

ON GEWRITUM CYTHATH: MODELS OF TRANSLATION IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

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This dissertation argues for a new understanding of translation in Anglo-Saxon England, based on careful studies of poetry translated from Latin into Old English. The traditional approach to Anglo-Saxon translation focuses on the educational reforms of Alfred the Great, obscuring to some extent the variety and sophistication of Anglo-Saxon responses to Latin literature. This project demonstrates that variety through close studies of four Old English texts: the *Phoenix*, Exeter Book riddles 35 and 40, the *Meters of Boethius*, and *Judgment Day II*. These studies, which occupy the individual chapters of the dissertation, show that the Alfredian approach was merely one among many distinct varieties of translation practiced during the Anglo-Saxon period. This project concludes by indicating some directions in which scholars might focus their efforts to better understand the dynamic relationship of Old English to Latin revealed in Anglo-Saxon practices of translation.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Benjamin D. Weber began his Ph.D. in Medieval Studies at Cornell in 2006, after earning a Bachelor's Degree in English from Princeton University in 2004 and participating in a two-year postbaccalaureate program at Columbia University from 2004-2006. He continued to pursue his interest in English and Latin literature through his Ph.D., focusing on Old English literature with minor fields in Middle English and Medieval Latin literature. His particular interests within the field of medieval literature include translation, etymology and the use of vernacular literature to negotiate relationships to figures of authority. His academic life has been supported unfailingly by his wife Naomi, and his free time made immeasurably richer by the birth of his daughter Melanie in February of 2011.

To my best girls, Naomi and Melanie

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
ASPR	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, ed. Krapp and Dobbie, 1931-53.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Hoelder, Pichler, Tempsky, 1886-
<i>DCP</i>	<i>De Consolatione Philosophiae</i> , ed. Moerschini. Leipzig: K.G. Sauer Verlag, 2000.
<i>De Ave</i>	<i>De Ave Phoenice</i> , ed. Brandt and Laubmann. CSEL xxvii. Vienna, 1892.
<i>De Die</i>	<i>De Die Iudicii</i> , ed. Caie. <i>The Old English Poem 'Judgement Day II': a Critical Edition with Editions of 'De die iudicii' and the Hatton 113 Homily 'Be domes daege'</i> . Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000.
<i>JDII</i>	<i>Judgment Day II</i> , ed. Caie. <i>The Old English Poem 'Judgement Day II': a Critical Edition with Editions of 'De die iudicii' and the Hatton 113 Homily 'Be domes daege'</i> . Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000.
<i>RSB</i>	<i>Regula Sancti Benedicti</i> , ed. Fry. <i>The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with notes and thematic index</i> . Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981.

Introduction: Alfred's Shadow

Alfred the Great, the celebrated king of Wessex who died in 899, casts a long shadow over Anglo-Saxon literary history. According to Robert Stanton, "he helped to define an English literary culture at a time when Latin was the dominant high-status language" (Stanton, "Alfred" 116). Stanton sees Alfred's educational reforms, conceived and carried out in spite of the constant threat of Viking invasion, as the precondition for the efflorescence of literary production that took place in tenth and eleventh-century England.

Stanton argues that case most obviously when he states that "English as a literary language was born out of a program of translation, and defined itself largely in terms of differences between itself and the Latin language" (Stanton, "(M)other Tongue" 33-4). Nicole Discenza, author of a recent book on Alfred's translation of Boethius, supports Stanton's assessment when she cites him in support of her claim that "Alfred started a process of legitimation...that would not be complete for many centuries" (Discenza 4). Discenza and Stanton thus both place Alfred at the forefront of translation in Anglo-Saxon England, figuring him as the first great translator who appropriated the authority of Latin literature for the vernacular, thus authorizing the use of English for high-status literature during and after his reign.

There is some truth to that claim. Alfred's program of translation was ambitious, designed to address a precipitous decline in Latin learning Alfred claims

took place during the ninth century.¹ Alfred's response to that decline places him squarely in the middle of Discenza and Stanton's narrative of literary history in Anglo-Saxon England, a story which begins with the arrival of Augustine of Canterbury and his missionaries from Rome at the end of the sixth century. When they arrived, Augustine and his followers brought the Latin language and new technologies of writing and bookmaking with them. Though historical evidence from that period is scarce, it seems that the Anglo-Saxons embraced literacy and the new religion with equal fervor: 100 years after the missionaries had arrived, Bede was nearing the completion of his *Ecclesiastical History*, a monument of Latin learning and historical scholarship.

Bede, though he may have been the greatest scholar in early England, was hardly the only one. The school of Theodore and Hadrian at Canterbury flourished during that period, and the famous churchman and poet Aldhelm began his career during Bede's lifetime. The celebrated twelfth-century historian William of Malmesbury paints a colorful picture of seventh-century English learning in his *Gesta Pontificum*:

Populum eo tempore semibarbarum, parum divinis sermonibus intentum, statim cantatis missis domos cursitare solitum. Ideo sanctum virum, super pontem qui rura et urbem continuat, abeuntibus se opposuisse obicem, quasi artem cantitandi professum. Eo plusquam semel facto, plebis favorem et concursum emeritum. Hoc commento sensim inter ludicra verbis scripturarum insertis, cives ad sanitatem reduxisse; qui si severe et cum excommunicatione agendum putasset, profecto profecisset nichil (V.190)

The people in that time were half-barbarian, scarcely intent on the divine services, accustomed to run home immediately after the mass had been sung. So that holy

¹ See Stanton, "King Alfred" 116-17 for Alfred's narrative of decline, c.f. Morrish, who argues that Alfred exaggerated the decay of English learning for political reasons.

man (i.e., Aldhelm) stood opposite the departing crowd, on the bridge which joined the city and the surrounding countryside, as if he were a professional in the art of singing. After having done so more than once, he won the favor and attention of the people. By this strategy he led the people back to health, inserting words of Scripture among the foolishness. That man, had he thought to proceed harshly, by threat of excommunication, would surely have accomplished nothing.

This anecdote, long a favorite of Anglo-Saxonists, comes from the account of Aldhelm's life that makes up the last book of the *Gesta Pontificum*. In its description of Aldhelm's unorthodox preaching style, this passage supports two important orthodoxies about early Anglo-Saxon culture. The first is that, within the walls of the monasteries, the late seventh century was a golden age of learning, during which men like Aldhelm and Bede were educated to the highest standard of Latinity. The second is that Old English poetry was at that time still an oral art form, recited aloud for a listening audience. In the figure of Aldhelm, William unites the traditions of monastic Latin scholarship and Anglo-Saxon oral poetry, but preserves the distinction between the two: Latin literature is represented by Scripture, what has been written, while Old English poetry is a discipline of oral performance, the "ars cantitandi."

Aldhelm's extant works affirm this distinction—despite his reputation as a vernacular poet, only his Latin writings survive.² The fact that two of Aldhelm's Latin riddles were translated into very sensitive and highly literate Old English verse, though, calls this distinction into question. One of the fringe benefits of studying poetic translation is the way such a study problematizes the traditional divide between Germanic orality and Latin literacy. Points of seeming division, for

² For the suggestion that some of Aldhelm's vernacular poetry survives in the Old English *Maxims*, see Wright, "Blood."

example, can also be viewed as intimate yet independent response. That tendency manifests most visibly in this project in a basic feature of supposedly “oral” Old English rhetoric: poetic repetition, generally thought to be characteristic of the oral-formulaic style, shows up again and again in the translated poems, but often stands in quite precisely for Latin rhetorical devices which have no equivalent in Old English.³

Some 150 years after Aldhelm's death, Alfred the Great, king of the West Saxons, painted a much different picture of English learning in his translation of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*:⁴

Swa clæne hio wæs oðfeallenu on Angelkynne ðætte swiðe feawe wæron behionan Humbre þe hiora ðenunga cuðen understandan on Englisc, oððe furðum an ærendgewrit of Lædene on Englisc areccan; & ic wene ðætte nauht monige begeondan Humbre næran. Swa feawe hiora wæron ðætte ic furðum anne anlepne ne mæg geðencean besuðan Temese ða ða ic to rice feng (Alfred, *Pastoral Care* 2).

So completely was it [i.e., learning] decayed in England that there were very few men south of the Humber [i.e., in the southern part of England, where Alfred ruled] who could understand the Mass in English, or even translate any written message from Latin into English; and I expect that there were not many such beyond the Humber. There were so few of those men that I cannot think of a single one south of the Thames when I became king.

Alfred's grim diagnosis of the state of English learning must be understood in its proper historical context. He took the throne in 871, at a time when the various kingdoms of England suffered greatly at the hands of the Vikings. Since the close of

³ Lapidge 223-30 provides a concise history of the "oral-formulaic" hypothesis, originating with Parry's studies of Homer and brought to bear on Old English by Magoun. In discussing Aldhelm's use of formulae, Lapidge demonstrates that repetition does not necessarily indicate oral composition, and that Anglo-Latin texts have much to offer as evidence for orality and literacy in Anglo-Saxon England.

⁴ This preface has, over the years, attracted quite a bit of scholarly attention. The principle studies are: Stanley, Shippey, Orton, Huppé and Morrish, as well as Stanton, *Culture* 60-3 and Discenza, *English* 13-15.

the eighth century, the Vikings had been raiding England, beginning with the sack of the monastery at Lindisfarne in 793. The D version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records the arrival of the Vikings in a memorable entry:

AN. .dcccxciii. Her wæron reðe forebecna cumene ofer Norðhymbra land, 7 þæt folc earmlic bregdon, þæt wæron ormete þodenas 7 ligrescas, 7 fyrenne dracan wæron gesewene on þam lifte fleogende. Ðam tacnum sona fyligde mycel hunger, 7 litel æfter þam, þæs ilcan gearas on .vi. idus Ianuarii, earmlice hæþenra manna hergunc adilegode Godes cyrican in Lindisfarnaee þurh hreaflac 7 mansliht. 7 Sicga forðferde on .viii. kalendas Martius (*Chronicle* 793).

The year 793: At this time portents swiftly came over Northumbria, and sorely terrified the people there. Those portents were great winds and flashes of lightning, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. A great famine soon followed those signs, and shortly after that, on the 6th of the ides of January in the same year, a terrible invasion of heathen men destroyed God's church at Lindisfarne through robbery and manslaughter. And Sicga died on the 8th of the kalends of March.

This entry, which is unique to the D and E branches of the *Chronicle*, the so-called "Northern" version, associates the arrival of the Vikings with terrible portents, fiery dragons and flashes of lightning. As the *Chronicle* was not begun until the Alfredian period, this entry suggests that in retrospect, the Anglo-Saxons saw the sack of Lindisfarne as a sign of things to come.⁵

Monasteries like Lindisfarne were choice targets for the raiders because they were often wealthy and poorly-defended, isolated from their neighbors due to the restrictions of monastic life. Since monasteries were also the primary centers of education, as well as the primary means of book production, it is no surprise that the Viking depredations contributed to the decline of Latin learning in ninth-century England.

⁵ On the relationship of the D version of the *Chronicle* to the other branches, see Cubbin xvii-liii. Campbell 132 discusses the *Chronicle's* evidence for Viking raids in the late 8th and early 9th centuries.

There is some reason to question Alfred's account: since the preface to the *Regula Pastoralis* was a letter advertising for his own educational reforms, he may have chosen to exaggerate the severity of the educational crisis.⁶ Still, given the paucity of sources for Anglo-Saxon history generally, Alfred's letter remains an influential text for the modern understanding of ninth-century English culture.

When juxtaposed with one another, William of Malmesbury's portrait of Aldhelm and Alfred's letter to his bishops illustrate a very compelling, and fairly common, narrative about English literary history: the seventh and eighth centuries saw a great flowering of Latin learning, which then decayed due to the relentless assaults of the Vikings until Alfred's reign.⁷ Alfred, deeply troubled by the lack of education within his realm, revived English learning with an ambitious program of translation, during which he rendered "those books most necessary for men to know" into English so they might be read by the next generation of Anglo-Saxon youth.⁸

This timely intervention, combined with Alfred's victories over the Viking invaders, set the stage for a literary revival in the tenth century, when almost the entire corpus of Old English literature was written down. That revival seems to have lasted until 1066, when William the Conqueror invaded England and drastically altered the literary landscape for hundreds of years to come.

⁶ On the preface to the *Regula* as an exaggeration, see Morrish.

⁷ Stanton endorses this narrative of decay and redemption (*Culture* 6-7), and Discenza argues for the enduring and transformative influence of Alfred's program of translation on late Anglo-Saxon culture (127-9).

⁸ This famous phrase may be found in Alfred, *Pastoral Care* 6.

According to that narrative, Alfred's program of translation was a crucial intervention in Anglo-Saxon literary history, perhaps the most important contribution to Old English literature by any single man. Alfred's reign, though late by historical standards, still pre-dates the vast majority of written Old English. It is thus difficult not to suspect that Alfred exerted some influence, direct or indirect, over nearly every surviving work of Old English literature. To borrow Stanton's words again, "Alfred's experiment set a precedent for reading and study in the vernacular and fundamentally changed the relationship between Latin and Old English in the late Anglo-Saxon world of learning" (Stanton, "Fragmentation" 12).

Powerful as that narrative is, it places too much emphasis on Alfred as the paradigmatic example of the Anglo-Saxon translator. Though Alfred offers an important model of translation in his prefaces and his works, the Alfredian model is only one among several distinct approaches to translation in Anglo-Saxon England. My goal in this project is to redress the balance somewhat by demonstrating that the poetic translations—the *Phoenix*, *Exeter Book* riddles 35 and 40, and *Judgment Day II*—offer evidence of a vital practice of translation, quite distinct from Alfred's, that flourished in Anglo-Saxon England. Though Alfred's influence on English literature cannot be denied, the poetic translations show that there were a much wider variety of approaches to translation than has generally been recognized, and that these approaches do not conveniently fit into a single narrative of decline and redemption.

Part of the work of this project, therefore, is to propose a new literary-historical framework better able to accommodate the evidence of all the translations, poetry and prose alike, in Anglo-Saxon England. Rather than focusing

exclusively on Alfred, this new framework identifies several different cultural moments at which translation was practiced, often with great sensitivity and supported by significant learning. Though Alfredian England must be recognized as one such moment, the poetic translations suggest others as well.

The earliest of the poetic translations is the Leiden Riddle, written in Northumbria sometime in the eighth century. Though it is difficult to posit the existence of a whole tradition of translation from a single poem, the Leiden riddle nonetheless reveals that Aldhelm's Latin writings found a sympathetic and well-educated audience not long after they were composed. The riddle also reveals that a sophisticated practice of translation developed early on in England, long before Alfred developed his particular approach late in the ninth century.

After the Leiden riddle come the *Exeter Book* poems, the *Phoenix* and Exeter Riddle 35. These poems are, unfortunately, extremely difficult to date precisely. Fulk tentatively assigns both to ninth-century Mercia based on dialect, but they could well have been composed in Wessex in the tenth century (Fulk 402-9). It is naturally attractive to accept Fulk's determination, as it would greatly strengthen the case for a robust, pre-Alfredian culture of translation that could, in the form of the *Phoenix*, lay claim to the most elaborate and ambitious example of poetic translation that survives from Anglo-Saxon England. Even if the *Exeter Book* poems are not pre-Alfredian, however, my analysis will show that they are radically different from the Alfredian translations. Whether they provide evidence for a pre-Alfredian culture of translation or an approach to translation contemporary with

and different from Alfred's, they reveal a diversity in the practice of translation often missing from the standard accounts.

Finally, Exeter riddle 40 and *Judgment Day II* are both demonstrably late translations. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe has shown, based on manuscript evidence, that the translation of riddle 40 dates to the tenth century, and *Judgment Day II* dates to the late tenth or eleventh century.⁹ In both cases, then, we have evidence for post-Alfredian translations that look very different from anything produced by Alfred's program. *Judgment Day II* is especially important because it is the easiest of all the poetic translations to tie to a particular cultural context. The poem's form, content, and manuscript context all suggest that it is a product of the English Benedictine Reform, a tenth-century monastic revolution that provided a new impetus for spiritual and devotional literature.

The translated poetry thus reveals, at a minimum, three cultural moments in addition to Alfred's that produced impressively imaginative and sophisticated translations from Latin. Though Stanton excludes the poetic evidence on theoretical grounds, this project will demonstrate that it is impossible to tell the story of translation in Anglo-Saxon England without taking the translated poetry into account (Stanton, *Culture* 5). To do otherwise leads, as Stanton's argument does, to a *reductio ad Alfredum* which adumbrates the variety of learned and imaginative responses to Latin literature throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.

One reason the Alfred-centered narrative of translation has flourished is that it lends itself well to theoretically-motivated inquiry. The two monographs on

⁹ For the late date of Exeter riddle 40, see O'Brien O'Keefe, "Text."

translation that have come out in recent years, Stanton's *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* and Nicole Discenza's *The King's English*, both find modern constructions of translation to be valuable hermeneutics for Alfredian England. Stanton in particular depicts Alfred as the originator and standard paradigm of Anglo-Saxon translation, focusing his analysis through theoretical lenses supplied by Lawrence Venuti and George Steiner. (Stanton, *Culture* 4). Discenza's book focuses more narrowly on Alfred's *Boethius*, assessing the function of that translation within its cultural context according to Bourdieu's criteria of adequacy and acceptability (Discenza, *English* 1-7).

As Discenza and Stanton demonstrate, these theoretical constructions have great value for our understanding of Anglo-Saxon culture, especially during Alfred's reign. It is more challenging, however, to apply theoretical paradigms to the translated poetry. Much of that challenge stems from the fact none of the translated poems can be definitely attributed to a particular author, audience, or even cultural context. Venuti's axiom, for example, that all translations be examined against their historical contexts, thus becomes difficult to put into practice.¹⁰

In addition to the problem of context, there is the bias of theories of translation towards foregrounding translation's violent, disruptive nature. From St. Jerome's contention that Hilary the Confessor "carried the sense captive into his own language by right of victory," to Lawrence Venuti's diagnosis of "the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation," such theories tend to

¹⁰ For an exhortation to translation theorists to develop this an historical consciousness, see Venuti, *Reader* 2.

emphasize the radical nature of translation in bridging the gaps between languages and cultures (Venuti, *Invisibility* 10).

