid food into the consistency of milk by grinding it; by this means the little ones newly born in the faith are nourished [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 3), 188–92]

30 *of a gazelle* the gazelle has long sight, like holy men [seeing] heavenly things from earth [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 3), 217–18]

**7:4 Your neck [is] like a tower of ivory  
your eyes [are] like fishpools in Heshbon**

**which are in the gate of the daughter of the  
multitude  
your nose [is] like a tower of Lebanon which  
looks towards Damascus**

*Your neck [is] like a tower of ivory*

31 *Neck*, that is, those through whom a voice will come and food be transmitted to the body. They are a *tower* because they fortify and embellish others by the pattern of their life [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 4), 226–34] [and ‘of ivory’ because] ivory is noted for its whiteness.

*your eyes [are] like fishpools in Heshbon, which are in the gate*

32 *Eyes*, [those] who gaze upon secret things so that they may speak of them openly, who never cease giving streams of teaching to the hearers, just as in the city of Heshbon [there are] fishpools always abounding in water, supplying water at the entrance of that city to the abundant people. It is aptly said that there are waters *in the gate* of the city because nobody can enter the church without first being sprinkled with the water of doctrine and baptism. For this reason at the entrance of Solomon’s temple there was a ‘sea’ where the priests about to enter washed their hands and feet (cf. 1 Kings 7:23). [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 4), 247–68, 286–88]

*your nose [is] like a tower of Lebanon*

33 Just as a tower is placed on a hill for surveillance, so that enemies may be seen coming from afar, the life of the preacher ought always to remain fixed in a high place, so that he may see the assaults of evil ones at a distance. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 549–53, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, I, XI, 143–46]

34 Mount Lebanon signifies Christ and the church. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 4), 312–13]

*which looks towards Damascus*

35 Damascus [is] the capital of Syria, which visited many wrongs upon Israel, and even enslaved her. By *Damascus* is signified the whole multitude of demons, or evil men.

[Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 4), 313–20, cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1220D]

36 *your neck* that is, those who join you [the church] to the head [Christ], having the power of binding and loosening [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1220B]

37 *of ivory* on account of chastity [Anselm, *ECC*, 1220B]

38 *your eyes* those most watchful providers [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 55v; *EAM*, fol. 27r; *ECC*, 1220B] for the future

39 *fishpools* containing many waters of wisdom and teaching to be drunk by those who will be in ‘the girdle of sorrow’ [see following gloss] during Antichrist’s persecution—these fishpools are in the public entrance of the one who will be the *daughter of each multitude* [of the church of the Jews and the church of the nations]

40 *Heshbon* ‘girdle of sorrow’ [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 4), 270, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Jer., 126, 8]

41 (\*) *in the gate of the daughter of the multitude* then there will be one daughter [the unified church] of the Gentiles and the Jews

42 *nose* very cautious discriminators between good and evil, just as scent or stench is discerned through the nostrils [Bede, *CC*, VI, 544–46, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, I, IX, 137–39]: no hypocrisy deceives them and they occupy the highest position

43 *tower* [the church like a tower is] always on guard against the wiles or tricks of devils or evil men, so that she may fortify her own and remove others from there

44 *Damascus* that is, ‘drink of blood’ [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 4), 320, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Gen., 64, 6]

**7:5 Your head [is] like Carmel and the hairs of your head like a king's purple joined in channels<sup>n</sup>**

*Your head [is] like Carmel*

45 [Christ says to the church:] “[*Your head*, that is,] your mind [Anselm, *ECC*, 1220D], by which the whole body of thoughts is ruled [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 5), 336–38], is as lofty as a mountain on account of your way of life, and the kind of mind that contains knowledge of circumcision [see gloss 48] not in the taking away of flesh but in the removal of the superfluities of the heart.”

*like a king's purple, joined in channels*

46 Sea-snails cut open with iron emit purple-colored tears from which a purple-colored dye is made. The *channels* which receive the *king's purple* are the hearts of the faithful. The wool which is dyed in order to make a king's [purple] garment is humility in suffering, and it is *joined in channels<sup>n</sup>* when with a constant heart the virtue of humility and the continuous memory of the Lord's bloodshed is roused to endurance. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 5), 374–87]

47 [Those] always having the purple of the true king [Christ], that is, his passion, in mind, and being prepared to imitate him, so that they may be raised with Christ. [cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 5), 400–04]

48 *Carmel* ‘knowledge of circumcision’, which the carnal Jews do not possess<sup>n</sup> [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 5), 353, derived from Jerome, *LIHN*, Jos., 92, 7–8]

49 *hairs* thoughts [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 5), 365]

50 *joined* placed in the channel of humility so that it may be dyed in the blood of Christ and, colored there, may become the garment of the king [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 5), 370–74]

**7:6 How beautiful you are and how lovely in delights,  
o dearest one**

*in delights*

51 [Christ says to the church:] “You are delicate, and you are disgusted by foods that are bitter and of no use to the rational soul: you also despise some good things in order to go on to better things.” [cf. Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 6), 432–34; ed.: the bridegroom does not speak in his own voice]

52 *how beautiful* [Christ says to the church: ] “why [should I praise your bodily parts] one by one? [Anselm, *ECC*, 1221B]

53 *how beautiful* in faith [Alcuin, *CCC*, 660B]

54 *lovely* in work [Alcuin, *CCC*, 660B]

55 *dearest* to your Lord because you devote yourself to heavenly delights” [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 6), 431–32]

**7:7 Your height is likened to a palm tree and your  
breasts to grapes**

*Your height, etc.*

56 Because a soul of this kind has a foretaste of the joys of eternity during the conflicts of this present life, what follows is *your height is likened to a palm tree*. This signifies the uprightness of good work, which hates to bend down to the earth but raises the whole of itself to heaven, and placed in conflict it strives for the prize, with which victory is bestowed after the conflict is over. In its lower parts the palm tree is rough, but higher up it is beautiful and bears fruit. In the same way the church on earth endures hardships but hopes to receive a reward in heaven. [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 6), 437–39; (vii, 7), 440–64] The palm tree keeps its

leaves [Isidore, *EsO*, XVII, vii, 1], and likewise the church, whose worldly condition varies, preserves the mysteries of the faith unchanged.

