

HIU33106, The Invention of England: Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English (?) People of 731 (Warntjes)

Assessment: 40% presentation, 60% reflective essay

Our knowledge of the historical framework of early medieval western Europe depends primarily on a few authors writing about their own people: Jordanes on the Goths, Gregory of Tours on the Franks, Paul the Deacon on the Lombards, and Bede on the English. For this reason alone, these texts have received disproportionate attention, and have shaped our views of an entire age. This module will tackle in detail one of these early medieval master narratives, and will raise questions about what writing history meant at this time, what the underlying agendas may have been, and how we can reconstruct the past from such biased accounts. In this, we will gain fundamental insights into the beginning of 'English' history and the formation of Western Europe after the Fall of Rome.