In Anglo-Saxon England, though, the divisions between Latin and English language and culture may not have been so keenly felt. To be sure, the "semibarbari" of William of Malmesbury's account were far removed from the world of Latin learning. Men like Aldhelm, though, or Bede, or even Aelfric, living within the walls of monasteries, were legitimately bilingual, and members of a culture in which Roman and Anglo-Saxon customs were thoroughly integrated with one another. For such men, it may have been less of an act of violence to render a Latin text into English. And indeed, the poetic translations seem to be the products of a different approach to translation, one based on exploiting the similarities between the two languages, placing both on an equal footing.

The close adherence of the translators to their source texts requires us to study the Latin sources carefully in order to properly understand the Old English translations. To that end, each of my chapters follows, with a few variations, the same pattern: an analysis of the Latin source text, followed by a consideration of its Old English translation. This approach has the advantage of grounding my analyses of the Old English poetry very closely in the language of the Latin sources. It also allows me on occasion to correct misapprehensions about the Latin sources that change the way we must read the translations.

In discussing the individual texts, there is always a need to balance a discussion of a text's particular problems against its contribution to the larger narrative about translation as a cultural practice. The strength of the philological

method, though, is that it builds up large claims from humble beginnings, grounding arguments about culture and tradition in subtle observations of language and style. Such an approach authorizes the occasional digression to explore a textual crux or ruminate on a peculiarity of manuscript transmission, though I have made every effort to ensure that those moments of digression contribute to, rather than detract from, the argument of the entire project.

This project begins with a study of the Old English *Phoenix* and its Latin source, the fourth-century *De Ave Phoenice*. This chapter reveals how the author of the *Phoenix*, while drawing heavily on the language and imagery of his source, greatly expanded the Christian symbolism of the phoenix myth, giving his poem an allegorical depth and moral urgency not present in the source. The complexity of this task reveals the poet to have been a sensitive reader and an imaginative writer, who saw his source more as a point of departure than a text to be transmitted.

The second chapter treats the translated riddles of the Exeter Book, riddles 35 and 40. Both are translated from Aldhelm's Latin riddles, composed during the eighth century. Though the translators of the riddles do not possess the *Phoenix* poet's eloquence, their poems still reveal a lively appreciation of Aldhelm's rhetorical strategies and etymological games. As in the case of the *Phoenix*, the riddles employ Latin rhetoric mixed with the native poetic techniques of Old English, evidence of an author or authors at ease with the Latin riddle tradition as well as the poetry of their mother tongue.

The third chapter demonstrates that the easy familiarity with Latin characteristic of the Exeter Book translations is conspicuously lacking from Alfred's

Meters. The *Meters* are written in a plain style, showing little appreciation of Latin rhetoric, and follow a dogmatic allegorical method that strives to pin down the meanings of the many images present in their source. In this respect they are the opposite of the *Phoenix*: while the *Phoenix* poet strives to expand the symbolic range of his source by invoking a multitude of typological associations, the author(s) of the *Meters* strive to gloss Boethius' poems with specific, concrete meanings, avoiding ambiguity whenever possible.

The final chapter examines the poem *Judgment Day II*, a translation of the Anglo-Latin poem usually called *De Die Iudicii*, an imaginative and powerful account of the Day of Judgment. I treat *Judgment Day II* last for a simple reason: both the *Phoenix* and the Riddles were likely produced outside of Alfred's influence, as both show signs of Mercian provenance and may have been written before Alfred began his translation program. *Judgment Day II*, on the other hand, was almost certainly written after Alfred's translations were in circulation, after his programmatic statements had had a chance to influence the Old English literary tradition.

What this chapter reveals, though, is that *Judgment Day II* resembles the Exeter Book translations much more than it does the *Meters*. The translator's close attention to language and form, his lively appreciation of the imagery and diction of the Latin source, separates him from the translator of the *Meters*. *Judgment Day II* thus demonstrates that the Alfredian approach was not typical of all late Old English literature. It was instead something specific to Alfred's program of translation, tied to his particular goals and understanding of Latin literature.

These poetic translations, so responsive to the language as well as the content of their sources, offer an alternative to Alfred's conception of Latin literature as a vast forest, scarcely penetrable to the English scholars of his day, which he describes in his preface to the *Soliloquies*:¹¹

Gaderode me þonne kicglas and stuþansceaftas, and lohsceaftas and hylfa to ælcum þara tola þe ic mid wircan cuðe, and bohtimbru and bolttimbru, and, to ælcum þara weorca þe ic wyrcan cuðe, þa wlitegostan treowo be þam dele ðe ic aberan meihte. ne com ic naþer mid anre byrðene ham þe me ne lyste ealne þane wude ham brengan, gif ic hyne ealne aberan meihte; on ælcum treowo ic geseah hwæthwugu þæs þe ic æt ham beþorfte. Forþam ic lære ælcne ðara þe maga si and manigne wæn hæbbe, þæt he menige to þam ilcan wudu þar ic ðas stuðansceaftas cearf, fetige hym þar ma, and gefeðrige hys wænas mid fegrum gerdum, þat he mage windan manigne smicerne wah, and manig ænlic hus settan, and fegerne tun timbrian, and þær murge and softe mid mæge on-eardian ægðer ge wintras ge sumeras, swa swa ic nu ne gyt ne dyde. (Alfred, *Soliloquies* 47)

I gathered for myself posts and props, and bolts and handles for each of the tools with which I knew how to work, and beams for my house, and, for each of the works I knew how to perform, the most beautiful trees from the valley which I might carry away. Nor did I ever come home with a burden not wishing that I might bring all that wood home, if I might carry it; on each tree I saw something which I needed at home. For that reason I admonish each one of those who are able and who have many wagons, that he proceed to the same forest where I cut my props, and there he may gather more, and load his wagons with fair branches, so that he may weave many beautiful walls, and build many a unique house, and construct a fair town, and there he may dwell happily and easily, whether in winter or in summer, as I have not yet done.

This preface, from what was probably Alfred's final translation, speaks to the great distance Alfred perceives between Old English and Latin literature.¹² The passage is full of language which speaks to Alfred's limits: he seeks handles for those tools he

¹¹ For other perspectives on this passage from the *Soliloquies*, see Bhattacharya *passim* and Stanley 357+ff..

¹² The order of the translations produced under Alfred's aegis is not certain, but the consensus is that the *Soliloquies* were his final translation--see Carnicelli 39. The contrast between the prefaces to the *Regula Pastoralis* and the *Soliloquies* raises the possibility that Alfred's conception of his own activity as a translator changed over time.

knows how to use, "þara tola þe ic mid wircan cuðe," and carries home material for those works he is able to perform, "to ælcum þara weorca þe ic wyrcan cuðe." He laments the fact that he cannot carry all the "wood" home, and acknowledges that he himself has yet to build the sort of dwelling he imagines in the preface: "swa swa ic nu ne gyt ne dyde."

All these qualifications point to Alfred's understanding of Latin literature as something foreign, something that needs to be worked on, by tools and by craft, before it can be assimilated into his experience. In the process of selection and construction, though, something is always left behind, abandoned in the forest or on the floor of the workshop.

For all that Alfred laments what he has left behind in the forest, his eye is firmly fixed on the town. Here again, his selection principle is need: "on ælcum treowo ic geseah hwæthwugu þæs þe ic æt ham beþorfte" (emphasis mine). Latin literature, as Alfred conceives of it, exists to serve the needs of the present, to give a man the raw materials with which he might build a safe, comfortable home. For a king, especially one so caught up in the need to defend his realm from physical attack, that is an admirable sentiment. For a translator, though, it is problematic. Alfred's focus on the needs of the present, and on the way literature may be "woven together" to form a "beautiful wall," devoid of ambiguity or inconsistency, authorizes any number of radical interventions in the process of translation. Such interventions, as my third chapter will show, were quite common in the *Meters of Boethius*.

This perspective of Alfred's is confirmed by Asser's description of the how the king assembled his famous *handboc*, a collection of scriptural and liturgical passages interpreted and translated from the Latin:

Quod cum intentus utriusque auribus audisset et intima mente sollicite perscrutaretur, subito ostendens libellum, quem in sinum suum sedulo portabat, in quo diurnus cursus et psalmi quidam atque orationes quaedam, quas ille in iuventute sua legeret, scripti habebantur, imperavit, quod illud testimonium in eodem libello literis mandarem. Quod ego audiens et ingeniosam benevolentiam illius ex parte, atque etiam tam devotam erga studium divinae sapientiae voluntatem eius cognoscens, immensas Omnipotenti Deo grates, extensis ad aethera volis, tacitus quamvis, persolvi, Qui tantam erga studium sapientiae devotionem in regio corde inseruerat (Asser 88).

As he was listening intently to this with both ears and was carefully mulling it over in the depths of his mind, he suddenly showed me a little book which he constantly carried on his person, and in which were written the day-time offices and some psalms and certain prayers which he had learned in his youth. He told me to copy the passage in question into the little book. When I heard this and realized his natural good-will on the one hand as well as his devout enthusiasm for the pursuit of divine wisdom, I stretched out my palms to the heavens and gave mighty (albeit silent) thanks to Almighty God, who had sown such great enthusiasm for the pursuit of learning in the king's heart (trans. Keynes and Lapidge 99).

As Asser describes it, Alfred's commonplace book sounds very much like the literary log cabin he imagines in his preface, a patchwork assembly of meaningful passages, selected according to need, preserved to be ruminated upon and digested. As such, it confirms the fact that Alfred perceives Latin literature very differently than Old English literature. Earlier in his life, Asser relates the story of how Alfred memorized a book of Old English poetry almost overnight in order to impress his mother (Asser 23). That easy familiarity with the written word does not seem to extend to Latin, which Alfred habitually excerpts to meditate upon at length. It is not clear whether this is a result of Alfred's education or simply a habit of mind, but

the result is the same: the king has a very different relationship to the two languages.

Alfred's unique relationship to Latin and Old English, as well as his use of personal need as a selection principle, guide his translations in a very particular direction. That claim will be examined in greater depth, and with greater precision, in chapter three, but even this cursory examination reveals the pitfalls of reading all Old English translation through an Alfredian lens. Not every Anglo-Saxon translator of Latin was so distant from Latin culture, or so bent on personal consolation, as Alfred.

The chapters that follow reveal the wide variety of Anglo-Saxon engagements with Latin literature, and try to suggest other frameworks, more profitable than the Alfredian one, that might illuminate the peculiarities and specific achievements of the translated poems. Once that detailed analysis is concluded, the stage will be set for a return to literary history, to contemplate how these other translations interrogate, complicate and modify the narrative that puts Alfred at the center of Old English literature.

Chapter 1: Non-Alfredian Exegesis in the *Phoenix*

The Old English *Phoenix* is probably the best-known example of poetic translation from Anglo-Saxon England. Its imaginative re-telling of the myth of the phoenix, explicated according to the terms of Christian allegory, has a long tradition of scholarly reception. This chapter examines the *De Ave* and the OE *Phoenix* to demonstrate the inspiration the Anglo-Saxon poet took from his Latin source and the sophistication of his response. The first half of the chapter deals with the *De Ave*, identifying some of its most important rhetorical strategies and linking it stylistically to the Jeweled Style of late Antiquity, defined by Michael Roberts in his influential book.¹³ The second half of the chapter shows how the *Phoenix* poet adopted and adapted these strategies to his own purposes, preserving the learned, Classical feel of the poem while updating its Christian message for his own audience by means of a complex program of exegesis.

The learning and sophistication of the *Phoenix*, inspired by a thorough understanding of the style and substance of its source, speak to a kind of translation quite different from that practiced by Alfred and his circle. The *Phoenix* poet is extraordinarily responsive to Lactantius' use of rhetoric and meter, and that sensitivity drives many of his innovative choices in translating the poem. Whether the *Phoenix* was written before Alfred's time or not, it shows that Alfred hardly had a monopoly on the practice of translation in England in the late 9th and early 10th centuries.

¹³ For the historical period and stylistic markers of the Jeweled Style, see Roberts *passim*.

The *Phoenix* is preserved in the *Exeter Book*, a famously diverse collection of Old English poetry dating from the tenth century.¹⁴ The poem's author, date and place of composition are unknown, though its dialect points towards ninth-century Mercia.¹⁵ The *Phoenix* is 677 lines long, and is conventionally divided into two parts (Blake 35). The first part, lines 1-381, is an imaginative translation of *De Ave Phoenixe*, a Latin poem often attributed to Lactantius, a fourth-century rhetorician and Christian author in North Africa.¹⁶

The second part, lines 382-677, is somewhat harder to describe. Fundamentally it is an allegorical explanation of the first half, revealing the Christian truth implicit in the story of the phoenix's death and rebirth. The allegorical method is complex, though, and the poem densely intertextual.¹⁷ The *Phoenix* poet is careful to encourage allegorical reading, connecting the two halves of the poem with verbal echoes and dazzling plays on sounds and words. This chapter will reveal how the

¹⁴ The standard edition of the *Phoenix* is Blake's. All quotations are from Blake's edition, and all translations are the author's own. For basic information on the *Exeter Book*, see the introduction to Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book. The Exeter Book. ASPR III*. Columbia University Press, NY 1936.

¹⁵ See Fulk 402-4, where he examines the poem's dialect and concludes that the *Phoenix* is roughly contemporary with Cynewulf, whom he dates to the late 8th or early 9th century. Blake, intro. 23-4 takes a noncommittal stance on the poem's date in his edition, and is mostly concerned with the early 20th century debate over the possibility of Cynewulfian authorship of the poem.

¹⁶ Text of the *De Ave Phoenixe* from Brandt and Laubmann. Translations are the author's. The attribution of the poem to Lactantius was first made by Gregory of Tours in chapter 12 of his *De Cursu Stellarum* but is also supported by the testimony of other medieval writers and many of the poem's manuscripts. See Blake 18 for a full list. For the most recent discussion of the *De Ave*'s authorship, see Steen chapter 3.

¹⁷ See Blake 33 on the poem's intertextuality. *pace* Blake 89 n.591, which finds a "slight harshness" in the presence of multiple meanings in the poem's second half.

poet's stylistic choices, so often inspired by the *De Aue* itself, allow him to create a textured allegory that greatly expands the symbolic potential of his source.

This Latinate exegetical approach is tempered by a distinctively Anglo-Saxon poetic sensibility, manifested in the *Phoenix* poet's artful use of repetition throughout his poem. The ability to vary words, "wordum wrixlan," has long been recognized as a hallmark of Old English poetic skill.¹⁸ John Leyerle gave further specificity to the concept of variation when he coined the term "interlace" in his influential article on *Beowulf* (Leyerle 148).¹⁹ It did not take scholars long to notice that the *Phoenix* displays the same kind of "wrixled" artistry.²⁰ That perception is confirmed by the poet's description of the phoenix shortly after its rebirth in the flames:

Is se fugel fæger forweard hiwe,
bleobrygdum fag ymb þa breost foran.
Is him þæt heafod hindan grene
wrætlice wrixleð wurman geblonden.
(*Phoenix* 291-4)

The bird is beautiful on its front, spotted with a variety of colors on its breast. Its head is green in the back, marvellously varied ("wrixled") and spotted with purple.

In this passage, variety gives rise to beauty: the phoenix is both "bleobrygdum fag" and "wrætlice wrixleð," "spotted with a variety of colors" and "marvellously varied."

The phoenix's splendor comes from the play of colors, artfully mixed by the poet.

¹⁸ The phrase "wordum wrixlan" is famously used in *Beowulf* 874a to describe a scop's composition of a poem.

¹⁹ Patenall 105-6 gives a short history of the way scholars have used serpentine decoration in art as a metaphor for Anglo-Saxon poetic syntax.

²⁰ Patenall 105-116 demonstrates the applicability of Leyerle's ideas to the *Phoenix*. In addition to describing the artistry of the *Phoenix* poet, Patenall argues that the interlace suspends narrative time in this passage, creating something more akin to a piece of visual art than a piece of narrative poetry.

But variation is much more than a visual principle for the *Phoenix*'s author; it characterizes his entire poem, from his choice of words to his use of Latin sources to the content of his allegory. The grace with which the poet knits together his interlace, weaving words with words and signs with signs, speaks to a sense of closeness to and familiarity with the Latin literary tradition.

Scholars have long recognized that the *Phoenix* is a deeply intertextual poem. The texts most frequently adduced as sources for the poem are the *Physiologus*, a sort of allegorical bestiary, and a passage from Ambrose's *Hexameron* in which he allegorizes the phoenix's rebirth as a symbol of the resurrection of man.²¹ The *Physiologus* in particular is a convincing parallel, since it supplies a model for the *Phoenix*'s two-part structure: each *Physiologus* entry consists of a short description of an animal, followed by an allegorical explanation of its characteristics. The fact that the *Exeter Book* contains three so-called "physiologus poems," *The Whale*, *The Panther* and *The Partridge*, makes a connection between the *Physiologus* and the *Phoenix* even more likely.

Though it seems unlikely that the *Phoenix* poet was not influenced in some way by the *Physiologus* tradition, the *Phoenix* is literature of a different order. The *Physiologus* entries are short and to the point, their allegories simple and direct. None of them display the technical or allegorical complexity of the second part of the *Phoenix*. For this reason, it is important to realize that the *Physiologus* texts are only some among very many analogues of this complex poem: it is misleading to

²¹ On the *Physiologus* and its relationship to the Old English *Phoenix*, see the entry on the *Phoenix* in Calder and Allen; McFadden, O'Donnell, and Drout. On the *Hexameron* as a source for the *Phoenix*, see Blake 20-1.

reduce the *Phoenix* to the combination of the *De Ave* and the *Physiologus*, or to suggest the two have similar approaches towards allegory.²²

In addition to the *Hexameron* and the *Physiologus*, scholars have suggested several other Latin texts as possible sources for the *Phoenix*: the Latin poem *De Die Iudicii*, Psalm 101, and the Biblical book of Job.²³ A recent article by E.K.C. Gorst also lays out evidence for the influence of the Christian Latin poets Avitus, Dracontius, and Corippus (Gorst 136-42). The range of sources which have plausibly been proposed suggests the education and ingenuity of the *Phoenix* poet, grounded in a deep knowledge of Latin poetry and exegetical works.