*57 breasts* that is, the masters [of theology] who temper their doctrine according to the capacity of their hearers [Bede, *CC*, IV (vii, 7), 474, 484–87], *grapes* making hearts rejoice and making the occasional person sublimely drunk with the richness of the house of God

**7:8 I said: I shall climb the palm tree and seize its fruits  
and your breasts will be like the fruits of the vine  
and the scent of your mouth like [the scent] of  
apples**

*I said: I shall climb . . . fruits of the vine*

58 In other words [the bridegroom says]: “and the fact that you have such doctors preaching so discerningly is not a consequence of your merit but a gift from me, for *I climbed the palm tree*, that is, I gave the church increased virtues until she should arrive at perfection, and I shall *seize its fruits*, that is, I shall so strengthen and multiply virtues in them [the church’s members] that they will assuredly be unable to fall until they reach maturity. And so *your breasts will be like the fruit* of the cyprus [vine], because those who nurse little ones, if they preach with good will, are themselves meanwhile satiated with higher wisdom.” [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 8), 493–97, 512–26; ed.: the bridegroom does not speak in his own voice]

*seize its fruits*

59 In other words: “the conversion of the Jews is a pressing concern because such a beautiful union is about to follow, and because I suffered very greatly for them I shall

make provision for them to be saved.” [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1221C–D]

60 The resurrection, the ascension, the coming of the holy spirit and the salvation of the world can be called the *fruits* of the cross [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 8), 544–47], and by this the doctors [of the church] are strengthened and satiated.

61 *I said* [the bridegroom says:] “before the creation of the world I ordained [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 58r; *EAM*, fol. 27v]

62 *I shall climb the palm tree* I shall be raised on the cross, of which part [was] made from palm<sup>n</sup> [Anselm, *ECC*, 1221D]

63 *and seize* in this way I shall as it were bring back the fugitives”

64 *its fruits* all who are to be saved, including, finally, the Jews [Anselm, *ECC*, 1222A]

65 and for this same reason [*your breasts*, etc.]

66 *your breasts* because no teaching would have availed had Christ not climbed the palm tree

67 *the fruits of the vine* sweet, not like [the fruits of] the ivy [Anselm, *ECC*, 1221D]

68 [the bridegroom says:] “*and the scent of your mouth* and not only your mouth but also the scent of your mouth, that is, the renown of your preaching, will entice and invite tasting”

**7:9 Your throat [is] like the best wine  
worthy for my beloved to drink and for his lips  
and teeth to savor**

*and the scent* (7:8) . . . *the best wine*

69 The *scent* in the throat [is] the voice of worldly teaching. Through scent the renown of the one absent is signified, and so the latter [the throat] is compared to wine on

account of the fragrance of virtues, and the former [the scent] to apples because of the sweetness of the renown of the absent one. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 660D, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 8/9), 561–66]

70 The scent is compared to apples [and] the throat to wine, because the apple gains praise for its freshness, wine for its age. Thus the present speech to the church surpasses any fame which the speech of the hearers can disseminate concerning her. [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 8/9), 566–69, 573–75]

*worthy for my beloved to drink*

71 While the bridegroom praises the throat of the bride, she, understanding *throat* to signify the word through which salvation is given to the world [and] wishing to proclaim the word out of great love, seizes the words from the bridegroom’s mouth. He compared her to *the best wine*; she added *worthy for my beloved to drink*. [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 8/9), 576–80]

72 [The bride says:] “The word which my beloved put in my mouth is so very sublime that it ought to be preached to the world by nobody else but himself [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 8/9), 582–86], because *nobody else was found who might open the book* (Rev. 5:4) and others who received [it] from him.” Christ drank, as it were, because, teaching divinity, he rapidly arrived at complete knowledge and freely underwent suffering; [his] members [also ‘drink’ but] not in the same way.”

73 *throat* the same office of preaching which the breasts contain [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1222A]

74 [the bride says:] “*wine*, I say [*worthy*, etc.]” [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1222A]

75 and *worthy for his lips* for proclaimers [Anselm, *ECC*, 1222B] such as Paul

76 *teeth* grinders [Anselm, *ECC*, 1222B] such as Augustine

77 *to savor* and thus not to be drunk readily, because he drank first and proffered [drink] to others, but to be reflected upon with labor and effort

**7:10 I [am] my beloved's and his turning [is] towards me**

*I [am] my beloved's and his turning [is] towards me*

78 [The synagogue says:] “I, once an exile from God, have turned away from all error [and] towards him, as a citizen and a servant, and he, once angered with the human race, has turned towards me, having put on the nature of my mortality.”

79 [the synagogue says:] “and believe me, exhorting you, because [*I*, etc.] [Anselm, *ECC*, 1222B]

80 I have turned *to my beloved*<sup>n</sup> and to nobody else [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 10), 613–14]

81 *to my beloved*<sup>n</sup> I relate all the effort of my service and devotion to him [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 10), 614]

82 *towards me* and lest I should grow weak, laboring in this present life, he comes to my aid, and at the end [of time] he will take me towards joys with him” [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 10), 615–18]

**7:11 Come, my beloved, let us go out into the field, let us linger in the villages**

*Come . . . whether the pomegranates have flowered (7:12)*

83 The church, seeing that she is not in herself sufficient to do good works, or to *go out* [to convert others], or to

[*linger in the villages*, that is,] persevere in goodness, or to perceive how much her hearers have accomplished (7:12), pleads for help. [Alcuin, CCC, 661A]

*Come, my beloved, let us go out into the field, let us linger in the villages*

84 [The bride says:] “You who put on humanity for my sake and were placed in heaven [at the ascension], visit me through the presence of divine grace, so that I may sow the seed of your word in the field of the world [Bede, CC, V (vii, 11), 650–54] and establish one faith in the places where people live.”

*into the field . . . whether the pomegranates have flowered* (7:12)

85 By *field* is signified Christians, by *village* unbelievers, by *vineyards* churches, by *flowers* faith, by *fruits* virtues, by *pomegranates* martyrdom. In [each of] these individual things, the bride seeks the presence of her beloved. [Alcuin, CCC, 661A–B]

86 *come* [the bride says:] “and so, because I am assured that penitent Judea will pay heed, help! [Anselm, ECC, 1222B–C]

87 *let us go out* I shall go out from the secrecy of the heart, in which I have been contemplating, to those who from the beginning until now [wait] to be ploughed and cultivated

88 *let us linger* by earnest preaching [cf. Anselm, ECC, 1222C]

89 *in the villages* in those already instructed in how to live lawfully”

**7:12 Let us arise early in the morning and [go to] the vineyards  
let us see whether the vine has flowered**

**[let us see] whether the flowers bear fruit  
whether the pomegranates have flowered  
there I shall give you my breasts**

*Let us arise early in the morning*

90 [The bride says:] “Because the night of faithlessness has passed and the light of faith appears [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 12), 674–75], proceeding from the early-morning resurrection of Christ, let us labor from that same early morning of resurrection, you inspiring, me preaching.”

