

Bede or *Beowulf*?

Constructing the narrative in the making of early medieval England

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King Æthelstan

c930, the earliest portrait of an English king



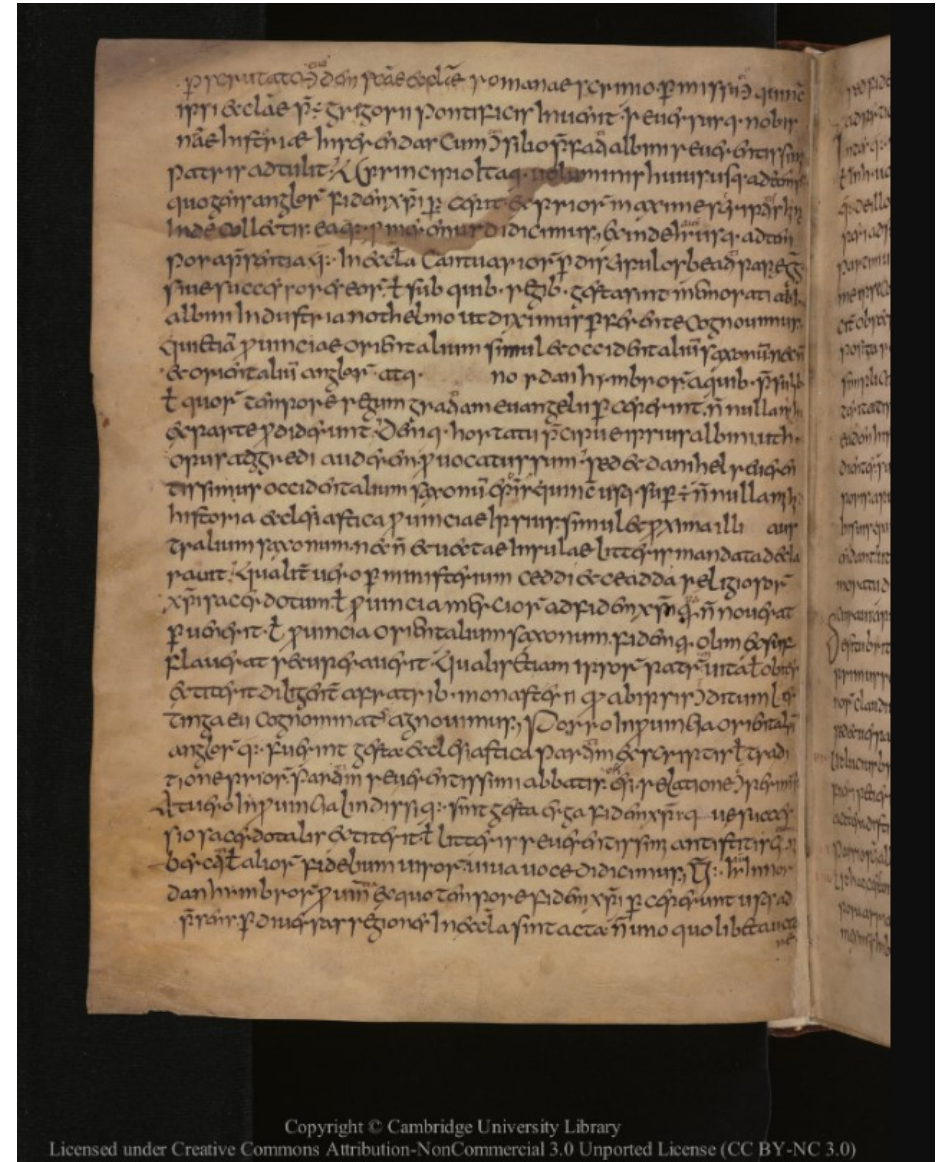
Britain in c.890



Ecclesiastical History of the English People

The earliest extant copy of Bede's
work dates to c737.