It is the goal of this chapter to demonstrate how the *Phoenix's* unity and allegorical message depend on the poet's immersion in the Latin literary tradition. This familiarity gives rise to the poem's distinguishing characteristics: a fine aesthetic sense, close attention to the formal properties of its source, a learned intertextual bent, and a willingness to entertain multiple meanings. The first two of these qualities are most obvious in the first half of the poem, the part translated from the *De Ave*, though the poet's knack for memorable imagery and sound-play shows itself throughout. The second two, both concerned with the poet's approach to symbolism, are more highly developed in the poem's second half, though again the poet does not confine his intertextual impulse too narrowly.

²² O'Donnell, who reads the *Phoenix* as essentially a versified *Physiologus* text based on the *De Ave*, is one example of this kind of reductive thinking. Though his point about generic translation is well-taken, the *Phoenix* does not belong to the genre of the *Physiologus*--it is something quite different. See Faraci for a similar suggestion.

²³ See Blake 19-20 for the possibility that *De Die Iudicii* is a source. For Psalm 101 as a possible source for the *Phoenix*, see Pulsiano. On Job's importance in the poem, see Blake 21 and Bjork *passim*.

A true appreciation of the *Phoenix* poet's Latinity must of necessity begin with his source, the *De Ave Phoenice*. The *De Ave* is a complex and ornate poem in its own right, one whose merit is often overlooked due to the sad chance that it falls between disciplinary boundaries, written too late to be of interest to most Classicists and too early for most medievalists.²⁴ The poem has had its readers, of course, many of them Anglo-Saxonists, but its virtuosity has not been much appreciated. Its formal qualities have mostly taken a back seat to the question of its authorship and the related debate over whether or not it was a Christian poem.²⁵

The crux of the debate is that the poem does not display any overt signs of Christianity, though the phoenix was a popular Christian metaphor for the resurrection.²⁶ If Lactantius did write the *De Ave*, the argument goes, he must have done so before he converted to Christianity, or else he would have made more of the phoenix's potential for Christian symbolism (Blake 18). That argument has been of particular interest to Anglo-Saxonists, many of whom see the *Phoenix* poet's primary achievement as having "Christianized" his source.²⁷

Whether or not Lactantius wrote the poem, and whether he wrote it before or after his conversion, manuscript evidence indicates that the *De Ave* was generally

²⁴ For a helpful discussion of the *De Ave*'s rhetoric, see Stock *passim*.

²⁵ Blake 22-3 provides a useful summary of the debate over the poem's authorship, which is mostly concerned with refuting the possibility of Cynewulfian authorship. For a recent argument in favor of Cynewulfian authorship, see Orchard, "Style".

²⁶ Both Ambrose and Gregory of Tours explain the phoenix as a figure of the human resurrection: see Ambrose, *Hexameron* V, 79-80 and Gregory of Tours, *De Cursu Stellarum* 12. The Greek physiologus allegorizes the phoenix's rebirth as the resurrection of Christ (Blake 90 n.652 ff.). Steen 37 argues from evidence internal to the poem that the *De Ave* implicitly equates the phoenix with Christ.

²⁷ e.g. Blake 27, "He [the *Phoenix* poet] made his work explicitly Christian and tried to relate it to the Old English heroic background, as exemplified in earlier poetry. Consequently, anything that was alien to either of these two aims was omitted."

read as a Christian poem. Blake notes that the earliest copy of the *De Ave* survives in a manuscript of poetry written by Venantius Fortunatus, an important Christian poet (Blake 17). More specific to its Anglo-Saxon reputation, the two copies of the *De Ave* known to have been in Anglo-Saxon England survive in manuscripts of other well-known Christian poems: Cambridge University Library Gg 5.35 is a long compendium of Christian Latin poetry, and the *De Ave* is nestled comfortably between Prudentius and Boethius. The other manuscript of the *De Ave*, Oxford Bodleian Library Auctarium F.2.14, also includes Prudentius' *Dittochaeon*, Theodulus' *Eclogues* and the metrical life of St. Swithun (Gneuss 27, 90; Lapidge, *Library* 319). Though this evidence is circumstantial, it speaks to a general perception in the ninth and tenth centuries that the *De Ave* was a Christian poem.

The *Phoenix* poet may not have created the poem's Christian meaning, but he did expand it greatly, stretching it to include several allegorical and typological associations not present in the source. But the allegory of the *Phoenix* has its roots in the language and imagery of the *De Ave*, which uses elaborate language to highlight the mystery of the phoenix's resurrection. In that respect, the *De Ave* is very much a product of its time--the poem's language reveals its affinities with the Jeweled Style of Late Antiquity, a style that emphasises formal virtuosity and ornate visual imagery. Though any number of passages from the poem would serve to illustrate this point, the description of the reborn phoenix most exemplifies the Jeweled Style:

Albicat insignis mixto viridante zmaragdo
Et puro cornu gemmea cuspis hiat.
Ingentes oculi, credas geminos hyacinthos,
Quorum de medio lucida flamma micat.

Aptata est rutilo capiti radiata corona
Phoebei referens verticis alta decus.
Crura tegunt squamae fulvo distincta metallo,
Ast ungues roseo tinguit honore color.
Effigies inter pavonis mixta figuram
Cernitur et pictam Phasidis inter avem.
(*De Ave* 135-44)

[the phoenix] shines, marked out by the mixed green of emerald, and a gemmed tip opens on its flawless beak. You would think its large eyes to be twin hyacinths, from whose centers a bright flame shines. A radiant crown is fitted for its crimson head, reflecting the high glory of Phoebus' head. Scales cover its legs tinted with gold, but color shades its claws with rosy glamour. Its appearance seems to be that of the peacock mixed with the painted bird of Phasis [i.e., the parrot].

The poet's description of the phoenix here follows the downward movement of the eye, beginning at the beak, then moving to the eyes, head and finally the legs and talons (Steen 65). The reader is thus forced to take the phoenix in at a glance, marveling at the bird's splendor as his "gaze" moves down its body. This orderly visual progression is characteristic of the Jeweled Style, exemplified in Roberts' book by the following passage from the *Heptateuch* of Cyprianus Gallus:

Sardia prima loco, topazo adiuncta smaragdus;
sapphirus hanc sequitur, cum qua carbunculus ardet,
iaspisque viret fulvoque intermicat auro:
tertia ligurio sedes: hic iunctus achati
atque amethysto, fulgens quem purpura tingit.
Chrysolithus quartus, berillo adnexus onychnus.²⁸
(*Hept. E* 1098-1103)

First in position is the carnelian, and the emerald along with the topaz; then comes the sapphire, with which the carbuncle blazes, and the jasper is green and shines with tawny gold. Third place is taken by amber, and along with it the agate and amethyst, with its bright purple hue. Fourth the chrysolite, and onyx next to beryl.

²⁸ text and translation cited in Roberts 10.

Roberts describes this passage as "a paradigm for poetic excellence, as understood in late antiquity" (Roberts 12). Its distinctive structure is a regular framework filled with dazzling variation, just as Aaron's breastplate is a grid made up of different precious stones: "it is just this regularity of outline, and brilliance and variation in detail, that the period most prized. A poet won admiration for skill in handling such restricted virtuoso passages and consequently sought to incorporate such passages into his work" (Roberts 12). The visual progression in the passage from the *De Ave* serves the same function as the grid structure in the *Heptateuch*, providing a framework in which the individual descriptive elements may sparkle, their rhetorical ornamentation matching the splendor of the precious objects they describe.

The poet of the *De Ave* does not fail to deliver his share of brilliant details. Lines 135 and 136 display a chiasmic structure, with the verbs outermost, then the nominative nouns and adjectives, all enclosing the distinguishing features in the ablative:

Verb Nom. Abl. Abl. Abl. Abl. Abl. Nom. Nom. Verb.
 Albicat insignis mixto viridante zmaragdo/ Et puro cornu gemmea cuspis hiat.

The fact that the phoenix's distinguishing features are set off by the syntax of the line dramatizes the poet's claim that the bird is "insignis," "marked out," by its gem-like colors. Line 137 is a golden line, also a kind of enclosing structure: two noun-

adjective pairs joined in the middle by a verb. Such lines were relatively rare and highly prized in Latin verse:²⁹

Adj. Noun Verb Adj. Noun
Ingentes oculi, credas geminos hyacinthos

The preponderance of long syllables in the first half of line 138 ("quorum de medio") contrasts with the quick movement of the pentameter's second half ("lucida flamma micat") and dramatizes the flames which shine from the bird's eyes, drawing the reader in to the description of the crown in the next two lines. Line 142 is very nearly a golden line as well—the structure is spoiled only by the conjunction ("ast") and a noun out of place ("honore").

The density of this passage, the way these jewels of rhetorical artistry are set into the framework of the travelling gaze, shows the author of the *De Ave* to be a devotee of the Jeweled Style of Late Antique poetry. The poet's command of the Jeweled Style is particularly well-displayed by the many catalogues in the poem, which gave the *De Ave*'s author the opportunity to show off his eye for detail. The catalogue is a rhetorical device with roots in the Classical period, common in Vergil and Ovid, that gained much popularity in Late Antiquity:³⁰

A recurrent feature of late antique poetry is the enumeration, catalog, or list. Enumerations were valued because they provided a regular framework for the poet to diversify by the techniques of polychromatic variation, the preeminent activity of the poet in late antiquity (Roberts 59).

²⁹ See Bede, *De Arte Metrica* 102-104. The first two examples of Bede's "best kinds of dactylic verse" are golden lines. Though Bede postdates the *De Ave*, his testimony is valuable insofar as it reveals the tastes of an educated Anglo-Saxon audience.

³⁰ See Curtius 285-7 for a short discussion of the late Classical and Medieval enthusiasm for catalogues.

The Latin poet's love for learned catalogues manifests itself at various points in the poem, but the catalogue of herbs the phoenix uses to make its nest is probably the most elaborate example:³¹

Construit inde sibi seu nidum sive sepulcrum:
Nam perit, ut vivat, se tamen ipsa creat.
Colligit hinc sucos et odores divite silva,
Quos legit Assyrius, quos opulentes Arabs,
Quos aut Pygmeae gentes aut India carpit
Aut molli generat terra Sabaea sinu,
Cinnamon hinc auramque procul spirantis amomi
Congerit et mixto balsama cum folio:
Non casiae mitis nec olentis vimen acanthi
Nec turis lacrimae guttaque pinguis abest.
His addit teneras nardi pubentis aristas
Et sociam myrrae vim, panacea, tuam.
(*De Ave* 77-88)

Then she builds for herself a nest and a tomb: for she dies that she might live, indeed she creates herself. Here she brings juices and herbs from the thick forest, those which the Assyrian gathers, which the rich Arab culls, which the Pygmean and Indian tribes pluck, or which the Sabaeian land produces from its tender bosom. In this place she piles up cinnamon, and the scent of the far-penetrating amomum, and balsam with mixed leafage; nor is there missing the twig of the mild cassia or that of aromatic acanthus, nor the tears and pungent drop of the frankincense. To these she adds tender ears of young spikenard, and your strength, Panacea, allied with myrrh.

In this case the "polychromatic variation" Roberts describes comes in the form of a list of herbs, their origins and specific qualities. Such catalogues are characterized throughout the poem by anaphora (the repetition of "nec," "non," and "quos" are most obvious), as well as generally heavy use of connectives.³² The metrical challenge of incorporating mostly foreign names into a line of Latin verse only increases the difficulty, and therefore the accomplishment, of composing such a

³¹ The other catalogues in the poem appear at ll. 15-24, 47-50, and 70-76.

³² See Steen 43-7 for a discussion of anaphora in the *De Ave* and the *Phoenix*. It is worth noting that all her evidence comes from the catalogues in the poems.

passage. Note the metrical contrast between lines 80 and 81, the dactylic "quos legit Assyrius, quos opulentes Arabs" and the spondaic "quos aut Pygmeae gentes aut India carpit." The sudden change from the dynamism of the dactylic line to the heaviness of the spondaic verse helps each line, each detail to stand on its own, distinct within the framework of the catalogue.

Lines 77 and 78 of the catalogue of herbs demonstrate another feature of the *De Ave's* rhetoric, one that is of pivotal importance for the poem's Christian meaning. That is the poet's love for paradox, which highlights the mystery of resurrection at the heart of the phoenix myth. In 77-78, the poet juxtaposes bed and tomb, life and death to call attention to that mystery: "construit inde sibi seu nidum sive sepulcrum:/ Nam perit, ut vivat, se tamen ipsa creat."

Here the poet suspends the opposites "nidum" and "sepulcrum" in a "seu...sive" construction, placing the two nouns next to one another to heighten the contrast. The frequent use of reflexives ("sibi," "se," "ipse") also serves the poet's purpose, calling attention to the oddly reflexive nature of the phoenix's actions. Finally, the juxtaposition of "perit" and "vivat" drives the paradox home, heightened by the leonine rhyme "vivat...creat".

As the example of lines 77 and 78 shows, paradox in the *De Ave* is more than just a rhetorical device. It is an artistic principle that governs the poet's meaning as much as it does his words. The paradoxical language speaks to the paradox at the heart of the poem, the phoenix's fiery death and resurrection. Significantly, the poet does not attach a specific gloss to the story, but is instead content to hold it up for examination, illuminating different facets of the phoenix myth with carefully-crafted

language. The potential for Christian symbolism is always present in the poem, but the poet never commits to a specific interpretation or allegorical scheme, perhaps out of a desire to preserve the mystery of the resurrection as something to be appreciated and contemplated rather than dissected and understood.

The poet's description of the phoenix's death is another passage that demonstrates the importance of paradox in the poem. It shows how rhetorical and syntactical complexity highlight the paradox of the phoenix's "genitali morte," "generative death":

Protinus instructo corpus mutabile nido
Vitalique toro membra vieta locat.
Ore dehinc sucos membris circumque supraque
Inicit exsequiis inmoritura suis.
Tunc inter varios animam commendat odores,
Depositum tanti nec timet illa fidem.
Interea corpus genitali morte peremptum
Aestuat et flammam parturit ipse calor,
Aetherioque procul de lumine concipit ignem:
Flagrat et ambustum solvitur in cineres.
(*De Ave* 89-98)

Immediately she places her changeable body on the prepared nest, her ancient limbs on the life-giving bed. Then she sprinkles juices around and on top of her limbs with her mouth, conducting her own funeral rites as she dies. Next she commends her soul among various perfumes, and does not fear the trust of such a great sacrifice. Meanwhile her body, snatched away by a generative death, grows hot, and the very heat gives birth to flame; she catches fire far removed from the ethereal light [i.e., the sun]: she burns, and, once burned, dissolves into ashes.

The phrase "genitali morte," "generative death," leaps out as an instance of paradox, but the whole passage is obscure in one way or another. The poet again uses the reflexive pronoun in line 92 to highlight the way the phoenix performs its own

funeral rites, "exsequiis suis." Perhaps the most puzzling part of this passage, though, is the description of the phoenix's combustion, lines 96-98.

The puzzle here hinges on the proper translation of "procul." If it means "far from" in the sense of "so far the sun cannot contribute its heat," then what we have is a case of spontaneous combustion. If, on the other hand, it means that the heat creates fire with the sun's help *even though* it is far away, then the phoenix's combustion is the result of some cooperation between it and the source of heat, the "aetherium lumen."

I favor the first reading, as it seems to me more in line with the poet's choice to showcase the mystery of the phoenix's death: a case of spontaneous combustion is a mystery, while the fact that the sun produces heat is not. The mystery of how the phoenix catches fire underscores the more important mystery in the passage, the fact of its "genitali morte": "generative," or "life-giving death." Just like "se tamen ipsa creat" in the catalogue of herbs, "genitali morte" is a highly suggestive phrase. Though the phrase cannot be proven to have a Christian meaning within the *De Ave*, it is all too easy to imagine the Crucifixion as a "genitalis mors."

Nowhere is the paradox of the phoenix more apparent, or more significant, than in the final lines of his poem, where the poet summarizes the mystery of the phoenix's resurrection in dazzling style:

At fortunatae sortis finisque volucrem,
Cui de se nasci praestitit ipse deus!
Femina se sexu se mas est sive neutrum,
Felix quae Veneris foedera nulla colit.
Mors illi Venus est, sola est in morte voluptas:
Ut possit nasci, appetit ante mori.
Ipsa sibi proles, suus est pater et suus heres,
Nutrix ipsa sui, semper alumna sibi.

Ipsa quidem, sed non eadem est, eademque nec ipsa est,
Aeternum vitam mortis adepta bono.
(*De Ave* 160-170)

O bird of blessed fate and death, to whom God ("ipse deus") granted to be born from herself! Whether that bird is female or male or neither, she is happy because she cultivates no bonds with Venus. Death is her Venus, her sole pleasure is in death: in order that she might be born, she hastens to die. She is her own offspring, her own father and her own heir, her own nurse and her own grandchild. Herself indeed, but not the same, and the same but not herself, having laid hold of eternal life through the good of death.

In these ten lines the poet highlights the mystery of the phoenix with phrases like "de se nasci", "mors illi Venus est," and the whole line "ut possit nasci appetit ante mori," another example of leonine rhyme. He deploys a short catalogue in lines 167-68, where he lists all the relationships the phoenix has to itself: it is its own offspring, father, heir, nurse, and child. As before, the preponderance of reflexive pronouns showcases the mystery at the heart of the phoenix myth.

The rhetorical flourish in 169 with the repetition of "ipsa" and "eadem" distills the series of relationships into a neat paradox, "the same but not the same," the impossibility of which is cast into relief by a line with no nouns, only pronouns, verbs and prepositions, paving the way for the ultimate paradox described in the last line of the poem: eternal life snatched from the jaws of death. That paradox, embodied in the myth of the phoenix, spurs the reader to contemplate one of the central mysteries of the Christian faith: God's gift of eternal life, ushered in by Christ's resurrection.³³

³³ See Steen 37-8 for her explanation of the Christian content of the *De Ave*. She argues that "while savouring its refined poetic art, the reader is drawn into accepting the allegorical truths hidden in its *obliquae figurationes*." Though I

It is clear that the *De Ave* gave its Anglo-Saxon translator much to work with, in terms of both form and content. But as the above analysis shows, it took a poet steeped in the traditions of Classical and Late Antique poetry to make the most of his source. The author of the *Phoenix* was clearly such a poet, whose sensitivity to Latin style was matched by his own poetic ambition. In his poem, the translator of the Old English *Phoenix* seeks to explore the whole range of possible meanings offered by the *De Ave*. The *De Ave* is content to illuminate the mystery of the phoenix's resurrection, allowing it to gleam like one of the gems in Aaron's breastplate, something to be admired and prized. The *Phoenix* poet, on the other hand, uses a network of allegorical associations to charge the phoenix myth with doctrinal and moral import, dispelling some of the story's mystery in favor of the edification of his audience.

