Worksheet 5.2 OE Text Analysis





The text is a selection from AElfric’s *Catholic Homily on St Gregory* (Godden 1979:74), which is based on Alfred’s translation of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, an apocryphal account of why England was Christianized. It centers on a play on words between the name of the Germanic tribe, the Angles, and the word *angel*. The passage is partially glossed; by now you should be able to supply the missing translations.

A) The passage provides numerous examples of OE inflectional morphology. List the words that belong to each of the following categories as well as the line each word appears in the passage. Try to find all examples; this is called an exhaustive collection. At least list 3 for each.

Verb forms:

1. **Strong verbs**

Gelmap, deð, common

1. **Weak verbs**

Gesette, beheold, axode

1. **Past participles**

hi gebrohte wæron

engla lande wæron

of alædde wæron

Noun forms

1. **Inflected forms of nouns**

Cypmenn, warum, cnapena

1. **Inflected forms of pronouns**

ðeodemennisc, hi, gedafenað

1. **Inflected forms of demonstratives**

heora, þære, þe

1. **Strong and weak adjective endings**

-til, -tilum, -tiles

1. **Adverbs**

foroft, fægeres, rihtliee,

B). The passage also shows characteristic OE syntax (p. 106-107). List at least five.

* Adjectives agree in number
* Adjectives agree in gender
* Adjectives have strong and weak inflections
* Using verb phrases with “have” and “be” with participles
* Word order is less fixed and sentences can have many varieties of subject, verb, and object order.