*Let us see whether the vine has flowered, [let us see] whether the flowers bear fruit*

91 “So that I, a teacher of little ones, may investigate how those who have become my responsibility are growing, how far they have advanced, so that I may know what kind of nourishment they need.” [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 12), 721–23]

92 It is not just a matter of seeing whether the vines are in flower, but whether the flowers are strong enough to bear fruit, because it is not surprising for a person to begin good things but it is truly amazing if he perseveres with good work and righteous intention. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 558–61, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XII, 53, 50–52]

*there I shall give you my breasts*

93 [The bride says:] “*There*, that is, where we shall have come to see whether the vines and pomegranates are flowering, I, obedient to you, shall reveal, in the likeness of a solicitous wet-nurse, [*my breasts*] the deeds and words of my preachers.” [Bede, *CC*, V, (vii, 12), 706–11]

94 [the bride says:] “*let us arise early* let us labor even more eagerly [Anselm, *ECC*, 1222C] among certain of the converted,” like the apostle [Paul] among the Galatians  
95 *to the vineyards* for the field (7:11) requires less cultivation than the vineyard

- 96 *has flowered* with some initial faith and confession  
[Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 12), 679]
- 97 *the vine* for cultivating more laboriously [cf. Anselm,  
*ECC*, 1222C]
- 98 *fruit* because very often the fruit does not follow  
the flower [cf. gloss 92]
- 99 *bear* whether they perform good works, lest faith  
be found futile [Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 12), 681–82]
- 100 *whether the pomegranates have flowered* whether  
those who have advanced in faith and righteous living  
are acquiring the desire for suffering [Bede, *CC*, V (vii,  
12), 683–84]
- 101 *breasts* tender teaching, by means of which chil-  
dren may grow [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1222D]

**7:13 Mandrakes have given forth scent in our gates  
I have served up to you, my beloved, all apples,  
old and new**

*Mandrakes have given forth scent*

102 [The bride] deservedly invokes the bridegroom's help  
in preaching (7:11), where preachers [signified by 'man-  
drakes'] smell sweet on account of special virtues. [Bede,  
*CC*, V (vii, 313), 744–46]

*Mandrakes have given forth scent in our gates*

103 *Gates*, apostles and their successors. *Mandrakes*, that  
is, the virtues of those who are proficient in medicines,  
bringing tranquillity in the face of the anxieties of the  
world [cf. Isidore, *EsO*, XVII, ix, 30], preventing sickness in-  
duced by the word of God, causing vices to be removed  
from men without pain, proffering *apples*, that is, churches  
sweetly redolent with confessors. Confessors *have given  
forth scent* as have martyrs [signified by] pomegranates,

because the lesser ones are strengthened by the examples of the greater. [cf. Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 13), 731–812]

*I have served up to you, my beloved, all apples, old and new*

104 Or, *I have served up to you*, that is [the bride says]: “I have understood all the precepts and witnesses, or promises, given by you in both testaments,” or *all apples*, that is, [she says]: “I have realized that all the righteous of both Testaments were justified by your incarnation alone.” [cf. Bede, *CC*, V (vii, 13), 813–38]

105 *mandrakes* [the bride says:] “indeed it is necessary to go out, because Judea is [like the mandrake] limbs without a head”<sup>n</sup> [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 59v; *EAM*, fol. 28v; *ECC*, 1222D]

106 *have already given forth* [Anselm, *ECC*, 1222D]

107 *scent* renown [Anselm, *ECC*, 1222D] [or] hope

108 *in our gates* on the way in to us, by faith [and] by conversion [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1222D]

109 *all apples* all patterns and witnesses

110 *new* of the new apostles

111 *old* of the old patriarchs and prophets

112 *I have served up to you* to be expounded at that time<sup>n</sup>

## Chapter 8

**8:1 Who will give me you as my brother, sucking the  
breasts of my mother  
so that I may find you outside and kiss you and  
now nobody may despise me?**

*Who will give, etc.*

1 Judea is introduced, already inspired and well taught, and she searches for God with great desire. [cf. Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 29r; *ECC*, 1223A–B]

*outside*

2 The beloved was inside when *in the beginning was the word* (John 1:1), *outside* when *the word was made flesh* (John 1:14). [Alcuin, *CCC*, 661C, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 1), 32–35]

*so that I may . . . kiss*

3 *That I may kiss*, that is [the church of Judea says]: “that I may see you face to face, and speak with you mouth to mouth.” [Alcuin, *CCC*, 661C, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 1), 47–48]

4 [the church of Judea says:] “O would that someone would *give me*, etc. [Anselm, *ECC*, 1223B]

5 *my brother* of whom I ought not to have been unmindful, because he is my brother according to the flesh” [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1223B]

6 *sucking the breasts* on a certain sabbath when he was speaking among the wise men, asking questions and replying (cf. Luke 2:42–8)

7 *of my mother* of the [Jewish] law, or the synagogue  
[Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 1), 28–30]

8 [the church of Judea says: “*that I may find you*”] that  
is, [that] I may know the nature of your humanity [An-  
selm, *GCCS*, fol. 60r; *EAM*, fol. 29r; *ECC*, 1223B]

9 *outside* because [to kiss you] inside is not allowed to  
anyone [cf. Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 1), 35–40]

10 *so that* I may *kiss you* begin to be joined [to Christ]  
in faith, so that at some time I shall be fully united with  
him, at the time of the marriage

11 *and now nobody may despise me* now the church of  
the Gentiles may not call me blind and faithless”

**8:2 I shall seize you and lead [you] into my mother’s  
house  
and into the bedroom of the woman who bore me  
there you will teach me  
and I shall give you a cup of wine preserved with  
spices  
and the new wine of my pomegranates**

*there you will teach me . . . my pomegranates*

12 [The church of Judea says:] “You will increase grace in  
me and I, not ungrateful, shall increase [my] servility [to  
you].”