The shift from the *De Ave* to the *Phoenix* requires a corresponding shift of visual metaphor, from the gridlike regularity of Aaron's breastplate to the serpentine decoration of the Sutton Hoo belt buckle, typical of Anglo-Saxon metalwork.³⁴ While the *De Ave* locates moments of rhetorical brilliance within a regular framework, describing one thing in dazzling detail before moving on to the next, the *Phoenix* weaves words together, constantly recapitulating and revisiting words, images and ideas. This process begins on a small scale, in the description of the phoenix's homeland at the beginning of the poem, and ends with the densely

sympathize with her aim, as well as her conviction that the *De Ave* is a "deeply Christian" (38), I do not think that the *De Ave* is a poem primarily about Christian doctrine.

³⁴ See Campbell 32 for an illustrative picture.

woven allegory of the poem's second half, capped by a final virtuoso passage in which the poet weaves together half-lines of Latin and Old English.

Lines 7-27 of the *Phoenix* display the ingenuity and range of the Anglo-Saxon poet, his proficiency in his own poetic style. The most distinguishing features of this passage are rhyme and anaphora (in the catalogue at 14b-20a), both of which seem to derive from the rhetoric of Lactantius, and a pattern of interlace that is all his own.³⁵ The first two devices are familiar from the *De Ave*, but the interlace is the Anglo-Saxon poet's response, and deserves careful attention.

The interlace in this passage is fairly loose; elements are not repeated until several lines have passed. Lines 7-14a show the pattern as it begins to emerge:

Wlitig is se **wong** eall, *wynnum* geblissad
mid þam fægrestum foldan stencum.
Ænlic is þæt iglond, æþele se wyrhta,
modig, meahtum spedig, se þa moldan gesette.
Ðær bið oft open eadgum togeanes
onhliiden hleopra *wyn*, heofonrices duru.
Þæt is *wynsum* **wong**, wealdas grene,
rume under roderum.
(*Phoenix* 7-14a, emphasis mine)

The whole plain is blessed, adorned with joys, with the fairest perfumes of the world. That island stands alone, noble was the maker, mindful, great in his power, who set it on the Earth. There the door of Heaven is often open together with the blessed...

"Wong" is repeated twice, and the half-line "ænlic is þæt iglond," "that island is unique," parallels, in both syntax and meaning, the half-line "wlitig is se wong," "the plain is beautiful." Thus, within these seven lines, the poet has interwoven three half-line descriptions of the paradise, differing in their language, but the same in

³⁵ Patenall argues that the interlace suspends narrative time in this passage, creating something more akin to a piece of visual art than a piece of narrative poetry (108-9).

their essential characterization. He has also played, with more variation, on the idea of "wyn," "joy." Though he never repeats himself exactly, he uses three different forms of the word (or a derivative) throughout the passage. In two of those cases, moreover, "wyn" occurs next to "wong," repeatedly strengthening the reader's association of the earthly paradise with joy.

Line 14b ushers in the catalogue, which continues until line 20a. The interlace does not stop, though, but ties lines 20b-27 with 7-14a:

...Is þæt æþele lond

blostmum geblowen. Beorgas þær ne muntas
steape ne stondað, ne stanclifu
heah hlifiað, swa her mid us,
ne dene ne dalu ne duncrafu,
hlæwas ne hlincas, ne þær hleonað oo
unsmepes wiht, ac **se æþele feld**
wridað under wolcnum, *wynnum geblowen.*
(*Phoenix* 20b-27)

...that noble land is covered with blossoms. Steep hills and mountains do not stand there, nor do stone cliffs tower on high, as they do here among us, nor are there hills or valleys or dark caves, mounds or ridges, nor does any iota of unsmoothness shelter there, but the noble field flourishes under the heavens, covered in joys.

This passage includes two more half-lines describing the nature of the paradise:

here it is "æþele," "noble," which connects it to the "æþele wyrhta" of line 9. As the creator is noble, so is his creation. In line 26 the connection is reinforced by the "æþele feld." "Wyn" returns in line 27 as "wynnum geblowen," which itself transforms "blostmum geblowen" from 21a. "Geblowen," which means "covered," develops the sense of joy from lines 7-14a: paradise is not just associated with joy, it is abundantly *blooming* with joy, and that joy is symbolized physically by the "blostmum" of line 21. These last lines also repeat the rhetoric of the catalogue passage which is characterized (among other things) by a profusion of "ne"'s.

The use of interlace in these lines allows the Anglo-Saxon poet to mediate between his source and his audience, the traditions of Latin rhetoric and "wrixled" composition in Old English. The recursive nature of the technique also primes his audience to be alert for verbal echoes and the repetition of ideas in new and slightly different form, subtle cues he will use to knit together his allegory in the poem's second half.

The interlace is not confined solely to this passage—these same words and themes appear again later in the poem. Lines 33a-34a, "smylte is se sigewong; sunbearo lixeð,/ wuduholt wynlic" contain the same collocation of "wong" and "wyn"; 43b refers to "se æþela wong." The pervasiveness of the interlace helps to set off the catalogue in 14b-20a, which is deeply indebted to the Latin source:

...ne mæg þær regn ne snaw,
ne forstes fnæst, ne fyres blæst,
ne hægles hryre, ne hrimes dryre,
ne sunnan hætu, ne sincaldu,
ne wearm weder, ne winterscur
wihte gewyrdan, ac se wong seomað
eadig ond onsund.
(*Phoenix* 14b-20a)

Nor may rain or snow, the chill of frost or the blast of fire, the downpour of hail or the cold of ice, the heat of the sun or everlasting cold, warm weather or winter storms, exist at all there, but the plain endures, blessed and inviolate.

These lines from the *Phoenix* are a translation of *De Ave* 15-24, the Latin poet's catalogue of ills absent from paradise:

Non huc exsanguis morbi non aegra senectus,
Nec mors crudelis nec metus asper adest,
nec scelus infandum nec opum vesana cupido
aut ira aut ardens caedis amore furor:
luctus acerbus abest et egestas obsita pannis
et curae insomnes et violenta fames.

Non ibi tempestas nec vis furit horrida venti
nec gelido terram rore pruina tegit,
Nulla super campos tendit sua vellera nubes,
nec cadit ex alto turbidus umor aquae.
(*De Ave* 15-24)

No debilitating disease or bitter old age come to this place. Neither is cruel death or harsh fear present, nor unspeakable crime, nor the mad desire of wordly goods, or rage, or fury burning with the love of slaughter. Harsh grief is absent, and the hunger of lacking bread, sleepless cares and raging hunger. No storm comes there, nor does the frightful power of the winds rage, nor does frost cover the earth with its cold blanket. No clouds stretch their veils across those fields, nor does torrential rain fall from on high.

The Old English and Latin poems follow the same basic structure. Each line contains two negatives ("nec" or "non"), the first at the beginning of the line and the second after a caesura.³⁶ The lines from the *De Ave* are also strongly spondaic, with five (out of a possible five) spondees in the first line and two out of two in the second line. The third line moves a bit faster, but still contains three out of a possible five spondees.

Spondaic lines would have been a challenge to the Anglo-Saxon poet. The heaviness of a spondaic line is not something an Anglo-Saxon poet can produce by metrical means alone; the limitation on stressed syllables and the difference between quantitative and qualitative verse force him to augment the meter with some other rhetorical device to achieve the same effect. In the case of lines 14b-20a, he achieves it with rhyme, which imparts a plodding, sing-song quality to the first four lines. The first two full lines rhyme internally ("fnæst" and "blæst"; "hryre" and "dryre"), and "scur" in 18 continues the "hryre/dryre" rhyme. Lines 15 and 16 are

³⁶ In line 15 the second "non" does not occur after the strong caesura in the third foot, but it does occur after a caesura in the fourth foot. In 16 and 17, the second negative word occurs after the strong caesura.

also metrically identical, Sievers B-types with the minimum number of syllables possible.³⁷

In conjunction with the rhyme, the meter reproduces the spondaic quality of the Latin in Old English. Just like the Latin poet, though, the Old English poet moves swiftly away from regularity, perhaps afraid to overdo the effect. Line 17a is a B-type, but with an extra unstressed syllable at the end, and 17b is a C-type. 18a is a C-type, 18b a B-type, and the poet introduces A-types in lines 19 and 20a. This innovative solution to the problem of dealing with Latin meter is further evidence of the *Phoenix* poet's comfort with and appreciation of the Latin language.

The same type of catalogue appears twice more in the *Phoenix*, at lines 50-64a and again at 134-39. Both catalogues also translate sections of the Latin source (lines 21-24 and 49-50, respectively). It is interesting to note that, though he relies on it several times in the first, "translated" part of the poem, the poet uses only one catalogue in the second half. This fact suggests that the *Phoenix* poet recognized the significance of the catalogue as a rhetorical technique in the *De Awe*, its importance as a component of the poem's jeweled style. These other catalogues display the same degree of ornamentation and rhetorical complexity as the first. Lines 54-57 show the same attention to meter and sound quality as 14b-20a:

ne synn ne sacu ne sarwracu,
ne wædle gewin ne welan onsyn,
ne sorg ne slæp ne swar leger,

³⁷ The Anglo-Saxonist aiming to describe the meter of a line of poetry has his choice of many different metrical systems. There is a widespread, if not general, agreement that those systems based on Sievers' five types are the most useful for critics who are not themselves metricists, even if other systems may be more theoretically elegant. Bliss and Pope both offer updated versions of Sievers' system, and my own metrical analysis follows in that tradition.

ne wintergeweorp, ne wedra gebregd
(*Phoenix* 54-57)

neither sin nor strife nor sore affliction, the struggle with want nor the arrival of woe, neither sorrow nor sleep nor bitter disease, nor the onset of winter nor the vicissitudes of the weather.

Though this is not the entire catalogue, these lines best demonstrate the poet's use of rhyme (sacu/wracu, gewin/onsyn), polysyndeton with "ne," and his interest in metrical patterning: lines 54-56 all use the same metrical strategy of a B-type followed by a C type, contrasting the relatively gentle iambic meter with the discordant juxtaposition of stressed syllables in the C type. Line 57 is composed of two B types, each with exactly one additional unstressed syllable (in the form of the prefix "ge") in the second foot. The two half-lines are also perfect syntactical parallels, allowing for the fact that word divisions within compounds are modern editorial decisions.

The catalogue in 134-139, which demonstrates the singular nature of the phoenix's song, does not fit the pattern quite so well, but it displays the same characteristics to a lesser degree:

Ne magon þam breahrtme buman ne hornas,
ne hearpan hlyn, ne hæleþa stefn
ænges on eorþan, ne organan,
sweghleopres geswin, ne swanes feðre,
ne ænig þara dreama þe dryhten gescop
gumum to gliwe in þas geomran woruld.
(*Phoenix* 134-9)

Nor may the bright trumpet nor horns, the sound of the harp or the voice of any man on Earth, nor the organ, the sound of a sweet voice, nor the swan's feather, nor any of the joys which God shaped for man's pleasure in this grim world.³⁸

³⁸ The "swan's feather" is here included in a catalogue of musical instruments because the Anglo-Saxons believed that swans made music from the movement of

Again we see the polysyndeton with "ne," though it does not occur as regularly as in the previous examples. There is no rhyme, excepting the homoioteleuton of "eorþan" and "organan" in 136. The meter is not nearly as regular, though 134 and 135 have 3 B types out of 4 half lines. The passage as a whole uses mostly A and B types, preferring the gentle alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables to the other, more strident options.

The care devoted to describing the phoenix's song is symptomatic of the importance of sound throughout the poem. This is another way in which the *Phoenix* elaborates on its source: the Jeweled Style relies heavily on visual imagery, rhetorical set-pieces describing beautiful objects like Aaron's breastplate or the jeweled phoenix, and the *De Aue* is very much a poem in the visual mode. "Wrixlan," though, can refer to oral composition as well as visual: it is a term often applied to oral performance.³⁹ And though the *Phoenix* poet imbues his poem with a great deal of visual beauty, he emphasizes song and sound even more than sight.

The catalogue examined above is part of a longer description of the phoenix's musical performance that occupies lines 120-142a, a section that is set off from the rest of the poem by a doubled envelope pattern.⁴⁰ Lines 120-124 paint a memorable picture of the phoenix saluting the rising sun in song:

sona swa seo sunne sealte streamas
 hea oferhlifiað, swa se haswa fugel
 beorht of þæs bearwes beame gewiteð,

their feathers as they flew. For another instance of the image in Anglo-Saxon riddle, see *Exeter Book* riddle 7 in Williamson.

³⁹ See Bosworth and Toller s.v. "wrixlan."

⁴⁰ For a discussion of envelope patterns as components of rhetorical set pieces in Old English poetry, see Clark 263-4.

fareð feðrum snell flyhte on lyfte,
swinsað ond singað swegle toheanes.

As soon as the sun climbs above the salt streams, then the pale bird flies away, bright, from the tree in the forest, travels, swift-feathered, in flight in the sky, raises its voice and sings together with the sun.

Much of this language is repeated when the phoenix's song is done, as the poet describes the setting of the sun: "singeð swa ond swinsað sælum geblissad/ oþþæt seo sunne on suðrodor/ sæged weorþeð"; "so [the phoenix] raises its voice and sings, blessed in its soul, until the sun goes to its rest in the southern part of the sky."

In addition to the word "sunne," found nowhere else in the poem, these two passages share the entire line "swinsað on singað swegle toheanes." While the repetition of half-lines is common in Old English poetry, the repetition of entire lines is relatively rare. That doubled envelope pattern marks this passage out as especially significant, a fact whose importance will become apparent during the investigation of the allegory in the poem's second half.

These examples from the first part of the poem illustrate the *Phoenix* poet's sensitivity to the language of his source, and his ability to recast the Jeweled Style of the *De Ave* in his own, "wrixled" style. The interwoven language in the first half of the poem sets the stage for an interwoven allegory in the second half, as the poet develops the phoenix's symbolic relationships to the souls of the blessed, Job, and Christ himself, making the bird into a symbol of both the human resurrection and the divine.

The poet's exegetical method is hardly straightforward, though—there is not always a one-to-one correspondance between events in the poem's first half and

explanations in the second. At points he does reveal the significance of an image from the poem's first half: the explanation of the phoenix's journey in 424-7, or his detailed analysis of the meaning of the phoenix's nest in 429-90. Much of the poem, however, is devoted to scriptural parallels to the phoenix story: the blessed souls in 387-423, the resurrection of the dead at 491-545, the comparison with Job in 552-69, and the comparison to Christ in 646-654.

The effect of this intertextual strategy is to expand the phoenix story's range of meaning in the Old English poem. The phoenix sits at the center of a web of possible meanings, alternately symbolizing a blessed soul, Christ, Job, and one of the righteous men resurrected at the Last Judgment. These allegorical relationships are supported by other symbols: the Ambrosian allegory of the nest as a collection of righteous deeds, and the chorus of the blessed who sing praises to Christ. This selection of symbolic references gives the poem a moral edge its source lacks. The Latin poem is most keenly interested in the mystery of the phoenix's resurrection, a natural mystery that echoes the divine mystery of Christ's resurrection and, at points, the mystery of the trinity. The Old English *Phoenix* is much more concerned with the human element: Job as a type of the righteous man, willing to suffer during his life on Earth to inherit an eternal reward in heaven. The poet's incorporation of Ambrose's explanation of the nest as the sum of a man's good deeds strengthens this moral purpose. This combination of allegory and intertextuality makes the *Phoenix* a remarkable poem, very much unlike anything else in the corpus of Old English poetry.

As he turns from mythography to allegory in the poem's second half, the *Phoenix* poet interprets the story of the phoenix through a succession of five images: a blessed soul on Earth (ll.387-423), the phoenix's nest (ll.429-90), the resurrection at the Last Judgment (ll.491-545), Job (ll.552-69), and Christ (ll.646-54). He then concludes his poem with a final virtuoso act, the fusion of Latin and Old English verse into a 10-line macaronic prayer (ll.667-77). It is this collection of symbols that gives the poem its spiritual weight, and the poet's language as he describes them repays careful analysis.

The poet lays out the comparison between the phoenix and the soul of a blessed man quite clearly:

Pisses fugles gecynd fela gelices
bi þam gecornum Cristes þegnum
beacnað in burgum, hu hi beorhtne gefean
þurh Fæder fultum on þas frecnan tid
healdap under heofonum ond him heanne blæd
in þam uplican eðle gestrynaþ.
(*Phoenix* 387-92)

The type of this bird betokens many similar ones among Christ's chosen thanes in the cities, how they hold to bright joy under Heaven through the protection of the Father in this terrible time, and secure themselves high glory in the celestial homeland.

This explanation gives way to a brief summary of the creation of man, with a heavy emphasis on the guilt man has inherited due to the Fall: "hæfdon Godes yrre,/ bitre bealorsorge"; "they bore God's wrath, a bitter sorrow" (408b-409a). Though the mention of the Fall after the blessed souls may seem a *non sequitur*, it serves to establish the need for salvation, as the poet paints a bleak picture of a world in bondage to the Devil:

...Him wearð selle lif

heolstre bihyded ond se halga wong
þurh feondes searo fæste bityned
wintra mengu, oppæt Wuldorcynig,
þurh His hydercyme halgum toheanes
moncynnes Gefea, meþra Frefrend
ond se anga Hyht eft ontynde.
(417b-423)

The best life will be hidden from him (i.e., Man) in darkness and the holy plain (i.e., Paradise) shut fast by the fiend's deceit for many winters, until the King of Wonder, through his arrival together with the saints, the Joy of Man, Comforter of the Weary, and the sole Hope, opens it again.