(University of Cambridge)





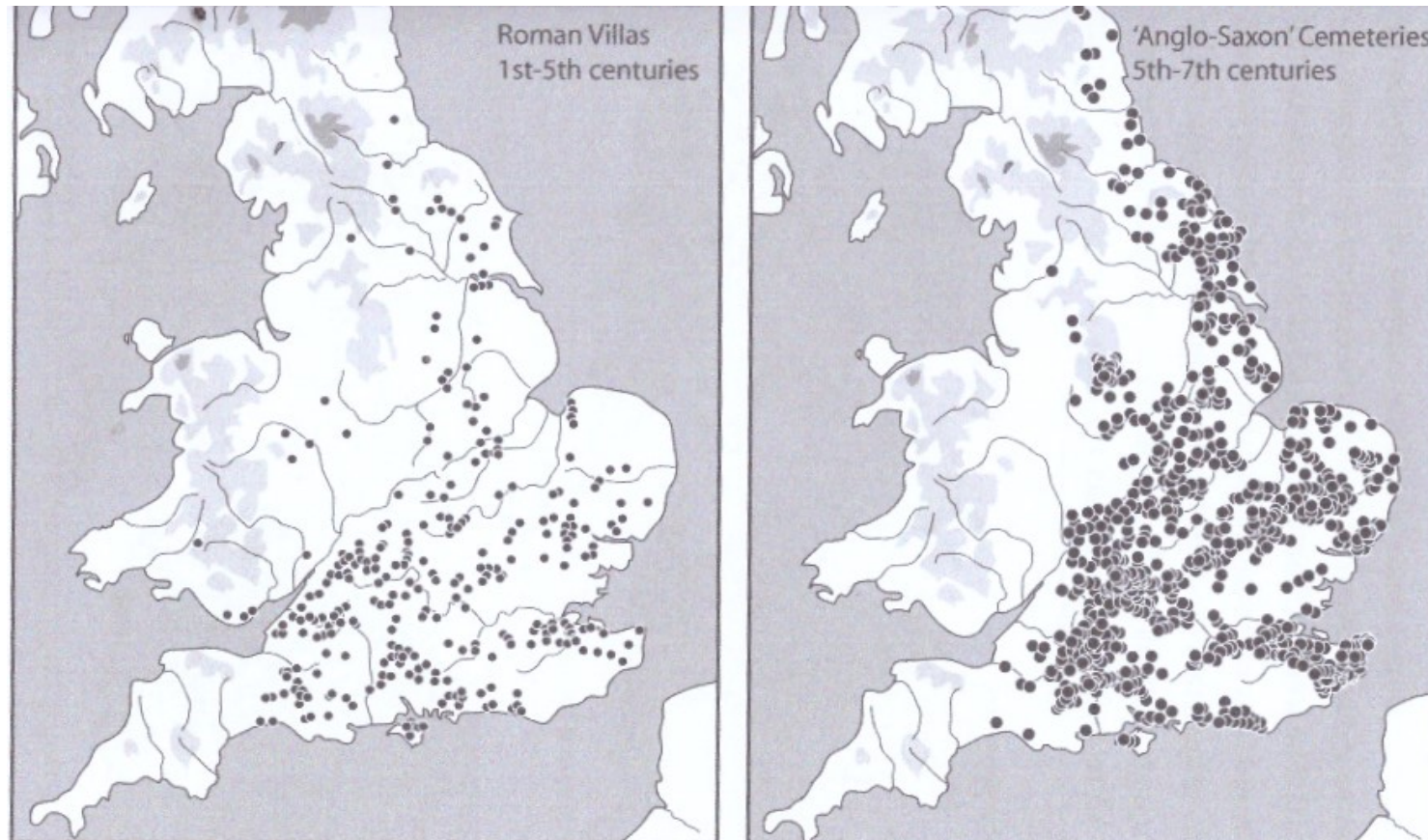
Bede's world

7th century English kingdoms and provinces

Small boats...