13 [the church of Judea says:] “and therefore *I shall  
seize you* if you wish to flee away [cf. Anselm, *ECC*,  
1223B]

14 *I shall lead* I shall teach other Jews [Anselm, *ECC*,  
1223B]

15 *into the house* into the multitude

16 *into the bedroom* into a private place

17 *there you will teach me* you will reveal yourself to me; you will go on increasing knowledge of yourself in me, more than through the Law and the Prophets  
18 *and I shall give you* I shall cause you to be delighted  
19 *preserved with spices* by those converted, colored with many virtues and good works [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1223C]  
20 and also [*I shall give you*] *the new wine of my pomegranates*, [cause you] to be warmed and made joyful by the blood of martyrs” [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1223C]

**8:3 His left hand [is] beneath my head and his right hand will embrace me**

*His left hand, etc.*

21 [His] *left hand*, that is, the mystery of the incarnation and the gifts which he gives in this world will be *beneath my head*, because sustained here and now by these things Judea becomes tranquil in the face of worldly tribulations and, in a manner of speaking, sleeps with God. And [his] *right hand*, that is, good things to come and the full sight of himself *will embrace me*, that is, will enclose on all sides so that no whirlwind of misery can make its way in. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 3), 174–84]

22 and then *his left hand* will be  
23 *beneath my head* here and now  
24 whenever *his right hand will embrace me*

**8:4 I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, not to arouse my beloved or cause her to awaken until she wishes**

*I adjure you, etc.*

25 The bridegroom, hearing that last church of all [Judea] [cf. Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 60v; *EAM*, fol. 29v; *ECC*, 1224A] say that she wishes to sleep here and now and be at rest at some time [in heaven], and seeing many born from the church who disturb others, adjures them to leave off troublemaking. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 3), 192–204]

*until she wishes*

26 Until the demands of divine service are fully completed and she agrees, admonished by necessities, to return to the everyday care of human frailty. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 4), 214–16]

27 *daughters* reborn in the font [of baptism] and united in faith [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 4), 208–09], although [as yet] imperfect

28 *not to arouse* with the tumult of fleshly disturbances [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 4), 212]

29 *or cause her to awaken* from the quietness of very peaceful devotion, in which she delights to stand in the presence of her creator [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 4), 213–14]

**8:5 Who is this one who comes up from the desert,  
abounding in delights  
leaning on her beloved?  
I raised you up under the apple tree  
there your mother was ruined, there the woman  
who bore you was violated**

*Who is this one*

30 The Gentile church, wondering at and rejoicing with Judea, burning with such great love for her newly recognized bridegroom, says [*who is this one, etc.*]. [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1224A]

*I raised you up under the apple tree*

31 He *who is our peace, who made two into one* (Eph. 2:14) replies to the [church of the] nations wondering [at the church of Judea], admonishing her to remember the grace through which she was snatched [from destruction], and to rejoice in the salvation of others. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 5), 239–44]  
32 In other words [the bridegroom says to the church of Judea]: “because you have advanced to such grace, *put me [as] a seal [upon your heart]* (8:6), and the reason already given is that you were situated under [the apple tree, ‘evil tree’] the sin of the first parent [Adam], or under the sin of the cross<sup>n</sup>—bringing death to you, o Synagogue [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1224C]—or, now, under the salvation of the cross.”

33 *who is this one* [the Gentile church says of the church of Judea:] “how worthy [she is]

34 *who comes up* who arrives at grace by steps of virtue [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 5), 223–24]

35 *from the desert* from previous blindness [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1224A, cf. Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 5), 223]

36 *in delights* with excellent works [Anselm, *ECC*, 1224A] and with desire only for the heavenly fatherland [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 5), 228]

37 *leaning on her beloved* justly leaning upon him from whom alone [is] all grace [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 5), 229–31]

38 *her* or, first my [beloved before her beloved], while she was blinded”

39 [the bridegroom says:] “*under the apple tree*, etc.

40 *I raised you up* I recalled you to faith in the passion [Alcuin, *CCC*, 662A–B, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 5), 251–52; ed.: the bridegroom does not speak in his own voice]

41 *I raised you up* which was a deed of great good will, because by that same tree your mother [the Jewish people] was inwardly blinded, and consequently said

*his blood [be] upon us and upon our children* (Matt. 27:25) [cf. Haimo, *CCC*, 353B]

42 *there your mother was ruined* as punishment for that same crucifixion [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1224D, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 5), 256–58]

43 *violated* by the outward vengeance of Titus and Vespasian” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1224D]

**8:6 Put me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon  
your arm  
because love is as strong as death, jealous love as  
hard as hell  
its lamps [are] lamps of fire and of flames**

*Put me as a seal upon your heart*

44 We put Christ as a seal upon the heart when we learn those things he said, as if [saying]: “truly these are the words of divine wisdom.” [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 6), 299–301]

*as a seal upon your arm*

45 We put [Christ] as a seal upon the arm when we strive to hear and follow those things he did, as if [saying]: “truly these are patterns of virtue.” [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 6), 301–04]

46 We are accustomed to carry around a token tied on some finger or on an arm, by which we are reminded of that thing which we wish to bring to mind very often. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 6), 269–71]

*because love is as strong as death*

47 [What is said] concerning *love* appropriately follows after the ruin of the mother (8:5), so that it may be shown that it is not as a consequence of [her] merits that love is given to the church. [cf. Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 6), 340–45]

48 Just as death separates the soul from the body, so love of God separates the soul from love of temporal things. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 581–82, derived from Gregory, *HE*, 1115D]

*jealous love as hard as hell*

49 Because [Christ's] concern for our salvation cannot be revoked whatever the temptations of the enemy, just as hell is not softened whatever the torments of the wretched, nor can the harshness of their sentence be commuted. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 6), 313–16]

50 The harsher the comparison the more compendiously the desire of the jealously loving Lord is commended to us. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 6), 317–19]

*its lamps [are] lamps of fire and of flames*

51 For the sake of piling up more details about the virtue of love he adds *its lamps*, etc. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 6), 375–76]

52 [Christ says to the church of Judea:] “because *I raised [you] up* (8:5) from such great calamity *put*, etc.

53 *me* my love

54 *upon your heart* upon [your] will [Robert of Tombe-  
laine, *CC*, 541B]

55 *a seal* let it be inscribed with my name lest in any way at all even a glimpse of an adulterous lover should creep up upon you

56 *arm* deeds [Anselm, *GCCS*, fol. 61v; *EAM*, fol. 30v; and *ECC*, 1224B, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 6), 265]

57 *arm* so that the devil may not just be shut out of [your] heart but so that not one of his characteristics should be apparent in [your] deeds

58 *because love is as strong as death* the love I had for you was as efficacious as death because my soul was severed from my body on account of it

59 *because love is as strong as death* what you have to do [die]

60 *jealous love* the performance of love [*as hard as hell*]” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1225A]

61 *lamps* that is, the hearts of the faithful in which love is contained as in a vessel. They are *of fire* because they glow inwardly with love of God and neighbor. They are *a flame* because they shine outwardly with the works of justice. These lamps do not go out when the bridegroom comes (cf. Matt. 25:11–13) [Bede, CC, V (viii, 6), 377–94]

**8:7 Many waters have not been able to quench love,  
nor may rivers overwhelm it  
if a man were to give all the substance of his  
household for love  
he would scorn it [the substance of his household]<sup>n</sup>  
as nothing**