This state of affairs, the poet tells us, is symbolized by the phoenix's journey through the world in its old age. Weighed down by wordly cares, it builds itself a nest, desperate for its rebirth through fire. Likewise we, if we desire a rebirth, need to make ourselves a dwelling place through our "halgum ðeawum" and "dædum domlicum," "holy customs" and "worthy deeds" (*Phoenix* 444b-45a)

That dwelling place, the surety of a heavenly reward, is symbolized by the phoenix's nest, neatly packaged by the poet inside a full-line envelope pattern:

Þær him neste wyrceð wið niþa gehwam
dædum domlicum dryhtnes cempa,
þonne he ælmešan earmum dæleð,
dugeþa leasum, ond him dryhten gecygd,
fæder on fultum, forð onetteð,
lænan lifes leahtras dwæscþ,
mirce mandæde, healdeð meotudes æ
beald in breostum, ond gebedu seceð
clænum gehygdum, ond his cneo bigeð
æþele to eorþan, flyhð yfla gehwylc,
grimme gieltas, for godes egsan,
glædmod gyrneð þæt he godra mæst
dæda gefremme; þam biþ drihten scyld
in siþa gehwane, sigora waldend,
weoruda wilgiefa. Þis þa wyrta sind,
wæstma blede, þa se wild fugel
somnað under swegle side ond wide
to his wicstowe, þær he wundrum fæst
wið niþa gehwam nest wyrceð.

(*Phoenix* 451-469)

There he creates a nest against all harmful things, God's champion, with his praiseworthy deeds, then he gives alms to the wretched, to the least of men, and God summons him, the Father into his protection, he hastens forth, destroys the sins of his transitory life, his evil sins. He holds the Lord's custom always, bold in his breast, and seeks his bed with pure thoughts, and nobly bends his knee to the earth; all evil things flee, grim crimes, for fear of God. Glad in mind he yearns that he might perform the most good deeds; for him God will be a shield in any tribulation, the ruler of victory, willing gift-giver of hosts. These are the herbs, the fruits and blossoms, which the wild bird gathers far and wide beneath heaven for his dwelling-place, where he, firm in wonders, makes a nest against all harmful things.

Formally, this passage is more elaborate than the description of the nest in 192b-215. The poet's frequent use of verbs to end lines (e.g., *dæleð*, *gecygð*, *onetteð*, and *dwæsceð* in 453-56) creates a sense of progress, a mounting up of actions that dramatizes the interpretation of the nest as a collection of deeds. He also uses a good deal of variation, as in 464-466 where he glosses "drihten" as "sigora waldend" and "weoruda wilgiefu." Here the Christian man on Earth is put in the phoenix's place, building his nest not out of sweet-smelling roots, but out of his good deeds, specifically the giving of alms mentioned in line 453. As in the phoenix story, this nest has a purifying function, purging the man of his past sins.

This interpretation of the phoenix myth comes, as I mentioned earlier, from Ambrose's *Hexameron*. Ambrose equates the phoenix with resurrection as follows: "Doceat igitur haec avis uel exemplo sui resurrectionem credere, quae sine exemplo et sine rationis perceptione ipsa sibi insignia resurrectionis instaurat"; "therefore this bird teaches [us] by its own example to believe in the resurrection, since it itself, without example and without the perception of reason, repeats the signs of the

resurrection" (Ambrose 196).⁴¹ Shortly thereafter, Ambrose makes it clear that he is discussing the human resurrection and not the resurrection of Christ by an appeal to his listeners to imitate the phoenix:

Fac et tu, homo, tibi thecam: expolians te ueterem hominem cum actibus suis nouum indue. Theca tua, uagina tua Christus est, qui te protegat et abscondat in die malo. Vis scire quia theca protectionis est? Pharetra inquit mea protexi eum. Theca ergo tua est fides; imple eam bonis uirtutum tuarum odoribus, hoc est castitatis, misericordiae atque iustitiae et in ipsa penetralia fidei suaui factorum praestantium odore redolentia totus ingredi (Ambrose 197-8).

O man, make a nest for yourself as well: as you throw off the old man along with his deeds, put on the new. Your nest, your sheath is Christ, who will protect you and hide you on the evil day. Do you wish to know what sort of protection the nest is? "With my quiver," he said, "I have protected him." The nest therefore is your faith; fill it with the good odors of your virtues, that is of chastity, of pity and of justice, and go forth wholly into that fortress of sweet faith redolent with the odor of [your] good deeds.

Ambrose understands the nest in the same way the *Phoenix* poet does, though he differs in a few particulars. Rather than almsgiving, he singles out chastity, pity and justice as the most important virtues. He also explicitly links the nest with faith, something the *Phoenix* poet does not do. Still, the allegory here follows the Ambrosian pattern: the phoenix is man, the nest his good deeds. When everything is consumed by fire at the end of days, the just man whose nest is secure will be reborn with eternal life, made new again by the power of God.

After the interpretation of the nest, the poet delivers his first moral message:

Swa nu in þam wicum willan fremmað,
mode ond mægne Meotudes cempan
mærða tilgað; þæs him meorde wile
Ece ælmihtig eadge forgildan.
(*Phoenix* 470-73)

⁴¹ Text of the *Hexameron* from Schenkl's edition. The relevant portion is reprinted in Blake, pp.96-7. Translation mine.

So now in your place do his will, champions of the Lord, with your wisdom and your strength, strive for glory; for this will the Eternal Almighty grant a reward to the blessed.

The command is simple enough, but its urgency depends on the carefully-crafted exegesis of the previous 100 lines. The story of the Fall, the grim characterization of the world, and the interpretation of the nest all support the message: man needs to strive for his salvation here on Earth, so he is purified, not consumed, in the fires of Judgment.

And it is those fires the poet describes next, as he connects the phoenix's death and rebirth to the Last Judgment:

Weorþeð anra gehwylc
forht on ferþþe þonne fyr briceð
læne londwelan, lig eal þigeð
eorðan æhtgestreon, æpplede gold
gifre forgripeð, grædig swelgeð
londes frætwe. Þonne on leoht cymeð
ældum þisses in þa openan tid
fæger ond gefealic fugles tacen,
þonne anwald eal up astellað,
of byrgenum ban gegædrað,
leomu lic somod ond lifes gæst
fore Cristes cneo. Cyning þrymlice,
of his heahsetle halgum scineð
wlitig wuldres gim. Wel bið þam þe mot
in þa geomran tid Gode lician.
(*Phoenix* 503-17)

Every one will go forth from this life when the fire destroys the transitory wealth of the world, the flames consume all the riches of the Earth, eagerly seizes dappled gold, greedily swallows the treasures of the land. Then in the light, in the time of revealing, the fair and joyful sign of this bird comes to men, when the Lord raises up all, gathers bones from the cities, body and limbs together with the spirit of life before the knee of Christ. The powerful king shines from his holy throne, a marvellous gem of wonder. It will be well for him who may please God in that woeful time.

In this passage the "fair and joyful sign of the bird" refers to the bodily resurrection, when men are reunited with their bodies to come before the throne of judgment. Again, the moralistic language is strong: "it will be well for him who may please God in that woeful time." At this point, the *Phoenix* poet has gone beyond Ambrose.

Though the idea that the fires that consume the phoenix's nest symbolize the fires of judgment is consonant with Ambrose's interpretation, Ambrose never makes that connection, ending instead with the example of St. Paul, who went to his rest secure in the nest of his good deeds: "intravit igitur thecam suam quasi bonus phoenix, quam bono replevit odore martyrii"; "therefore just like the phoenix he [i.e., Paul] entered his nest, which overflowed with the good odor of the martyr." As powerful an example as Paul is, Ambrose's tone is gentle, while the *Phoenix* poet's is harsh. Ambrose ends with the image of Paul at rest, having finished his race; the *Phoenix* poet gives us fire and brimstone, and a grim warning.

The poet continues in this vein for another twenty lines or so, further elaborating on the similarity between the phoenix's fiery death and man's fate on the Day of Judgment. Then, describing the end of the judgment, the poet returns to the image of the blessed souls, describing how they will sing in praise of their creator:

Þonne hleopriað halge gæstas,
sawla soðfæste song ahebbað
clæne ond gecorene, hergað Cyninges þrym
stefn æfter stefne, stigað to wuldre
wlitige gewyrtad mid hyra weldædum.
Beoð þonne amerede monna gæstas,
beorhte abywde þurh bryne fyres.
(*Phoenix* 539-45)

Then the holy spirits sing, souls confirmed in the truth, chosen and pure, raise up a song, praise the power of the King with voice upon voice, ascend to wonder beautifully perfumed with their good deeds. Then the spirits of men will be cleansed, brightly purified through the fire's burning.

The throng of the blessed singing to Christ returns later on the poem, in lines 611-617:

Ne bið him on þam wicum wiht to sorge,
wroht ne weþel ne gewindagas,
hungor se hata ne se hearda þurst,
yrmþu ne ylðo. Him se æþela Cyning
forgifeð goda gehwilc. Þær gæsta gedryht
Hælend hergað ond Heofoncyninges
meahte mærsiað, singað Metude lof.
(*Phoenix* 611-17)

Nor is there any sorrow for them [i.e., the blessed] in that place, misfortune nor poverty nor days of affliction, hot hunger or hard thirst, woe or old age. The noble King gives them every good thing. There the band of souls praises the Savior and glorifies the might of the King of Heaven, sings praises to the Lord.

The recurring motif of the blessed souls singing to Christ is another kind of interlace in the poem, as the image returns to impress itself upon the audience yet again. But the language of this second passage recalls the catalogue in lines 50-64, especially 614a, "yrmþu ne ylðo," which repeats 52a, "ylðu ne yrmðu." But the language of both passages has its root in a passage from the Revelation of St. John which describes those saved from among the Gentiles: "non esurient, neque sitient amplius; nec cadet super illos sol, neque ullus aestus: quoniam Agnus, qui in medio throni est, reget illos et deducet eos ad vitae fontes aquarum, et absterget Deus omnem lacrymam ab oculis eorum"; "they shall not hunger, nor shall they thirst anymore; nor will the sun fall on them, nor any other heat: for the Lamb, who is in the middle of the throne, rules over them and leads them down to fountains of the waters of life, and God removes every tear from their eyes" (Rev.7:16-17).

This example shows how the *Phoenix* poet, by linking the two halves of his poem through verbal repetition and rhetorical patterning, is able to draw the phoenix myth into the center of a tightly-woven web of Christian meaning, where repeated images of blessedness and holiness communicate the moral importance of the resurrection to the audience, and reveal the critical theological connection between Christ's resurrection from the tomb and the resurrection of man at the Last Judgment.

This is not the only such example, however. In fact, the *Phoenix* poet's most innovative exegetical move, one that weaves together allegory and rhetoric with the motif of song, is his description of Job's song, "Iobes gieddinga":

...Gehyrað witedom,
Iobes gieddinga. Þurh Gæstes blæd
breostum onbryrðed beald reordade,
wuldre geweorðad he þæt word gecwæð:
'Ic þæt ne forhycge heortan geþoncum
þæt ic in minum neste neobed ceose,
hæle hrawerig, gewite hean þonan
on longne sið lame bitolden
geomor gudæda in greotes fæðm,
ond þonne æfter deape þurh Dryhtnes giefe
swa se fugel fenix feorh edniwe,
æfter æriste agan mote
dreamas mid Dryhten, þær seo deore scolu
Leofne lofiað. Ic þæs lifes ne mæg,
æfre to ealdre ende gebiden
leohtes ond lissa. Þeah min lic scyle
on moldærne molsnad weorþan
wyrnum to willan, swa þeah weoruda God
æfter swylthwile sawle alyseð
ond in wuldor aweceð. Me þæs wen næfre
forbirsteð in breostum, ðe ic in Brego engla
forðweardne gefean fæste hæbbe.'
(*Phoenix* 546-69)

Hear the prophecy, Job's song. Through the glory of the Holy Spirit he opened his breast and sang aloud, honored by wonder he spoke those words: 'I do not despise

this in the thoughts of my heart, that I chose a deathbed in my nest, a man weary of my body, I go up thence on a long journey covered in clay, despairing of my good deeds into the embrace of the grave, and then after death through the grace of the Lord, just like the phoenix, I may have new life after my arising, joys with the Lord. I may never await the end of that life, of that light and that joy. Though my body shall become a speck of dust in the grave for the pleasure of the worms, nevertheless the God of hosts after the hour of my death shall free my soul and wake it in wonder. The hope of this shall never fail in my heart, that I have sure joy forever in the Lord of angels.

Blake notes in his edition how this passage is linked to the first half of the poem by verbal repetition: l.126a, "onbryrded breostsefa," which describes the phoenix preparing to sing, anticipates l.549, "breostum onbryrded," describing Job (Blake 88 n.549). That verbal echo links Job's song to the phoenix's, which was specially marked out with great care and rhetorical skill by the poet.

Blake remarks on the Job's appropriateness in the poem in his commentary, arguing that Job "is introduced into the poem as the typical example of the suffering Christian on earth," and that he is a suitable choice for the Old English poet, since "the phoenix also represents the blessed on earth and thus the phoenix and Job symbolize the same thing. It is fitting therefore that Job's song should echo the phoenix's"(Blake 87-8 n.549). Though Blake is not wrong, his interpretation does not quite do justice to the complexity of the *Phoenix* poet's scheme. As I have shown, the *Phoenix* poet is rarely content with simple interpretations. He does equate the phoenix with Christians on earth, but he also equates it with Christ himself:

...Swa fenix beacnað
geong in geardum Godbearnas meahht
þonne he of ascan eft onwæcneð
in lifes lif leomum gepungen.
(*Phoenix* 646b-49)

So the phoenix symbolizes the power of the God's son, young on the Earth, when awoke after from the ashes, surrounded by light in the life of lifes.

What makes Job a suitable choice for the Old English poet is not that he typifies the suffering Christian, but that he symbolizes both Christian and Christ, a suggestion advanced by Robert Bjork in a recent article (Bjork, "Job" 322-5). With recourse to the *magnum opus* of Gregorian exegesis, the *Moralia In Job*, Bjork demonstrates that Job was understood both as a type of the blessed soul and a type of Christ: "Job, then, in name, in deed, in disposition and in uniqueness prefigures Christ and the church even as he represents humanity, fallen and redeemed" ("Job" 325).

Bjork suggests that Job's appearance in the second half of the *Phoenix* helps knit together the different strands of the allegory, resolving God and man, human resurrection and divine resurrection, in a single figure. Job is thus the perfect choice for the Anglo-Saxon poet because he both expands and reifies the symbolic potential of the phoenix, perfectly in keeping with the poet's aims. The language used to describe Job's song looks back to the first half of the poem, while his typological significance strengthens the allegory in the poem's second half.

After using the figure of Job to resolve the different strands of symbolism in his commentary, the *Phoenix* poet sets himself one final task: to unite Latin and Old English in a short hymn of praise to God, which occupies the last eleven lines of the poem.

Hafað us alyfed lucis auctor
þæt we motun her merueri,
goddædum begietan gaudia in celo,
þær we motun maxima regna
secan ond gesittan sedibus altis,
lifgan in lisse lucis et pacis,
agan eardinga almae letitiae,
brucan blæddaga, blandem et mitem
geseon sigora frean sine fine,

ond him lof singan laude perenne,
eadge mid englum. Alleluia.
(*Phoenix* 667-77)

The Lord of light has granted us that we may here be deserving to attain with our good deeds joy in the heavens. There we may, in the greatest of kingdoms, seek and sit in the high seats, live in the grace of light and of peace, pursue the nourishing joy of those who dwell there, enjoy days of glory, see the Lord of victory, sweet and mild, forever, and sing praises to him in perpetual honor, blessed among the angels. Alleluia.

Thus the poet ends his poem with one final song, a hymn in praise of God that looks forward to a life of eternal joy. Though the middle of the poem contains a sharp moral message, the poet ends on a high note, emphasizing the endless days of joy to come over the suffering of the present. The way the *Phoenix* poet fits the Latin half-lines gracefully into the meter of the Old English poem confirms his deep understanding of both poetic traditions, and the lack of any obvious source for the Latin indicates that the poet, albeit in a small way, had no trouble composing Latin poetry. These lines also draw attention to the way the poem itself is put together: two halves, quite different in some respects, which can nevertheless be read profitably together. Just as the poet uses syntax to link the macaronic lines together, he uses repeated images to link the two halves of the poem. In this way the poem, just like the phoenix, is "wrixled," on a large scale as well as a small one.

The complexity of this weaving, across the dimensions of language, symbolism, and structure, is the *Phoenix* poet's great accomplishment. Though his translation is faithful to the language of its source, it expands and explores the phoenix's range of signification. While the Latin source was content to hold up the mystery of the resurrection, the Old English *Phoenix* explores its implications for the reader's present life on earth as well as his future life in heaven.

The flexibility of that exegetical program, the ease with which it combines typology, allegory and myth, is what distinguishes the *Phoenix* as religious poetry of the highest order. The poet has taken the story of the phoenix and created a system of symbols that connects the phoenix to Christ, but also to Job and to the souls of the blessed generally. These connections give the poem a moral urgency that its source lacks: the *De Ave* is an exploration of the mystery and paradox of resurrection, while the *Phoenix* explores the implications of the resurrection for man's behavior during his time on earth.

The *De Ave* is a poem about the otherworld, the mysterious, East, home to the natural marvel of the phoenix. The Old English *Phoenix*, however, uses typology to build a bridge between this world and the next, just as it uses rhetoric to build a bridge between Latin and Old English. The connection between form and content, Latin and exegesis, is declared in the macaronic ending of the poem, which promises salvation and eternal bliss to the man who, like the phoenix, Job and Christ, prepares a place for himself in heaven by virtue of his deeds on earth.

The previous analysis amply demonstrates the studied sophistication of the Old English *Phoenix*. The poem's close ties to and imaginative departures from its Latin source suggest a highly-educated, thoughtful author, who must have been trained in the company of similarly learned and capable men. The *Phoenix* is an ambitious poem, one that not only translates its source but transforms it with intertextual glosses and rhetorical embellishments. The inconsistencies and paradoxes so important to the *De Ave* are not elided, but are instead brought to the

fore, augmented by a variety of scriptural associations which the *Phoenix* poet suspends, artfully juxtaposed, before his reader.