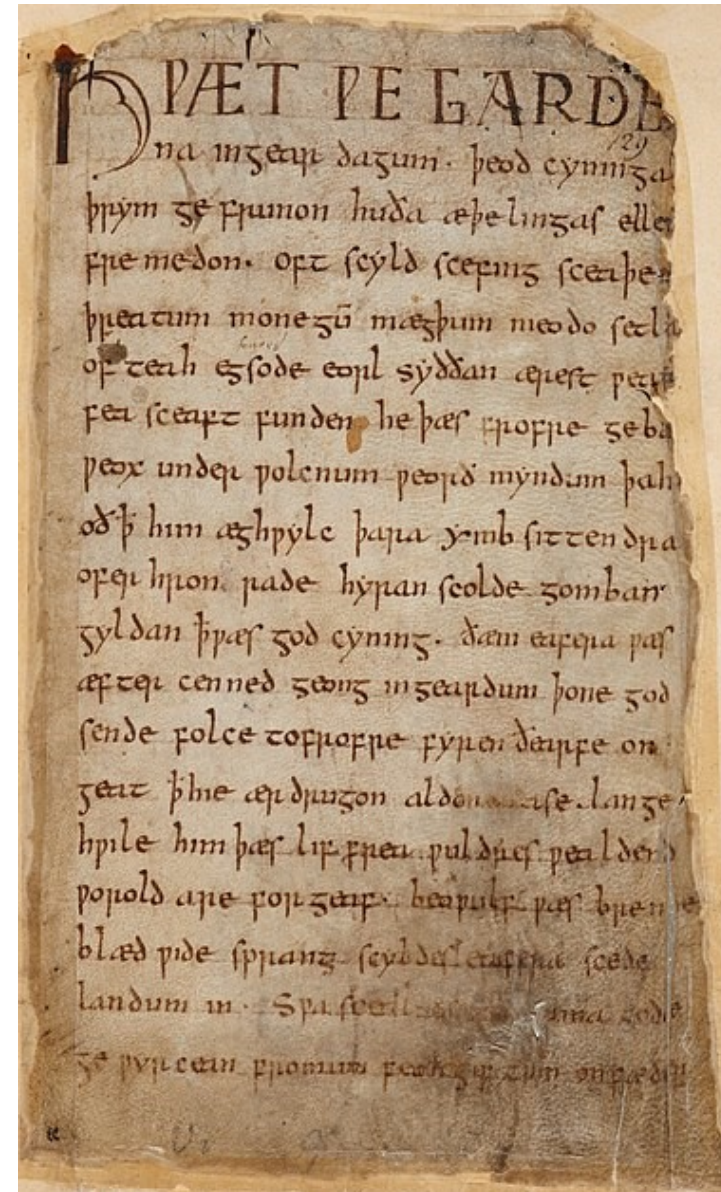
Distribution of Roman villas and “Anglo-Saxon” cemeteries



Beowulf

The sole surviving manuscript dates to c1000

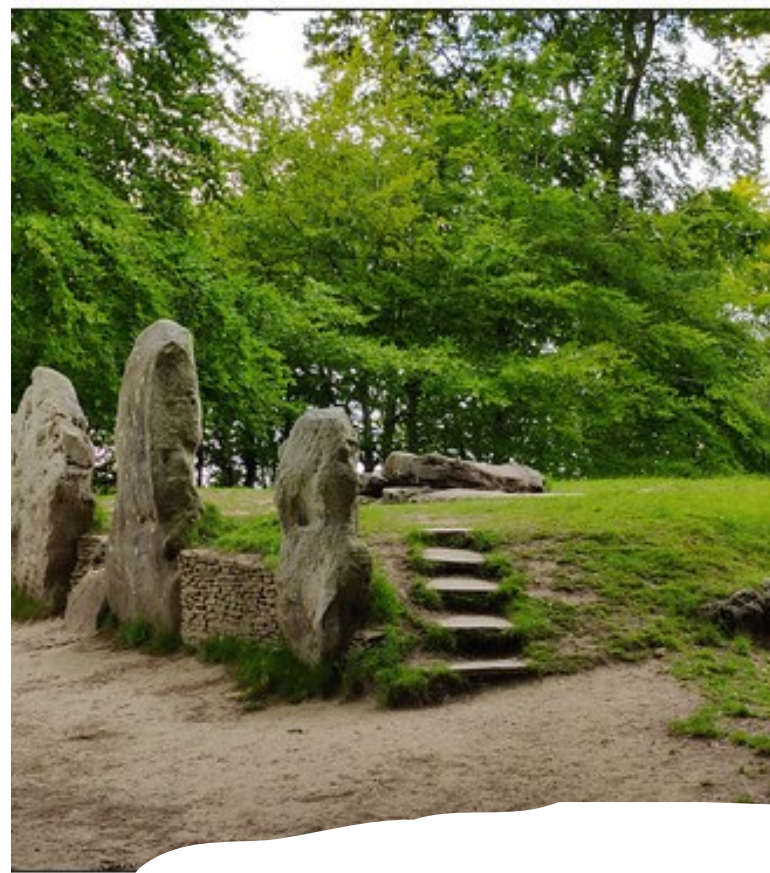
(British Library)