*Many waters . . . overwhelm it*

62 Some adversities, enticements, allurements.<sup>n</sup> [cf. Haimo, CCC, 354B, also Anselm, ECC, 1225C]

*if a man were to give . . . scorn it as nothing*

63 Because the possession of transient things soon becomes meaningless where love of eternal things abounds, *if [a man] were to give*, etc., properly comes next. Apostles and other saints who have given up everything seem in their own eyes to have lost nothing as long as they can have the good things that are true, and so Paul says *I count all things loss, as excrement, so that I may gain Christ* (Phil. 3:8). [Bede, CC, V (viii, 7), 408–26]

64 *many waters* rivers of temptations tempting the hearts of the faithful, either visibly or invisibly [Alcuin, CCC, 662C, derived from Bede, CC, V (viii, 7), 396–98]

65 *have not been able to quench love* because a house founded on the rock of love cannot collapse when waters press upon it [Bede, CC, V (viii, 7), 403–08]

66 *love* for out of it the root of constancy [grows]  
67 *rivers* the assault of very distressing difficulty, or  
indeed of death  
68 *to give to feed the poor* (1 Cor. 13:3) [Bede, *CC*, V  
(viii, 7), 429]  
69 *the substance of his household* even [his] flesh  
70 *for love* in exchange for love<sup>n</sup> [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 7), 432]  
71 *he would scorn it [love]<sup>n</sup> as nothing* because even  
if he were to give all this for the one whom he loves,  
what profit would it be to him?—but the love of Christ  
profited us, not himself

**8:8 Our sister [is] little and does not have breasts  
what shall we do for our sister on the day when she  
is spoken for?**

*Our sister [is] little and does not have breasts*

72 [The bridegroom says to his ‘friends’:] “O you ministers and co-soldiers of mine, this church [of Judea]<sup>n</sup> is new and delicate where the preserving of new love is concerned.” [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1225D–1226A]

*Our sister*, etc.

73 Until the church grows by means of increases in virtue, it is unable to offer the breasts of preaching to frail hearers. She is said to be adult when she is coupled with the word of God, filled with the holy spirit, and, through the ministry of preaching, made fruitful by the conception of children. She carries them by exhorting [them], gives birth [to them] by converting [them]. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 588–93, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XIX, 12, 6–12]

74 *breasts* [those] who to this point take responsibility for teaching [75] *does not have* from her own [members] [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1226A]

76 *what shall we do for our sister* a rousing-cry

77 *what shall we do for our sister* [the bridegroom says to his 'friends':] "will you be my helpers in strengthening her?" [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1226A]

78 *on the day* at this time [Anselm, *EAM*, fol. 31v; and *ECC*, 1226A]

79 *on the day* not to be led into the bridal chamber as yet, but in the meantime to be prepared [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1226A]

**8:9 If there is a wall, let us build silver ramparts on it  
if there is a door, let us face it with boards of cedar**

*If there is a wall, etc.*

80 He reveals what he wishes and what ought to be done to the silent one [the church of Judea] listening. [Alcuin, *CCC*, 663A, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 8), 481–83]

*If there is a wall, let us build silver ramparts on it*

81 [The bridegroom says:] "If anyone were to be found who [like a wall] could defend others from the assaults of heretics by strongly resisting the weapons of wickedness, or someone fortified [like a wall] by natural understanding, or instructed in the knowledge of philosophy, let us educate him in the holy scriptures. [cf. Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 9), 514–21]

*if there is a door, let us face it with boards of cedar*

82 If there is anyone not so far instructed in repelling the sophistries of heretics, but nevertheless able through simplicity of faith to open [like a door] the way of righteousness to those wishing to enter the forecourt of the heavenly fatherland, by preaching and by instructing little ones, let us put before him the examples of previous men who were incorruptible [like cedar] [also Anselm, *ECC*, 1226B], [so that] through [imitating] these examples he may fulfil his office better." [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 9), 526–30]

83 *silver ramparts* unassailable statements shining with divine eloquence [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1226A]

84 *let us face* let us join together and consolidate

85 *let us face* by adding on perfect men, well hewn and planed [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1226B]

86 *with boards of cedar* the scent of which puts snakes [demons] to flight [Anselm, *ECC*, 1226B, cf. ch. 1, gloss 187]

**8:10 I [am] a wall and my breasts [are] like a tower  
as a result of this I am made in his presence as if  
one seeking peace**

*I am a wall, etc.*

87 Now that the church [of Judea and of the nations] has heard these intentions or promises from her redeemer, neither one waits for the other, but each replies for herself with a devout voice [*I am a wall, etc.*]. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 9), 540–42]

*my breasts [are] like a tower*

88 Now [the bride] speaks universally for the whole church, begun on the foundation of the apostles, because there have been *breasts* [preachers] in the churches from then until the last times.

*one seeking peace . . . over to watchmen* (8:11)

89 [The bride says:] “Well may I say *one seeking peace*, because during that peace I mentioned a vineyard was founded by the peacemaker Christ, a vineyard foretold by the Law and the Prophets.”<sup>n</sup> This peace does not only embrace one people, the Jews, but many peoples gathered in from the whole world, not because of any human deserts but only because of that peace between God and man Christ came to make. Because this vineyard is the Lord’s responsibility, and because it is beneficial for men to

become sharers in it, *he handed it over to watchmen* appropriately comes next. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 11), 582–83, 603–13]

90 *a wall* made of living stones, compacted with the mortar of love [Alcuin, *CCC*, 663B, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 10), 548–52]

91 *breasts like a tower* higher, as a tower outdoes a wall, giving milk to others

92 *as a result of this* [the bride says:] “I have been able to have all these things not on my own account but as a result of the gift of his peace to me, lavished by means of the word of reconciliation [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 10), 554–57]

93 *in his presence* from whom I withdrew a very long way” [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 10), 557–58]

94 *peace* given by grace, not bought [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 10), 559]

95 *seeking* gratefully receiving [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 10), 559]

**8:11 The peaceful one owned a vineyard in peace  
which has peoples  
he handed it over to watchmen  
a man brings a thousand silver pieces for its fruit**

*a thousand silver pieces*

96 The perfect price, [or] whatever he owns. By *a thousand* perfection is to be understood, by *silver* everything worldly, which even when small in itself is great on account of the devotion [paid to it]. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 11), 626–36]

97 because *the peaceful one*, etc.