Chapter 2: Translation and Intellectual Culture in Exeter Riddles 35 and 40

If the *Phoenix* is a virtuoso adaptation of Latin spiritual writing, Riddles 35 and 40 are more concerned with the tradition of intellectual inquiry embodied in the Latin riddle collections of Symphosius, Tatwine and Aldhelm.⁴² The following examination of these two Exeter Book riddles will reveal that their translators, like the translator of the *Phoenix*, were able readers of Latin with an interest in Aldhelm's style and an appreciation for the intellectual qualities of his poetry. My readings will show that the style of the Old English translations were clearly inspired by Aldhelm's particular idiom, and that the translators, just like Aldhelm, took pleasure in exploring the puzzles and paradoxes of the natural world.

In making these observations, I do not mean to suggest that the translated riddles and the *Phoenix* are similar in their practices of translation. Though both are engaged with Latin style and sympathetic to intellectual as well as spiritual content, they are very different poems, as my close analysis of the riddles will show. But both the riddles and the *Phoenix* are different from Alfred's vision as well, much more conscious of style and comfortable with the abstractions and ambiguities present in their sources.

Due to the circumstances of their transmission, the riddles are particularly valuable evidence for the history of translation in Anglo-Saxon England. Exeter Riddle 35 exists in a Northumbrian version, called the Leiden Riddle, that almost certainly dates from the 8th century. And though the Exeter Book poems are

⁴² the first 15 pages of this chapter are reprinted with permission from the author's article "The Isidorian Context of Aldhelm's 'Lorica' and Exeter Riddle 35," forthcoming in *Neophilologus*.

generally very difficult to date, Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe has demonstrated that Riddle 40 must have been composed in the tenth century, based on paleographical evidence from its Latin source. These translations thus span nearly two centuries of literary production, and show that attention to Latin style and an interest in intellectual literature was not confined to a single moment in Anglo-Saxon history. This evidence does not necessarily suggest a continuous tradition of translation from the eighth century to the tenth, but it does speak to the plurality of approaches to and interests in translation throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.

The Latin riddle tradition upon which these translations are based is too diverse to describe easily, but it is characterized by an interest in drawing connections between the natural world and the world of learning. Etymology therefore figures prominently in Latin riddles, providing a point of departure for intellectual explorations of everyday objects, as in this example by Symphosius:

Setigerae matris fecunda pastus in alvo
Desuper ex alto virides expecto saginas,
Nomine numen habens, si littera prima peribit.
(Symphosius, *Aenigmata* XXXVI)

Nourished in a fertile womb of a bristly mother I hover above my green food,
possessing the name of a god, if the first letter go away.

The answer to this riddle is "porcus," "pig," and the etymological play is to find the name of the god Orcus (Hades) when the initial "p" is removed. Though finding "Orcus" from "porcus" was surely a joke, etymology was used for serious purposes as well, as in this example from Isidore: "Ligna dicta quia incensa convertuntur in lumen. Unde et lychnium dicitur, quod lumen det"; "branches are so called since, when burned, they are converted into light. Whence also the lamp is named,

because it gives light." Here etymology illustrates the relationships among things in the natural world: as wood gives off light when burned, "ligna" is a combination of "lumen" and "incensa" (*Etymologies* XVII.6.25).

This sometimes playful tradition of intellectual riddling seems to have found a ready audience in Anglo-Saxon England. The 95 Old English riddles of the Exeter Book were patterned closely on their Latin models, and therefore provide a strong lure for scholars interested in the relationship between Latin and Old English poetry.⁴³ The fact that riddles 35 and 40 are actually translated from Latin riddles of Aldhelm only strengthens that appeal. This chapter will demonstrate the sensitivity of those translators to Aldhelm's rhetorical and enigmatic conceits, illuminating both their learning and poetic craft.⁴⁴ Like the author of the *Phoenix*, the translators behind riddles 35 and 40 approach their sources with a subtlety and skill that suggests deep familiarity and comfort with Latin language and literature.

Of the two translated riddles, Exeter 40 has garnered the most critical attention. It has received careful and thorough treatment at the hands of Anglo-Saxonists, most notably Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, whose articles provide a nuanced view of how the poem functions both as a translation and as a vernacular composition in its own right.⁴⁵ Exeter 35, however, has fared less well. It has, for

⁴³ For a recent treatment of the Exeter collection in relation to Symphosius, Tatwine and Aldhelm, see Bitterli.

⁴⁴ For the possibility that riddles 35 and 40 were translated by the same person, see Williamson 269.

⁴⁵ See O'Brien O'Keefe "Art" and "Text" for a thorough and sensitive treatment of the poem's debt to its Latin source, as well as its affinities with specifically Old English poetic practice. Howe discusses riddle 40 in the context of the rest of the Exeter riddles, and Steen ch.5 also includes a lengthy discussion of Exeter 40 and its source, Aldhelm's "Creatura."

example, been criticized for its failure to "capture the linguistic mystery" of its source, Aldhelm's riddle 33, "Lorica" (Howe 54). Though Exeter 35's critics recognize its merit as an Old English poem, they are divided as regards its success in translating the enigmatic play at the heart of Aldhelm's riddle.⁴⁶

The anonymous translator of Exeter 35 deserves closer attention than he has so far received. The current lukewarm assessment of the poem's merits as a translation rests upon a mistaken assumption about Aldhelm's poem, an assumption that diminishes our sense of Aldhelm's artistry as much as it obscures the real achievement of the Anglo-Saxon translator. This assumption, shared by all recent critics of the poem, is that Aldhelm's riddle hinges on a play on words which invokes "vestis," "garment," as a colloquialism for "lorica," "armor," highlighting the paradoxical notion of an unwoven garment created by the poem.⁴⁷ Though this reading has merit, it does not correctly locate the poem's central conceit, thus clouding the issue of the translator's accomplishment as well as doing Aldhelm a disservice.

A close look at "Lorica" reveals much more than a simple play on words. "Lorica" is a well-constructed poem whose precise and ornate style is typical of Aldhelm's verse, and the neatness and care with which it was composed is

⁴⁶ Howe's rather dim view of the poet's success may be contrasted with the more positive view expressed by Klein.

⁴⁷ Howe, Klein and Steen are the three authors who have recently discussed Exeter 35 as a translation in a sustained way. Though their opinions of the Old English poem differ, they all agree that the pun on "vestis" defines Aldhelm's riddle, and thus can be used as a yardstick for the success of Exeter 35 as a translation.

invaluable in figuring out how Aldhelm infused his poem with its enigmatic meaning:⁴⁸

Roscida me genuit gelido de viscere tellus;
Non sum setigero lanarum vellere facta,
Licia nulla trahunt nec garrula fila resultant
Nec crocea seres texunt lanugine vermes
Nec radiis carpor duro nec pectine pulsor;
Et tamen en vestis vulgi sermone vocabor.
Spicula non vereor longis exempta faretris.
("Lorica" 1-7)

The dewy Earth gave birth to me from her cold womb; I was not made with a hairy fleece of wool, no threads drag [at me] nor do garrulous strings resound. Chinese silkworms do not weave me from a yellow thread, nor am I snatched at by shuttles or struck by the harsh comb; but nevertheless I am called *vestis* ("garment") in common language. I do not fear arrows drawn out from long quivers.

In these seven lines, Aldhelm deploys his rhetorical arsenal to highlight the puzzle at the heart of his poem.⁴⁹ Gentle touches of alliteration ("genuit gelido" in l.1; "sum setigero" in l.2; "pectine pulsor" in l.5; "vestis vulgi...vocabor" in l.6) highlight the qualities that define the "lorica": it is born from the Earth, not made from wool, not woven on a loom, and called a "garment" in common speech. The poem's many chiasmic and enclosing structures highlight the process of creation it describes. In line one, "roscida...tellus" encloses the rest of the line, dramatizing the breastplate's claim that it was born from within the Earth, as the pronoun "me," referring to the

⁴⁸ For more on Aldhelm's poetic style, see Orchard, *Poetic Art* and Lapidge and Rosier, intro.

⁴⁹ Many of these observations about the poem's rhetorical flourishes have been made before, especially by Steen: "*Lorica* is elegantly constructed, with sequences of leonine rhyme in the middle three lines (*trahunt...resultant/seres...vermes/...carpor...pulsor*), light touches of alliteration throughout (*genuit gelido*, line 1; *pectine pulsor*, line 5; *vestis vulgi...vocabor*, line 6), and a golden line at the poem's center (line 4), which appropriately places the verb *texunt* ('weave,' 'compose') at the centre of the poem" (Steen 92). Though Steen notes the central placement of "texunt," she dismisses it as an elegant curiosity rather than a clue to the poem's meaning.

breastplate, sits between "roscida" and "tellus." Line two surrounds "lanarum" with a chiastic structure:

a b c b a
Non sum setigero lanarum vellere facta,

The verb "facta sum" forms the outer element of the chiasmus, while the adjective-noun pair "setigero...vellere" forms the inner. Both elements, however, enclose "lanarum," adding another layer of syntactical complexity and emphasizing the fact that the breastplate is not made from wool, the material traditionally used in weaving.

Line four is a golden line, two adjectives and two nouns separated by the verb "texunt." Though this is not a chiastic structure, the verb is enclosed by the other syntactical elements on the edges of the line, foregrounded in the same way as "lanarum" in line two. Since line four is also the middle line of the seven-line poem, "texunt" thus lies at the poem's exact center, revealing the central importance of weaving for Aldhelm's riddling exposition of the word "lorica."

Though it is a short poem, "Lorica" has attracted its fair share of critical attention as the source of Exeter 35. Klein, Howe and Steen all offer thoughtful readings, but they err in their shared assumption that the paradox of the riddle rests upon the contrast between "vestis," an object woven from wool or thread, and "lorica," an unwoven object made from metal (Howe 50-4; Klein 345; Steen 91). The fact that "vestis" is a colloquial term for armor, which Aldhelm reveals in line 6, creates the puzzle, which Klein calls "a simple play on names" (Klein 345).

Though Aldhelm's play on "vestis" as a colloquialism is a clever and subtle detail, it is not in fact the crux of his enigma. Just as the structure of the poem pivots on the word "texunt," the poem's meaning hinges on the idea of a "lorica" as a *woven* garment, a conceit that Aldhelm seems to have adopted from Isidore, who defines "lorica" thus: "lorica vocata eo quod loris careat; solis enim circulis ferreis *contexta* est;" "the 'lorica' is so called because it lacks ('careat') leather ties ('loris'); for it is *woven* only from iron bands" (Isidore XVIII.13).

The key word here is "contexta," "woven," which reveals that Isidore thought of a "lorica" as a *woven* garment, not an unwoven one as Klein, Howe and Steen have asserted. Thus the thrust of Aldhelm's puzzle is not that the "lorica" is unwoven, but that it is woven without traditional materials or techniques.⁵⁰ Aldhelm's rhetoric supports this claim: though "vestis" is nicely emphasized by alliteration on "v" in line 6, the central placement of "texunt" marks it out as the more important word, suggesting that Isidore's definition of "lorica" as an object woven from metal provides the crux of Aldhelm's riddle. The central placement of "lanarum," "wool" in line two lends further support to this idea, since it emphasizes the idea that the "lorica" is not woven from *wool*, not that it is not woven at all.

This new appreciation of Aldhelm's poem requires a revision of the standard reading of Exeter 35. Even Howe, the poem's harshest critic, admits that the Old English version captures the idea of weaving very well:

⁵⁰ Howe demonstrates at some length that Aldhelm drew on much of Isidore's etymological lore in his riddles. His discussion of "minotaurus" on p.42 is an excellent example, as it shows that Aldhelm took errors along with etymologies from Isidore.

The Exeter Book version of 'Lorica' demonstrates that a fine riddle can be written about this object without calling attention to its alternative name. In rendering Aldhelm's text into Old English, the translator remained quite faithful to its sense and may even have improved the weaving conceit by rearranging its sequence in places (Howe 53-4).

Given that the "weaving conceit" is in fact the whole point of Aldhelm's riddle, Howe's observation demonstrates quite nicely that the Old English translator did an admirable job capturing the spirit of his source.

Aldhelm's riddle is much more than an etymological pun, though. "Lorica" is distinguished by careful structures in which form echoes content to a remarkable degree, and thus poses a significant challenge to its translator. The Old English poet's response was to focus on the language of weaving, exploiting the fortunate coincidence that woven mail-shirts were an established part of the Old English poetic tradition. The rhetorical conceits of Aldhelm's poem, though, seem to have proven less inspirational than his etymological play.

Demonstrating the truth of these claims is complicated somewhat by the fact that "Lorica" has come down to us in two separate versions: in addition to the West Saxon text in the Exeter Book, there is a Northumbrian text preserved on folio 25 of Leiden MS Voss Q 106, the so-called "Leiden Riddle."⁵¹ The differences between the two versions have been amply catalogued by previous critics; for this discussion, the most significant difference is the way the two treat the poem's end.⁵² The Leiden

⁵¹ See Fulk 404-5 for an analysis of the dialect and date of the Leiden Riddle.

⁵² Steen 95 includes a thorough summary of these differences: "in addition to dialectical differences between the two versions, there are also differences in diction. The West Saxon version alters the correct plural translation of *radiis* to the singular, and has substituted *scripeð* with *scelfath*. The Exeter Book riddle avoids the give-away feminine inflection on the participle *biurhtae* (*The Leiden Riddle*, line 3a), which might allude to the feminine nouns *gewæde* ('garment'), or even the

Riddle translates the final line of Aldhelm's riddle more or less literally, while Exeter 35 discards it in favor of a familiar-sounding challenge to the wise reader. Though my analysis focuses on the Exeter version, I include both texts for purposes of comparison: first the Exeter version, followed by the Leiden Riddle.

Mec se wæta wong, wundrum freorig,
of his innape ærest cende.
Ne wat ic mec beworhtne wulle flysum,
hærum þurh heahcræft, hygeþoncum min:
wundene me ne beoð wefle, ne ic wearp hafu,
ne þurh þreata geþræcu þræd me ne hlimmeð,
ne æt me hrutende hrisil scribeð,
ne mec ohwonan sceal am cnyssan.
Wyrmas mec ne awæfan wyrda cræftum,
þa þe geolo godwebb geatwum frætwað.
Wile mec mon hwæpre seþeah wide ofer eorþan
hatan for hæleþum hyhtlic gewæde.
Saga soðcwidum searoþoncum gleaw,
wordum wisfæst, hwæt þis gewæde sy.⁵³

The wet plain, wondrously cold, bore me first from within himself. Nor do I know myself in my thoughts to be worked from fibers of wool, from hair through high craft: nor am I woven by the shuttle, and I do not have a warp, nor does a thread make me sound from the pressure of a crowd, nor does the rattling shuttle glide across me, nor does the slay (OE *am*; part of a loom) strike me anywhere. Worms did not weave me with skill of *wyrd* (a disputed phrase; see below for a discussion of the proper translation), so that a yellow thread decorates me with ornaments. Nevertheless men far and wide across the Earth will call me a noble garment for warriors. Say in true words, o man wise in your thoughts, knowledgeable about words, what this "garment" might be.

Mec se ueta uong, uundrum freorig,
ob his innaðae acrest cæn[.]æ.
Ni uuat ic mec biuorhtæ uullan fliusum,

solution, *byrne* ('mailcoat'), and instead simply has *beoworhtne*. There are other slight changes in number and word order in the West Saxon version (*hrutende*, *wyrda*, *sceal am*). The most striking difference between the two versions, however, is the omission of the last line of *Lorica* from the Exeter Riddle, perhaps to preserve a measure of riddling obliquity. Instead, the poet adds the oral challenge to the listener, a 'man wise in words' (*searoþoncum gleaw*)..."

⁵³ Text of Riddle 35 Williamson 88-9.

The chiasmus here is admittedly loose. The correspondence between "flysum" ("floss") and "hærum" ("thread") is clear enough, but the connection between the outer elements relies on the idea of thought present both in "wat" and "hygeþoncum," the same words which drive Klein's theory of the object's "heightened self-awareness" (Klein 347). Line six displays ornamental alliteration on "þ," and the phrase "þurh þreata geþræcu" has attracted much commentary for its martial metaphor (Klein 348; Steen 97 n.33). Line seven is lightly marked by the assonance in "hrisil scribeð," an aural effect reminiscent of the light touches of alliteration in Aldhelm's riddle. Klein has demonstrated that eight b contains an excellent example of soundplay, in which the clashing meter of the C-line mimics the crash of the shuttle described in the poem (Klein 348). Lines nine and ten contain the suggestive phrase "wyrda cræftum," and ten b punctuates the sequence nicely with the repetition of the unusual "tw" consonant cluster in "geatwum frætwað."

Though this evidence demonstrates that the poet of Exeter 35 understood weaving to be the riddle's central conceit, it does not show that he paid much attention to Aldhelm's rhetoric. The nested chiasmus and careful symmetry that characterize "Lorica" are imitated in one instance at best, and Aldhelm's frequent play with sound leaves little mark on the Old English poem, which has almost no aural ornamentation beyond the requisite alliteration. Exeter 35 is a clever riddle and a well-crafted poem in its own right, but it does not maintain its source's commitment to mirroring content in its formal structures.

Exeter 35 may not capture the playfulness and precision of Aldhelm's rhetoric, but it does catch the etymological conceit at the heart of his riddle. The persistent focus on the importance of "vestis" for the Latin poem, however, has obscured the Old English translators' success in this regard. Though Howe is perhaps right that "hyhtlic gewæde is a poor periphrasis for 'vestis,'" and that Exeter 35 line 12 lacks the ornamentation of "Lorica" line six, he is perfectly correct in his admission that the poet of Exeter 35 has written an effective riddle about weaving. (Howe 54). It is no surprise that an Anglo-Saxon translator would have delighted in the idea of a woven breastplate; many beautiful or skillfully wrought objects are referred to as "woven" in Old English verse, and the Old English equivalent of "lorica," "byrne," was a mail shirt frequently described as woven by Anglo-Saxon poets, as in this well-known example:⁵⁶

...Gyrede hine Beowulf
 eorlgewædum, nalles for ealdre mearn;
 scolde herebyrne hondum gebroden,
 sid ond searofah, sund cunnian,
 seo ðe bancofan beorgan cuþe,
 þæt him hildegrap hrepre ne mihte,
 eorres inwitfeng, aldre gesceþðan...
 (*Beowulf* 1441b-1446)

Beowulf outfitted himself in a noble garment, he did not fear for his life at all; that battle-shirt, woven by hands, broad and decorated with treasures, would make a trial of the mere, which [byrne] was known to protect his body, so that no hostile grip might take his life, no attack of an angry [adversary] do him harm.