Sutton Hoo

Burial ground of kings

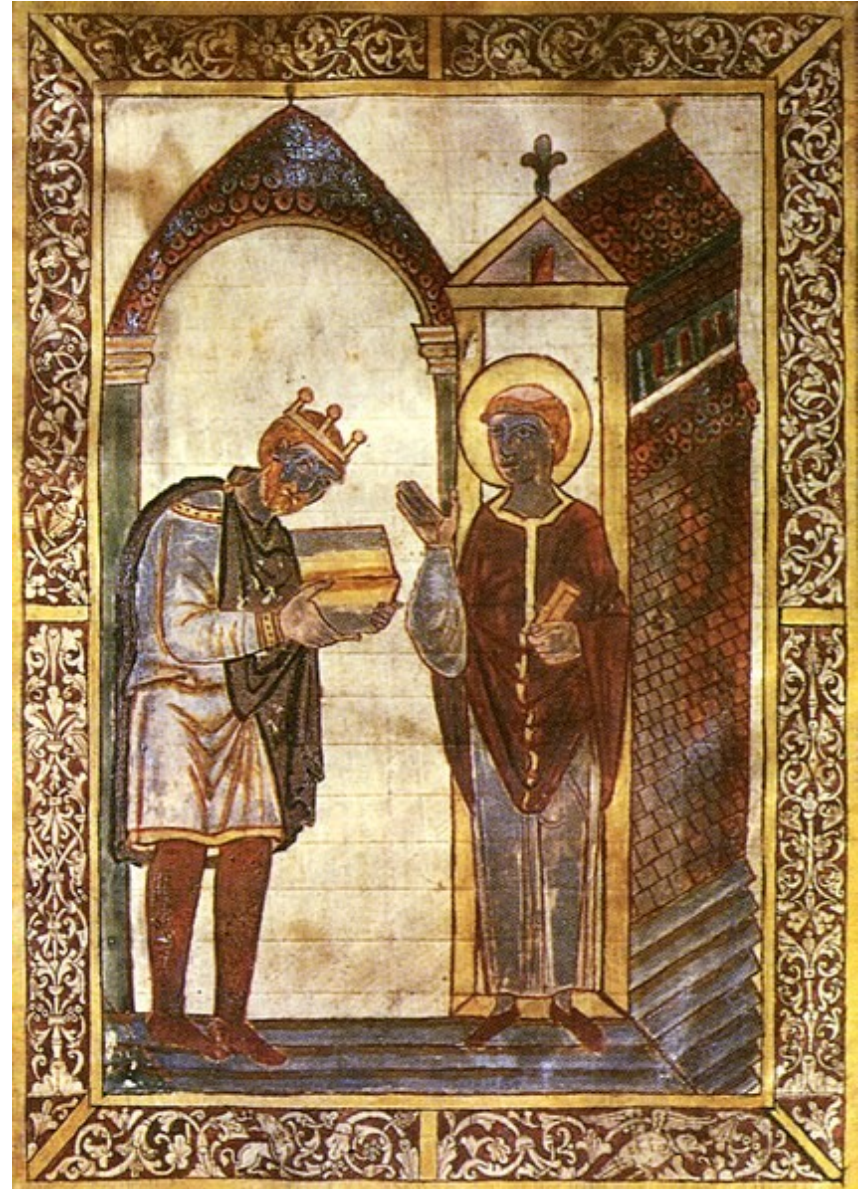




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Migration and memory

King Æthelstan stands alongside Bede,
holding Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*



(Corpus Christi College, Cambridge)