98 *a vineyard* the universal church [Haimo, *CCC*, 356B]

99 *in it in peace* [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 11), 582]

100 *which* the vineyard, or peace

101 now *has peoples*

102 *it the vineyard*

103 *to watchmen* to prelates [Anselm, *ECC*, 1226D, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 11), 648]

104 *a man* whoever is in possession of strength [Haimo, *CCC*, 356B]

105 *brings* by forsaking temporal things

106 *for its fruit* for the purchase of the kingdom of heaven [Alcuin, *CCC*, 663C, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 11), 620–21]

**8:12 My vineyard is in my presence**

**a thousand of your peaceful one (or your peaceful ones a thousand)<sup>n</sup>**

**and two hundred for those who guard her fruits**

*My vineyard*, etc.

107 There follows the voice of that *peaceful one* [Christ], showing what great care he takes of this vineyard [the church], and what he lays up in eternity for those relinquishing their own possessions, and what he ordains as a unique reward for its doctors [double, see glosses 110, 112–14]. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 11), 645–49]

108 [Christ says:] “I see clearly, not forgetting anything, the measure of the price paid for you [the crucifixion], and estimate the measure of repayment [to be] less.”<sup>n</sup>

*your peaceful ones a thousand*

109 The number of *silver pieces* (8:11) and *peaceful ones* is the same [a thousand], because money expended on God’s behalf procures peace between God and man.

*your peaceful ones a thousand and two hundred for those who guard her fruits*

110 The same perfection signified by *a thousand* [is] also denoted by *a hundred*, because each is a perfect number

[Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 12), 676–78] and *two hundred* is worth the same as if he said ‘two thousand’.

111 *my vineyard is in my presence* in other words [the bridegroom says]: “you tell the truth [saying] that the vineyard is in my presence, and that I have handed her over to watchmen (8:11) [Alcuin, *CCC*, 664A, derived from Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 12), 651–52], and I see what happens in her”

112 *two hundred* double fruit and twin reward [Anselm, *ECC*, 1227A, also Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 12), 702]

113 *for those* for the doctors [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 12), 680]

114 *who guard* because he who looks after himself and gains others deserves a double reward [Anselm, *ECC*, 1227A]

115 *fruits* good works

116 *her* of the vineyard

**8:13 You who live in the gardens—friends are  
listening—make me hear your voice**

*You who live in the gardens*

117 [The bridegroom says:] “And inasmuch as a reward for merit is stored up in my presence for each person, and a double reward for the doctors (8:12), therefore until the time for rewarding comes the marriage-day is delayed, each person devoting himself to the culture of this vineyard to the best of his ability.” [cf. Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 12), 702–05]

118 The church, or the individual faithful soul, already filled with the greenness of hope and good works, *lives in the gardens*. Hope in this world is undoubtedly dry, because all things loved here rapidly wither away. It is therefore necessary that the one *who lives in the gardens* should

make the bridegroom hear her voice, that is, the more good she sets forth in preaching the more delighted the one she desires is, because *friends are listening*, in other words all the elect who desire to hear the words of life so that they may live once more in the celestial fatherland. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 599–602, 604–08, derived from Gregory, *HHP*, II, II, 95–106]

*friends are listening*

119 *Friends*, that is [the bridegroom says]: “angels I have given you as helpers, and the spirits of just men [Bede, *CCC*, V (viii, 13), 720–22] who are already with God and pray for their brothers.”

*make me hear your voice*

120 “I demand from you that you live prepared for departing without any disturbance; afterwards I demand in addition that you make me hear your voice.”

121 *in the gardens* in the cultivation of spiritual fruits [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 13), 710]

122 *friends are listening* in other words [the bridegroom says]: “these [angels] are messengers between me and you

123 *make me hear* live your life in such a way that whatever you pray for with deed or voice may be worthy to be heard by me [cf. Anselm, *ECC*, 1228A]

124 *your voice* while you are not able to be united [with me] in presence”

**8:14 Flee, my beloved, and be like a gazelle and the young of stags upon the mountains of spices**

*Flee, my beloved*

125 Consenting [to ‘make me hear your voice,’ 8:13], the church replies: “be absent as long as you wish, delay your

presence, I shall suffer whatever you enjoin with patient hope.” [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 13), 728–29]

126 She does not speak of her own volition—for who would want the one she loves to flee?—but mindful of her state she consents to her beloved’s will. [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 14), 791–97]

*Flee, my beloved, etc.*

127 In other words [the bride says]: “you who were made comprehensible in the flesh, now in your divinity surpass the understanding of our senses, and in yourself remain incomprehensible to us.” With a prophetic spirit the church exclaims this to the Lord after the death and resurrection, and she describes the Lord’s ascension. He is said to flee from us when what we wish to recollect does not suggest itself [and] when what we wish [to recollect] we do not retain in our memory. [Bede, *CC*, VI, 609–16, derived from Gregory, *MJ*, XVII, 27, 24–32]

128 Flee in order that you may appear very frequently in the hearts of the faithful through the grace of compunction. [The faithful] are *mountains of spices* because, with worldly desires despised and vices purged, they are possessed by the love of heavenly things, they are fragrant with the sweet scent of virtues, and they are *Christ’s good smell* (2 Cor. 2:15). [Bede, *CC*, V (viii, 14), 736–41; see also Bede, *CC*, VI, 84]  
*upon the mountains of spices*

129 [The bride says:] “Although you fix your feet on the mountains, deign to move down to the valleys.” [Anselm, *ECC*, 1228A–B, cf. ch. 2, gloss 172]

130 *flee* you do not allow yourself to be known, but to be understood by faith alone

131 *like a gazelle* in [speed of] descent

132 stepping forth upon the mountains

## Notes

### Prefaces

**2** “the church, *without stain or wrinkle*,” cf. also Song of Songs 4:7 and Augustine, *DDC*, III, xxxiv, 85.

“those who *attain to the perfect man*”: That is, the saints in heaven, who are resurrected at the *perfecta aetas* (perfect age), either the age at which Christ died (thirty years) or one hundred years (cf. Isa. 65:20); see Mary Dove, *The Perfect Age of Man’s Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 57–59.

**4** The idea behind this preface is that the Song of Songs, i.e., the best of songs, is the culmination (“summit”) of all the songs of the Old Testament. Origen borrows this idea from Jewish commentators. The Song of Songs is the sixth song in Origen’s text.

“the first of the songs” is *Cantemus domino* (Exod. 15:1); “the second song” is *Audite coeli quae loquor* (Deut. 32:1).

**5** *in form beautiful* [etc.]. All Christian commentators interpret Psalm 44 as a psalm about Christ, because it is interpreted in this way in the New Testament, in Hebrews 1:8–9.

“he composed three books”: Jerome is following Origen, who in turn followed Jewish tradition in attributing Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs to Solomon, in his *Commentarium in Cantica Canticorum*, trans. Rufinus of Aquileia (ed. W. A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke* 8, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, vol. 33, Leipzig, 1925), 75–76.