Beowulf's mail coat is described as "gebroden," "woven," and called "eorlgewædum," "noble garment," a phrase reminiscent of "godwebb," which means roughly the same thing. Though Beowulf's mail shirt is never called "hyhtlic," the

⁵⁶ For a list of many compounds describing the "byrne" as woven, see Steen 96.

passage makes it abundantly clear how much hope the garment lends him. This passage demonstrates how attractive Aldhelm's riddle would have been for an Anglo-Saxon poet, presumably already familiar with descriptions of beautifully decorated, woven mail shirts.

The Old English poet's focus on recreating the etymological content of Aldhelm's riddle, as well as the rich poetic history behind phrases like "godwebb" and "hyhtlic gewæde," also mitigates against Steen's understanding of Exeter 35 as a Christian metaphor. Her reading is distinguished from Howe's and Klein's by the fact that she believes Aldhelm's "Lorica" to be a deeply Christian poem, and riddle 35 to be a sensitive re-fashioning of "Lorica"'s Christian symbolism:

The riddling tension in this *enigma* is thus not so much in the superficial incongruity between the garment of the loom and the breastplate, but in the mystery of the name *lorica* itself, betokening both a breastplate, a visible garment, and an invisible garment, a Christian virtue (faith, or righteousness). The speaker of the *Enigma* seems to describe his own process of transformation, from iron ore, to a meshed garment, to the invisible garment of faith that defends the wearer against evil. Even the statement in the last line that this garment protects against 'arrows drawn from long quivers' (*spicula...longis exempta faretris*, line 7) recalls Paul's imagery of spiritual armour that defends against 'all the fiery darts of the wicked' (*omnia tela nequissimi ignea*, Ephesians 6.16) (Steen 96).

Though Steen's argument is compelling, it depends more on the Biblical association of the riddle's title than on any feature of the riddle's language. It is perhaps true that the "spicula" of line seven recall the "tela" of Ephesians chapter six, but it is the shield, not the breastplate, that Paul promises will protect against those "fiery darts." It is a bit surprising that a poet as careful and as learned in Scripture as Aldhelm would indulge in that sort of looseness at the end of such a precisely constructed poem. As for the Old English translation, the two pieces of evidence

that suggest a metaphorical meaning in Aldhelm's riddle, the title and the final line, are not translated into Old English.

Steen acknowledges this difficulty, arguing that "the main challenges for the translator, therefore...are the intimation of the solution within the titleless poem itself and the suggestion that the mailcoat is figurative, the spiritual armour that defends the wearer against evil" (Steen 96). Her argument that the Old English riddle suggests a metaphorical breastplate rests on little evidence: the denial that the garment was woven "wyrda cræftum" in line 9, the possibility of a *double entendre* in "godwebb" in line 10, the similarity between riddle 35's "hyhtlic gewaede" and the description of the Bible as a "hyhtlic hildewaepen" in riddle 92, and the Old English poem's perceived insistence that the mailcoat is not woven.

The last of these, as I have demonstrated, is unlikely to be true. Aldhelm's riddle depends on the idea that a "lorica" is a woven garment, and the expansion of the weaving sequence in Exeter 35 suggests that the Old English translator was well aware of the etymological play.

How best to translate "wyrda cræftum" and what it might mean is a problem which Williamson takes up in his commentary on Exeter 35:

The translation of *wyrd* is always a difficult matter (for the range of possible meanings, see Stanley, *NQ* ccx, 285 ff.). Mackie translates *wyrda cræftum* as "by the skill that the fates have given" (p.127); Baum, as "with fatal wiles" (p.41). Both place too much emphasis upon the older meanings of *wyrd*, though Mackie's reading is certainly preferable to Baum's. I prefer Erhardt-Siebold's translation of *wyrda cræftum* as "with inborn skill" (in her article noted above in *Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies*, p. 13). Note that the Leiden version has singular *wyrði* for plural *wyrda* here (Williamson 248).

Williamson's reminder that "wyrd" need not always have a supernatural meaning is apposite, and calls into question Steen's suggestion that "...by saying that the

mailcoat is *not* woven 'through the skill of fates,' the poet is hinting that the garment is not endowed with the supernatural power of the Parcae or the Norns, the goddesses who weave the fates of mankind" (Steen 96). I would suggest that "wyrda cræftum" might be translated as "by the skill normally associated with the Fates," since both the Parcae and the Norns were known to be weavers. However, this translation need not hold any specifically supernatural meaning; there are ample examples in the corpus of mythological references, both Classical and Germanic, being deployed without a specifically pagan or supernatural agenda.⁵⁷

Steen's assertions that "hyhtlic" and "godwebb" also point to a hidden meaning are impossible to deny categorically, but insisting that they contain the poem's true meaning, a meaning which the Anglo-Saxon translator carefully designed his poem to express, fails to account for the fact that the bulk of the poem, 9 of its 14 lines, is about weaving. The evidence of the poem suggests that weaving is its central concern, and that meaning is authorized by Isidore and Aldhelm much more strongly than Steen's metaphorical reading. Indeed, if the poet were so concerned with privileging the breastplate's metaphorical meaning over its physical one, why would he have neglected to translate Aldhelm's reference to the arrows which, according to Steen, connect the "Lorica" riddle to the "lorica fidei" of Ephesians six?⁵⁸ The passage from *Beowulf* cited earlier also demonstrates,

⁵⁷ A particularly germane example is the frequent use of Classicisms in Exeter Riddle 40, which leaves Aldhelm's "Vulcan" and "Zephyrus" unchanged while remaining a deeply Christian description of Creation.

⁵⁸ It is of course true that the Leiden riddle does translate this line. However, the Leiden riddle complicates Steen's reading in different ways, while both riddles share the emphasis on weaving, suggesting that capturing Aldhelm's etymological play rather than Christian metaphor is the central concern of both poems.

admittedly without using the word "hyhtlic," how a mailcoat might be "hopeful" in a purely secular context: it is, after all, intended to protect a warrior's life. Though Steen is correct that the mailcoat has rich potential as a Christian symbol, neither "Lorica" nor Exeter 35 seems to take much advantage of that fact.

It is impossible to dismiss Steen's analysis out of hand; what she proposes is possible, and intriguing. Nevertheless, the bulk of the evidence indicates that both "Lorica" and Exeter 35 were primarily etymological riddles, short ruminations on the strange and fascinating idea of an object woven from metal. From this perspective, it is apparent that the Old English riddle is a perfectly competent translation of Aldhelm's "Lorica," and that the translator captured the central conceit of the Latin riddle quite nicely. Though his rhetoric might not be as carefully constructed as Aldhelm's, the Old English poet has nevertheless produced an effective poem of his own, one which balances the demands of Old English verse with fidelity to the etymological play of its source.

The second of the translated riddles in the Exeter book is riddle 40, a translation of Aldhelm's riddle 100, "Creatura."⁵⁹ As in Exeter 35, the translator of Exeter 40 shows considerable skill in recognizing and responding to the challenges of his source. Those challenges, though, are quite different: while "Lorica" is a short riddle with a compact, elegant structure, "Creatura" is long and diffuse. The poem is 83 lines in total, and begins with an 8-line passage that introduces Creation, the poem's narrator, to the reader. The next 72 lines consist of a series of antitheses that illuminate the paradox of Creation: she is tall and short, hot and cold, large and

⁵⁹ The text of "Creatura" may be found in Williamson 266-8 and Pitman 60-7

small. The final four lines of the poem issue a challenge to the reader to solve the riddle by naming its speaker.

Beyond this basic outline, the poem is structured only by the antitheses themselves: most are two lines long, the first line making an assertion that is swiftly contradicted in the second. Lines 9 and 10 demonstrate Aldhelm's usual procedure: "segnior est nullus, quoniam me larbula terret/ setigero rursus constans audacior apro"; "No-one is more fearful than I, since a mask terrifies me. On the contrary I am steadfast and more daring than the bristling boar" ("Creatura" 9-10).⁶⁰ Though its structure may not be as intricate as "Lorica," "Creatura" still demonstrates Aldhelm's fondness for a well-placed rhetorical flourish. The riddle's beginning displays several such flourishes as Aldhelm introduces Creation, the subject of his poem:

Conditor, aeternis fulcit qui saecla columnis,
Rector regnorum, frenans et fulmina lege,
Pendula dum patuli vertuntur culmina caeli,
Me varium fecit, primo dum conderet orbem.
Pervigil excubiis: numquam dormire iuvabit,
Sed tamen extemplo clauduntur lumina somno;
Nam Deus ut propria mundum dicione gubernat,
Sic ego complector sub caeli cardine cuncta.
("Creatura" 1-8)

The Founder, who supported the world on eternal pillars, the Ruler of realms, bridling the thunderbolt with his law while the lofty peaks of the heavens are overturned, created me in my variety when first he established the Earth. I am wakeful through nighttime watches: never does He allow me to sleep, but nevertheless my eyes are immediately closed with slumber; for as God properly governs the world with his fiat, so do I enfold all things beneath the compass of the Heavens.

⁶⁰ See O'Brien O'Keefe, "Art" 107-8 for a detailed description of the structure of the antitheses.

By mentioning her "variety" and the fact that she "enfolds all things," Creation prepares the reader for the 70 lines of paradoxical antitheses to come. She also paints a suitably impressive picture of God, the Creator, through evocative images: he is the one who established the pillars of the world, and who can restrain the thunderbolt. The bridled thunderbolt (l.2) and the revolving peaks of the Heavens (l.3) infuse the passage with a degree of dynamism, perhaps preparing the reader for the quick movements between opposites in the lines that follow. As in "Lorica," form reflects content to a remarkable degree.

It is a commonplace of scholarship on Aldhelm to discuss his difficult vocabulary, characteristic of his "hermeneutic" style.⁶¹ Though his obscurantist tendencies manifest themselves in "Creatura" as much as they do elsewhere in his poetry, his stylistic choices—frequent alliteration, metrical patterning and syntactic structures—are much more interesting and commented upon less frequently.⁶² Aldhelm writes very regular hexameters, often decorated with alliteration, with a high incidence of end-stopped lines and strong caesuras in the third foot.⁶³ He also shows a fondness for syntactic patterns based on the golden line, a central verb flanked by a pair of nouns and their corresponding adjectives. Line 3 is actually a golden line, and lines 1, 2 and 6 imitate the pattern by placing the verb in the middle of the line.

⁶¹ See Ruff 165-7 for an overview of scholarly thinking on the hermeneutic style.

⁶² For an overview of Aldhelm's metrical practice generally, see Orchard *Poetic Art* and Lapidge, "Poetry." Lapidge also discusses alliteration at some length. For alliteration in Aldhelm's prose, see Ruff *passim*.

⁶³ Orchard reports that Aldhelm uses a strong caesura in the third foot 97.5% of the time, to be compared with 85% in Vergil (*Poetic Art* 92). O'Brien O'Keefe mentions "a tendency in Aldhelm's verse to match syntax with the end of a line, a metrical failing which produces rather plodding cadences" ("Art" 108).

These eight lines also reveal Aldhelm's general approach to periods in his poem. The first period, which stretches from line 1 to line 4, is an extreme example of hyperbaton: the subject, "conditor," is separated from its verb, "fecit," by two subordinate clauses and one appositive phrase. Lines 5-8 contain two periods, each of which is neatly contained in two lines and quite easy to follow. This approach is typical of Aldhelm; he rarely piles one complex period on top of one another, and frequently breaks his poem into two-line sense units. This may be a feature of his rhetorical education at the school of Theodore and Hadrian, or a byproduct of his formulaic approach to writing in his second language. Whatever the cause, the regularity of his periods makes his poem a good candidate for translation into Old English. As O'Brien O'Keefe observes, the length and complexity of Aldhelm's periods often inform the choices the Anglo-Saxon poet makes in his translation (O'Brien O'Keefe, "Art" 110).

Aldhelm's fondness for alliteration is another feature that recommends his poetry to an Anglo-Saxon audience. This tendency is familiar from "Lorica," and Aldhelm uses alliteration in much the same way in "Creatura." These first eight lines of his poem are particularly rich in alliteration: "conditor...columnis" in line 1, "rector regnorum" and "frenans...fulmina" in line 2, "pendula...patuli" and "culmina caeli" in line 3, and so on. The alliteration in line 8, "sic ego complector sub caeli cardine cuncta," is particularly pronounced, serving to divide the introduction from the main body of the poem.

Aldhelm's preference for tightly constructed and intricately decorated sense units informs his entire poem. Lines 27-34 make up a typical passage from the

middle of the poem: a series of discrete, two-line antitheses, each with its own variety of rhetorical ornamentation, separate from the lines that surround it:

Lator, en, patulis terrarum finibus exto
Et tamen in media concludor parte pugilli,
Frigidior brumis necnon candente pruina,
Cum sim Vulcani flammis torrentibus ardens,
Dulcior in palato quam lenti nectaris haustus
Dirior et rursus quam glauca absinthia campi.
Mando dapes mordax lurconum more Ciclopum,
Cum possim iugiter sine victu vivere felix.
("Creatura" 27-34)

I am wider, oh, than the broad boundaries of the Earth and yet I can be shut up in the middle part of a closed fist, I am colder than midwinter and shining frost, though I burn with Vulcan's raging flames, I am sweeter to the taste than a draught of delicate nectar, and on the contrary I am more bitter than green wormwood from the field. Biting, I devour my feast after the fashion of the gluttonous Cyclopes, though I, happy, am able to live indefinitely without food.

These eight lines reveal the typical structure of Aldhelm's poem. There are four antitheses in the passage, and each is exactly two lines long. Three of the four are introduced by comparatives ("lator," l.27, "frigidior," l.29, and "dulcior," l.31), and the contrast between the first and second lines is emphasized in each case with an adversative construction ("et tamen," l.28; the adversative "cum" clauses in l.30 and l.34, and "et rursus" in l.32). They are lightly decorated with alliteration in lines 28, 33 and 34, and reveal Aldhelm's strong preference for certain metrical patterns.

These lines also show how Aldhelm treats each antitheses as a unit, separate from what comes before or after. Each two-line unit in this passage is a complete thought, ornamented in its own way seemingly without regard for the rest of the poem.

Lines 27 and 28, for example, are both decorated with word-pictures:

Lator, en, *patulis* terrarum *finibus* **exto**

Et tamen in **media** *concludor* **parte** pugilli

The different typefaces highlight how Aldhelm has arranged his words to represent visually what they describe. In line 27, Creation says that she "is spread out more widely than the far ends of the Earth." "Latior" and "exto," which together mean "I am spread out more widely," lie at the very edges of the line, outside the "patulis terrarum finibus," the "far ends of the Earth." Likewise in line 28, Creation says that she can be "enclosed in the middle part of a fist"; "concludor," "I am enclosed," sits between "media" and "parte," inside the "middle part" of the fist. This strategy, familiar from "Lorica" l.1, effectively creates an image of Creation's vastness (in line 27) and smallness (in line 28), but is then abandoned. As he moves from one thought to another, Aldhelm also moves from one rhetorical device to another, encapsulating each idea within its own stylistic bubble.

Lines 29 and 30 are not so elaborately decorated. There is no alliteration or assonance, no carefully-constructed word-picture or fancy syntax. The only ornamentation is the spondaic heaviness of line 30, enhanced by the fact that the first spondee, "cum sim," is composed of two monosyllables, which create a deliberate, plodding rhythm at the beginning of the line. The decision to make the second line spondaic also helps to separate the thought in 29-30 from what follows, providing further evidence that Aldhelm was unconcerned with forging links between the individual units within his poem. The reference to Vulcan in 30 is a rare instance of a name from Classical mythology wholly taken over into Old English. Though it does little in terms of the poem's rhetoric, the presence of the

name shows that even a poet as Christian as Aldhelm could use a Classical reference without concern for the orthodoxy of his poem.⁶⁴

Lines 31 and 32 also lack conspicuous ornamentation, but they are held together by their syntax: both lines use a comparative adjective with a "quam" construction, and the two "quam" clauses are metrically identical, consisting of a spondee plus the hexameter cadence. The similarity in sound between "dulcior" and "dirior" helps tie the lines together as well, marking them off as a separate thought from the lines preceding and following. Lines 33 and 34, in contrast, are syntactically similar to 29 and 30: the assertion in the first line is qualified by a concessive "cum" clause, in which the conjunction is immediately followed by a subjunctive form of "esse". These lines also alliterate, the first across the caesura and the second after it:

mando dapes **m**ordax lurconum **m**ore Ciclopum,
cum possim iugiter sine **v**ictu **v**ivere felix.

Line 33 is also marked by another Classical reference, this time to the Cyclopes, whom Aldhelm uses as the paradigmatic example of messy eating, and by the homoioteleuton of "lurconum" and "Ciclopum," not a proper leonine rhyme since "lurconum" comes after the caesura. Line 34 is distinguished by its unusual meter. It is a perfectly acceptable hexameter line, spondee/dactyl/dactyl/spondee before the cadence, but Michael Lapidge has shown that Aldhelm habitually relies on three

⁶⁴ See Steen 106-9 for the argument that the Classical references in the poem indicate that it was intended for a learned audience.

metrical patterns in his hexameters: DSSS, DDSS, and SDSS, and that any deviation from these three is highly unusual (Lapidge, "Poetry" 214).⁶⁵

The last line also contains a nice example of etymological wordplay between "victu" and "vivere," which are connected according to Isidore: "victus proprie vocatus quia vitam retinet; unde et ad cibum vocare invitare dicitur"; "food (victus) is rightly named because it sustains life (vita); for which reason 'to call to dinner' is also called 'to invite'" (Isidore XX.3).

These lines are a typical example of Aldhelm's approach throughout "Creatura." Each thought is set off on its own, the lines linked to one another by rhetorical and syntactical ornament. There is no attempt to link those small units together, however, to make one idea flow smoothly into the next. Aldhelm's poem therefore challenges the reader because it requires him to adapt constantly to new combinations of style and content. Aldhelm's bag of tricks is limited, though, and after fifty lines or so his favorite flourishes become apparent: alliteration, assonance, and word pictures recur throughout the poem, and the contrasts within the sense units are frequently highlighted by comparative adjectives followed by an adversative conjunction of some sort. Thus, though Aldhelm's poem is difficult at first, its challenges quickly become familiar to the reader, and frustration with Aldhelm's diffuse structure gives way to appreciation of his individual sense units,

⁶⁵ Lapidge adopts this simplified notation for the Aldhelm's metrical patterns because Aldhelm always concludes his hexameter lines with the normal hexameter cadence, a dactyl followed by a spondee. Thus, only the first four feet are variable, and the meter of a line can be specified with four letters, one for each of the first four feet.

each of which is set against its background in a manner reminiscent of the Jeweled Style.