“theoretical wisdom”: This is the reading in the manuscripts of the glossed Song of Songs and in the first printed edition (Rusch, 1480–81), but both Jerome and Alcuin read *theologicam* (theological), and Robert of Tombelaine (*CCC*, 1063) and Anselm of Laon (*ECC*, 1189) also say that the branch of philosophy taught in the Song of Songs is theology.

6 The terms *materia* (subject matter), *modus* (mode), and *finis* (end, goal) occur in the prologue to Anselm, *ECC*, 1187–89. *ECC* is a conflation of the glossed Song of Songs and Anselm’s commentaries on the Song of Songs, perhaps prepared by his brother Ralph; see Mary Dove, *Glossa Ordinaria in Canticum Canticatorum*, 35–36. It seems likely that the manuscript attributing this preface to Anselm is correct. A. J. Minnis speculates that Anselm may have been responsible for transferring what he calls the “type C” prologue, which contains these three (and other) terms, from *accessus* (prologues) to literary texts to prologues to theological texts; see *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984), 40–41.

7 “in accordance with the number of terms for him,” that is, Solomon (“peaceful one”), Edida or Ydida (“beloved”), and Ecclesiastes (“one who addresses an assembly”); see preface 6.

The Torah, that is, the books Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

“the custom among the Jews”: The Jews did not permit anyone under the age of thirty to read the Song of Songs, the beginning of Genesis, or the beginning and end of Ezechiel, because these parts of scripture demand a width of knowledge and depth of spiritual understanding that only maturity can give; see Jerome, *Tractatus in Marci Euangelium* (14:5), *CCSL* 78 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1958), 500.

## Chapter 1

### 1:1

9 “Let him . . . mouth” is third-person singular optative; “because . . . wine” is second-person singular. The following gloss provides a different reason for this lack of fit.

15 The first printed edition (Rusch, 1480–81) and all post-1170 MSS add the word *eterna* (eternal).

### 1:4

66 The Hebrew name “Solomon” means “peaceful one” (see preface 5, and Jerome, *LHN*, Matt. 138, 5). The “true” peaceful one is Christ, prefigured by Solomon.

74 See previous note.

### 1:9

130 The words in italics are Origen’s text of 1:10, which is repeated in a slightly different form in gloss 139 (see introduction, p. xxviii).

### 1:10

139 The words in italics are Origen’s text of 1:10/11.

### 1:12

158 The quotation from Ezechiel comes from his allegory of the lewd sisters Oolla (Oholah) and Ooliba (Oholibah), who represent Samaria and Jerusalem (Ezech. 23:4).

### 1:14

172 The words in italics are from Origen’s text of 1:14: “behold, you are beautiful, my near one, behold you are beautiful, your eyes [are] doves.”

173 The phrase “the Law and the Gospel” is a metonymy, meaning the Old and the New Testaments (the entire Bible).

## Chapter 2

### 2:2

5 The word translated “darling” is *proxima* (near one), since this gloss derives from Origen and Origen’s text of 2:2 reads “as a lily in the middle of thorns so is my near one in the middle of the daughters.”

8 The glosses are very rarely attributed to their authors, but in this case the manuscripts wrongly attribute this gloss to Augustine: “Augustinus. Quia aduersarum heresum [etc.]” The source, *Aduersus Pintam*, is a sermon by one of Augustine’s followers, Fulgentius Ruspensis, bishop of Ruspa in northern Africa (468–533). Several of Fulgentius’s works were wrongly attributed to Augustine.

### 2:8

61 This gloss, which is not found in all manuscripts, consists of the abbreviated word *or*, which may represent *oratio* (speech), and I have understood it in this way here. The first printed edition (Rusch, 1480–81) has *orum* [*orationum?*].

### 2:9

71 *being visible through the nets* is from Origen’s text of 2:9. The equivalent words of the biblical text of the glossed Song of Songs are “peering through the lattice.”

### 2:11

106 This gloss recalls Origen’s text of 2:11: “for behold, the winter has passed, the rain has gone after it.”

### 2:12

110 Origen says “[the turtledove] appears to Moses and one of the prophets (it does not matter which), withdrawing into the mountains and deserts and there receiving the words of God” (*Homiliae in Cantica Canticorum*, II, 12, 59:16–18). By Moses and the prophet Origen signifies souls who have attained mysti-

cal union with God; in his commentary on the Song of Songs he explains that “the voice of the turtle-dove” is “the deep wisdom of God which is hidden in mystery” (R. P. Lawson, *Origen: The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies* [London: Longman, 1957], 241). The common, tame dove ministers to less elevated souls (Lawson, 371).

### Chapter 3

#### 3:5

41 Alcuin’s identification of the church of the Gentiles with the *regina austri*, the queen of the south who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, leads Honorius Augustodunensis to identify her as the second of the four brides of the Song of Songs, from 3:1–6:10 (the other three are Solomon’s bride, the daughter of Pharaoh, chapters 1–2, the Sunamite, 6:11–7:11, and mandragora, the girl without a head, 7:12–14:8) (*Expositio in Canticum Cantorum*, PL 172, 347–496).

#### 3:7

66 See note on 1:4, gloss 66.

68 “The decalogue of the law,” i.e., the ten commandments are multiplied by “the perfection of works,” i.e., six, because perfection of works is associated with the six days of God’s work at the Creation (Gen. 1), to arrive at the number sixty. The “penny of reward” alludes to the pay promised to the workers in the Parable of the Vineyard, Matt. 20:2.

#### 3:11

The Latin genitive *illius* may be either masculine or feminine, “her” or “his.” Glosses 93, 100, and 101 acknowledge this ambiguity and suggest alternative interpretations: for “her betrothal,” Mary’s betrothal to the godhead at the annunciation (glosses 93, 100 and 101), and for “his betrothal,” the resurrection (gloss 93) or Christ’s betrothal to the church at the annunciation (glosses 100 and 101).

## Chapter 4

### 4:4

44 The Hebrew name David means “beloved.”

### 4:13

128 Nearly all manuscripts read simply *aliis* (others), but Pembroke College Cambridge MS 47 adds *confessoribus scilicet* (that is, confessors), following Anselm “*poma, id est confessores*” (*GCCS*, fol. 37v).

### 4:14

145 Robert of Tombelaine says “what is to be understood by ‘Lebanon’ except baptism?”

## Chapter 5

### 5:2

40 Anselm explains that “twisted hairs adher[e] to the head badly” (*ECC*, 1212A).

### 5:4

50 The Latin text of this gloss does not include the word “only,” but *vix* [scarcely] occurs in Gregory’s text, cited by Bede (*CC*, VI, 460).

### 5:11

117 The words of the biblical text *elatae palmarum* mean “the shoots of palm trees.” Bede, from whom the gloss derives, argues that the Latin *elatae* should be understood not as “shoots” but as the plural of the Latin equivalent of the Greek *elates*, meaning fir tree. In that case, the biblical text would mean “his locks [are] like fir trees,” and *palmarum* (of palm trees) would be an interpolated gloss.

123 Anselm explains that “the raven does not feed her chicks until they are like her, that is, until they themselves are black” (*GCCS*, fol. 44v; *EAM*, fol. 21r–v; *ECC*, 1214C).

**5:17**

172 This gloss is attributed to Gregory the Great in two manuscripts and in Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, but to the school of Anselm of Laon by Odon Lottin ("Nouveaux fragments théologiques de l'école d'Anselme de Laon," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 12 [1940], 58, no. 66).

## Chapter 6

**6:2**

14 The Latin words *dilecto meo* are in the dative case, which conveys the sense of possession ("my beloved's") but may also be understood literally, as in this gloss, "for my beloved."

15 Again, the Latin dative, *michi*, conveys the sense of possession ("my beloved is mine"), but may also be understood literally, as in this gloss, "my beloved for me."

**6:3**

19 "The camps of the Romans . . . did not possess true peace"; "unlike Jerusalem" is understood, since Jerusalem means 'city of peace'.

**6:4**

29 In spite of this gloss, derived from Bede, the repeated verses are only very lightly glossed.

**6:7**

39 "Perfection of works," that is, six, because perfection of works is associated with the six days of God's work at the Creation (Genesis 1), multiplied by "God's [ten] commandments," or alternatively the five senses are multiplied by the twelve apostles, to arrive at the number sixty.

**6:11**

82 The manuscripts read *spontaneus meus* (my free will), but Bede, following Jerome, gives the meaning of the name Amina-

dab as “free will of my people.” The following gloss confirms this meaning.

## Chapter 7

### 7:1

5 “the mortification of desires” derives from the fact that, as Bede explains, “sandals are made from the skins of dead animals” (*CC*, IV [vii, 1], 30–31).

6 Bede explains that “by *thighs* scripture is accustomed to signify the succession of offspring” (*CC*, IV [vii, 1], 60–61).

14 See previous note.

### 7:2

17 Haimo of Auxerre explains that “the umbilicus is the coldest part of the body, and therefore by the umbilicus we ought to understand the fragility of our mortality” (*CCC*, 342B–C).

### 7:5

*iuncta canalibus* (joined in channels) is the reading of all manuscripts of the glossed Song of Songs I have seen, and of the first printed edition (Rusch, 1480–81). The Hebrew text and the Septuagint, however, read “captured,” and *vincta* (captured) is the only reading given in *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (ed. Robert Weber [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969]). *Iuncta* is recorded as an error in the *correctoria* of William de la Mare and the Dominicans of St.-Jacques; see *Biblia Sacra iuxta Latinam Vulgatam Versionem*, vol. 11 (Rome: Vatican, 1957), at Song of Songs 7:5. *Iuncta* was almost certainly originally an error (*uincta* and *iuncta* being easily confused), but it was evidently an error very widely disseminated in medieval biblical manuscripts, since it is the reading which makes most sense of the glosses on this verse in the commentaries of Bede (see glosses 46 and 50 on this verse), Alcuin, Haimo of Auxerre, and Robert of Tomblaine. The Wycliffite translation of the Bible into English ca.

1380–90 also has “ioyned” (*The Holy Bible*, ed. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden [Oxford, 1855], vol. 3, 81).

46 This is the reading of the manuscripts, but D. Hurst’s edition of Bede’s *In Cantica Canticorum* has *vincita canalibus* (see previous note).

48 Bede explains that “knowledge of circumcision” is an appropriate name for the head of the bride, that is, the mind of the church, because “she well knows that she ought to glory not in carnal but in spiritual circumcision.” In support, he cites Jeremiah 4:4: “circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and remove the foreskins of your hearts” (*CC*, V, vii, 5, 352–57).

#### 7:8

62 There is a wealth of medieval lore concerning the history of the Cross and the woods from which it was made. This gloss seems to refer to the tradition exemplified by Bede, who says that the different parts of the cross (four, including the scroll bearing the legend INRI) were made of four different woods, cedar, cypress, pine, and box (PL 94, 555D). This verse of the Song of Songs undoubtedly influenced the tradition that one of the woods of the cross was palm.

#### 7:10

80–81 see notes on ch. 6, glosses 14 and 15.

#### 7:13

105 Anselm explains that “the Jews . . . are called mandrakes because just as the plant called *mandragora* ‘mandrake’, has limbs like a human being but is born without a head, in the very same way the Jews without Christ their king were saying *we have no king but Caesar*, denying Christ” (*GCCS*, fol. 59v).

112 That is, at the time of the conversion of the Jews.

## Chapter 8

### 8:5

32 That is, the sin of crucifying Christ. In this gloss, Anselm seems to be punning on *arbore malo*, meaning “apple tree” but also “evil tree.”

### 8:7

The text reads *eam* (it), feminine, which agrees with *substantiam* (substance). The author of gloss 71, however, reads *eum* (it), masculine, which agrees with “love.”

62 Haimo of Auxerre explains “threats or even blandishments by which men strive to separate saints from the love of God.”

70 Bede, however, says “in order that he may love,” that is, so that he may receive love which he did not up to now possess.

71 The author of this gloss reads the text of 8:7 as “he would scorn *eum*, ‘love,’ as nothing” rather than “he would scorn *eam*, ‘it’ [the substance of his household], as nothing.”

### 8:8

72 Anselm makes it explicit (following Bede) that the “sister” is “the church from among the Jews” (*ECC*, 1225D).

### 8:10

89 Most notably in “the Song of the Vineyard” (Isa. 5:1–6), in which the vineyard symbolizes Israel.

### 8:12

The words *tui pacifici* may be construed as genitive singular, “of your peaceful one,” or as nominative plural, “your peaceful ones.” Glosses 107 and 108 understand the words in the former sense; gloss 109 understands them in the latter sense.

108 “The measure of repayment” is two hundred, which is “less” than a thousand.

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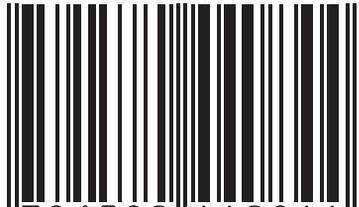
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