Aldhelm does not always restrict his sense units to two lines, and some of the passages where he deviates from that norm are the most rhetorically interesting. Lines 44-52 are such a passage, containing an unusual example of an unbalanced antithesis that occupies five lines instead of the usual two or four:

Cincinnos, capitis nam gesto cacumine nullos,
Ornent qui frontem pompis et tempora setis,
Cum mihi caesaries volitent de vertice crispae,
Plus calamistratis se comunt quae calamistro.
Pinguior, en, multo scrofarum axungia glesco,
Glandiferis iterum referunt dum corpora fagis
Atque saginata laetantur carne subulci;
Sed me dira famis macie torquebit egenam,
Pallida dum iugiter dapibus spoliabor opimis.
("Creatura" 44-52)

For I do not bear any curls on the top of my head, which crown my brow and temples with hairy dignity, but waving locks float about my head, crisper than curls made with the curling-iron. I am much fatter, indeed, than breeding sows, when they bring back their bodies again from the acorn-bearing beech tree and the swineherds delight in their fattened flesh; but dire hunger twists me with thinness in my need, while I, pale, am continually deprived of wondrous feasts.

These nine lines include two antitheses: the hairless: hair antitheses in 44-7, and the fat: thin antitheses in 48-52. In this respect the passage is atypical; Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe has shown that most of the antitheses in the poem occupy two lines, with one line devoted to each half of the contradiction (O'Brien O'Keefe, "Art" 108, table 1). The extra space gives Aldhelm more opportunity to ornament his verses, though, and these lines are a fine example of how he uses alliteration, assonance and other rhetorical devices to break the monotony of his simple structures. Aldhelm is much less playful with his syntax and the caesura in these lines than in the previous

examples, however. The strong caesura never functions as a syntactical break, though it still preserves the half-lines as artistic units. The result of this choice is that the lines hold together more closely, perhaps helping Aldhelm to sustain his thoughts for the duration of the longer sense units.

The first four lines, which contain the hairless: hairy antitheses, are unified by alliteration on "c." Lines 44, 46 and 47, similarly to lines 1 and 83, alliterate across the caesura, and the two halves of line 44 are bound together by the hyperbaton "cincinnos...nullos." Line 45 has no alliteration or aural ornamentation aside from the end-rhyme of "pompis" and "setis," not a true leonine rhyme since the caesura occurs after "frontem," but it is a spondaic line whose slow pace underscores the *gravitas* it describes.

Line 46 alliterates on "v" as well as "c," the alliteration on "v" within the second half-line balanced by the alliteration on "c" that joins the halves together. Line 47 adds an extra dimension to the rhetorical ornamentation with the etymological play on "calamistratis" and "calamistro," emphasized by their respective positions at the caesura and the end of the line. The extra ornamentation in 47 seems to serve as a signal that this particular thought is finished, a tendency apparent elsewhere in the poem.⁶⁶ The connective "en" in line 48 signals the beginning of a new sense unit, though it is not united so tightly by alliteration as the

⁶⁶ E.g. the extreme alliteration in l.14, at the end of the poem's "introduction," or the combination of alliteration and assonance in l.69, "et penitus numquam per terram pergo pedester"; "and never do I travel through the earth on foot."

previous. The comparative "pinguor" is a further indication of the shift in sense, as many of the antitheses in the poem begin with comparative adjectives.⁶⁷

Line 48 is ornamented by the leonine rhyme "multo...glesco," and features assonance on the long "o" in "multo," "scrofarum" and "glesco." Line 49 is particularly interesting, with the sequence of short vowels in "glandiferis iterum referunt" imparting movement to the line, as well as the assonance on "u," which continues with "dum." Line 50 has light alliteration on "s" with "saginata" and "subulci," and line 51 has strong assonance with the long "e"s in "macie," "torquebit" and "egenam." Other than a light alliteration on "dum" and "dapibus," though, line 52 is without ornament, and does not punctuate the thought in the same way as line 47. Though these lines are atypical in the length of their antitheses, they otherwise give an excellent example of Aldhelm's rhetorical style: the prevalence of the strong caesura as an artistic element, the frequent use of alliteration and assonance, and the occasional use of extra ornamentation to punctuate the end of a thought.

Aldhelm concludes his poem with a four-line coda, issuing a challenge to the reader to identify the speaker of his riddle. That challenge does seem somewhat out of place, as all the *Enigmata* are preserved with their solutions in their titles. A challenge to solve the riddle is a regular feature of the Old English riddles, however, and so the very end of Aldhelm's riddle may be a nod to a vernacular tradition with which he was also familiar. By the standards of the Old English tradition, Aldhelm's challenge is typical, if perhaps more confrontational than most:

Auscultate mei credentes famina verbi,
Pandere quae poterit gnarus vix ore magister

⁶⁷ See Steen 99 for the importance of comparatives in Aldhelm's poem.

Et tamen infitians non retur frivola lector!
Sciscitor inflatos, fungar quo nomine, sofos.
("Creatura" 80-3)

Listen to my word and believe my pronouncements, which a knowledgeable teacher is hardly able to lay open, but even a skeptical reader does not think frivolous! I ask those puffed-up savants: by what name may I be called?

On the whole, this passage has little ornamentation: there is a leonine rhyme "mei...verbi" in line 80, and some alliteration on "p" in 81. The last line has the leonine rhyme "inflatos...sofos," and closely mimics the syntax of the first line as described above.

These three passages give a sense of Aldhelm's favorite rhetorical techniques, as well as his hexameter practice and his use of antithesis in the "Creatura" riddle. The structure of Aldhelm's riddle was adopted easily enough by the Old English translator, but his rhetoric proved to be more of a challenge. As in the case of the Leiden riddle and Exeter 35, Aldhelm's ornate style does not translate easily into Old English.

Though it may not possess the gem-like ornamentation of Aldhelm's poem, Exeter 40 is a well-constructed poem in its own right. Both Steen and O'Brien O'Keefe praise it for its rhetorical excellence, based on the way the translator surmounts the challenge posed by Aldhelm's difficult Latin vocabulary (Steen 98-109; O'Brien O'Keefe *passim*). Both scholars offer insightful readings of the poem, and O'Brien O'Keefe's observation of the translator's use of generative composition (to which I shall return later) is particularly effective.⁶⁸ The Anglo-Saxon poet follows the promptings of his Latin source very closely, usually translating one line

⁶⁸ See O'Brien O'Keefe, "Art" 112-115 for her discussion of generative composition as a response to Aldhelm's difficult lexical variation.

of Latin with two lines of Old English.⁶⁹ The translator replicates Aldhelm's large-scale structure of a short introduction (ll.1-15) followed by a long series of antitheses (ll.16-108a). There is sadly no conclusion since the Exeter Book is missing a folio between 111v and 112r, which presumably included the poem's end. As in the Latin poem, Exeter 40 has no other structure that unites the antitheses or helps the reader navigate among them; each stands on its own as a single thought and an artistic unit.

Though the translator reproduces the antitheses of Aldhelm's poem, he rearranges some of them as well. Williamson's edition of the Latin poem gives precise correspondances, but his broad comparison is more easily understood:⁷⁰

Old English	Latin
1-81	1-43
82-97	59-66
98-108	44-50

This table shows that the translator translates lines 44-50 of the Latin text at the end of his poem, and that lines 51-58 and 67-83 of Aldhelm's poem are not translated in Exeter 40 as it has come down to us. It is possible that the translator in fact translated lines 44-58 after 59-66, after which he continued to translate lines 67-83. Without the missing folio, of course, only speculation is possible.

In addition to following the structure of Aldhelm's poem, the translator takes great care to reproduce his vocabulary, including the unusual step of borrowing

⁶⁹ See Williamson 266-8 for exact correspondances between the Latin and Old English poems.

⁷⁰ This table is reproduced from Williamson 266.

Classical names like Vulcan and Zephyrus directly into Old English. This punctiliousness sometimes results in errors, as in line 66, where the translator mistakes the Latin adjective "pernix," "swift," for the name of a bird, which he gives in Old English as the "pernex."⁷¹ In addition to its eclectic vocabulary, Exeter 40 is distinguished by a high percentage of lines with a single alliterating element in the first syllable, and occasional rhyme and assonance. Though these last two are features of Aldhelm's poem as well, the Anglo-Saxon translator does not use them in as consistent or deliberate a way as Aldhelm.

The following lines typify the approach of the Anglo-Saxon poet. Each antithesis occupies exactly four lines, sporadically ornamented by assonance, and the alliteration reveals the poet's loose adherence to the norms of Anglo-Saxon prosody:

Hyrre ic eom heofone; hateþ me heahcýning
his deagol þing dyre bihealdan;
eac ic under eorþan eal sceawige
wom wraðscrafu wraþra gesta.
Ic eom micle ylðra þonne ymbhwyrft þes
oþþe þes middangeard meahte geweorþan,
ond ic giestron wæs geong acenned,
mære to monnum, þurh minre modor hrif.
Ic eom fægerre frætsum goldes,
þeah hit mon awerge wirum utan;
ic eom wyrsligre þonne þes wudu fula
oððe þis waroð þe her aworpen ligeð.
(Riddle 40 38-49)

I am higher than Heaven; the High King commands me to behold his precious secrets; yet beneath the Earth I gaze upon every affliction of Hell's cruel guests. I am much older than the world or the compass of the Earth might be, and I, young, was born yesterday, well-known to mankind, through my mother's womb. I am fairer

⁷¹ See Steen 103 for a discussion of the misunderstanding that may have led the poet to translate "pernix" as "pernex."

than an ornaments of gold, though a man might cover it with wires on the outside; I am viler than this foul wood or the sea-weed which lies here cast up.

These twelve lines consist of three antitheses of exactly four lines. Each antitheses splits neatly in half, with two lines devoted to a proposition and two devoted to its opposite. The Anglo-Saxon poet is not quite so likely as Aldhelm to signal the opposition--of the three antitheses in this passage, only the first is clearly indicated by "eac," which has some adversative force. The contrast in the second antithesis is signaled by "ond," and though Aldhelm does sometimes use "et," he frequently combines it with another word to emphasize the contrast, as in "et rursus" in the example above. The third antithesis has no indication of contrast at all, only the semicolon placed there by the modern editor. This passage also displays the translator's tendency towards single alliteration: eight out of the twelve lines (39, 42-4, 46-9) have only two alliterating elements.

In contrast to the examples from Aldhelm, this passage has little decoration. There are a few light touches of assonance: the repetition of "ea" ("eac," "eal" and "sceawige") in line 40; the repetition of "æ" ("fægerre," "frætwum") in 46; and the sequence of short "u" ("wudu fula") in 48. Though the assonance ornaments individual lines, it does not help to tie together the antitheses in the way Aldhelm's rhetoric often does. The only other ornamentation in this passage is a few instances of generative composition, a device which O'Brien O'Keeffe argues is the primary stylistic device in the Old English poem (O'Brien O'Keeffe, "Art" 112).

O'Brien O'Keeffe defines generative composition as "a habit of contiguous lexical recurrence where forms reappear, often with varied lexical and syntactic shapes, within a few lines" ("Art" 112). In the above passage, it occurs in line 38,

where positive of the comparative "hyrre" is repeated in the first element of "heahcýning," and again in line 41, where the element "wrað" in "wraðscrafu" is repeated in the b-verse as "wraþra."

These instances, along with other instances of generative composition in the poem, are charted by O'Brien O'Keeffe in her article ("Art" 113). Her table shows a large number of instances of generative composition, distributed more or less evenly throughout the poem. The repeated forms nearly always occur within ten lines, but not always within a single antithesis. Of the 35 occurrences of generative composition O'Brien O'Keeffe lists on her table, 16 happen inside the bounds of an antithesis. Of those 16, seven happen across the thesis-antithesis boundary so that they highlight the contrast in the poem. Of these, O'Brien O'Keeffe writes:

Such binary repetition of forms, as it occurs throughout the translation, has an effect which reaches beyond the simple linking of discrete ideas in the translation. Where the repeated forms occur within antitheses, they heighten the sense of contrast, for the antithesis in this case is formed not from antonyms but from polar opposites (x and not-x), and such repetition restricts the lexical fields within which the antithesis is stated. And so, in translating Aldhelm's opposition: *cincinnos...nullos/caesaries* (ll. 44, 47), the translator expresses the antithesis with the same forms: *loccas...wræste gewundne/ wundne loccas* (ll. 98, 99, 104). The resulting economy of language makes the contrast that much starker in the Latin. Were these repetitions casual or random, their effect within the translation would be negligible, but their frequency and intensity alter the character of Aldhelm's vision ("Art" 114).

O'Brien O'Keeffe's reading of the translation here is sensitive and accurate, and illuminates a subtle aspect of the Anglo-Saxon poet's artistry.

It is easy, however, to extrapolate from her example that generative composition always functions in the same way, and that such subtle artistry pervades the Old English poem. As I have mentioned, though, more than half of the

examples of generative composition do not occur within an antitheses, and only seven actually highlight the contrast in the way O'Brien O'Keeffe demonstrates. Her general conclusion that "the tension between opposites in the Old English poem is stronger than in the Latin. Aldhelm develops through synonymy; the lexicon of the Old English translation reduces by identity" still stands, as does her description of the lexically-restricted Old English poem as "starker" than its Latin source ("Art" 114). My only disagreement is with her implication that the Anglo-Saxon translator controls his use of generative composition as tightly as Aldhelm controls his use of alliteration, chiasmus and word-pictures.

The Anglo-Saxon poet's willingness to use generative composition to forge verbal links across the antitheses as well as within them shows that he deviated from Aldhelm's rhetorical structure rather than replicating it. O'Brien O'Keeffe's data therefore confirm what we have already suggested about this translation: it is faithful and effective, but lacks the carefully-planned ornamentation of Aldhelm's poem. Instead it has a looser rhetorical style all its own, one which cuts across the units of sense instead of reinforcing them. I do not mean to suggest that one form of ornamentation is inferior to the other, only that they are distinct, and that, though the stylistic decoration of the Old English poem is effective, it is not as precise as Aldhem's Latin rhetoric.

These claims about the Anglo-Saxon translator's approach may be tested with reference to the other two Creation riddles, Exeter 66 and 92. Riddle 92, unfortunately, only survives in fragments, but 66 is long enough (and intact enough) to illuminate some of Exeter 40's peculiarities:

Ic eom mære þonne þes middangeard,
læsse þonne hondwurm, leohtre þonne mona,
swiftre þonne sunne. Sæs me sind ealle
flodas on fæðmum ond þes foldan bearm,
grene wongas. Grundum ic hrine,
helle underhnige, heofonas oferstige,
wuldres eþel, wide ræce
ofer engla eard; eorþan gefylle,
ealne middangeard ond merestreamas
side mid me sylfum. Saga hwæt ic hatte.⁷²

I am greater than the world, smaller than a hand-worm, lighter than the moon, swifter than the sun. The seas all come within my embrace and the bosom of this Earth, the green plains. I touch the ground, descend below Hell, stand above the Heavens, the kingdom of wonders, I spread out widely over the realm of the angels; I fill the world, the whole Earth and the waters of the ocean widely with my self. Say what I am called.

The relationship of this riddle to Exeter 40 has been the subject of some debate.

According to Williamson, Dietrich believed the riddle to be based on ll. 61 ff. of

Exeter 40, while Herzfeld thought it a condensed version of the whole riddle and

Tupper thought it corresponded with ll. 82-97 of Exeter 40.⁷³ Williamson's own analysis is inconclusive:

The *hondwurm* appears in both poems (and may have been inspired in each case by the Latin *exiguo, sulcat qui corpora, verme* in line 66 of Aldhelm), but apart from that it is difficult to say whether the grander sentiments of *Rid.* 64 [66] were inspired by *Rid.* 38 [40], Aldhelm's "Creatura," or both. At any rate this "creation" riddle is shorter than its predecessor and less bound to the recurrent notion of paradoxical pairs. To be sure the creature is *mare* (1*a*) and *læsse* (2*a*), but it is also *leohtre* (2*b*) and *swiftre* (3*a*) without being either "darker" or "slower" (Williamson 333).

A close comparison of Exeter 66 and Exeter 40 reveals no consistent

correspondance. The "hondwurm" of line 2 shows up in Ex. 40 line 96, and lines 4

⁷² Text of Riddle 66 from Williamson 105-6 (as riddle 64).

⁷³ See Williamson 268-9 for a fuller discussion of Exeter 40's relationship to the other creation riddles.

and 5 correspond well with Ex. 40 50-51, as well as 82-83 where the same lines are repeated. Line 6, though, seems to be inspired by Ex. 40 38-41, and the content of lines 8 and 9 bears a vague resemblance to Ex. 40 line 27. It therefore does not seem likely that Exeter 66 is a reproduction of part of Exeter 40 or its Latin source. Herzfeld's suggestion is thus the most likely, though Exeter 66 is in no way a neat summary of Exeter 40.

Regardless of the relationship between the two poems, their differing rhetorical strategies are worthy of comment. Exeter 40, as I have shown, expands its Latin source by translating each line of Latin with two of Old English, creating a normative scheme of four-line antitheses. The antitheses in Exeter 66 are much shorter, occupying a single line or half-line. As Williamson points out above, Exeter 66 does not consist entirely of antitheses; some of the claims are open-ended. The compactness of the antitheses and the avoidance of a strict structure reveal another approach to a creation riddle, and suggest the translator of Exeter 40 must have followed his source carefully and deliberately.

What survives of Exeter 92 shows the same approach as 66:

Smeþr[.....]ad
 hyrre þonne heofon[.....
] glædre þonne sunne,
 [.....]style,
 smeare þonne sealt ry[.....]
 leofre þonne þis leoht eall, leohdre þonne w[.....]

Smoother.....?
 higher than Heaven.....
, gladder than the sun,
 steel,
 subtler than salt ?.....

dearer than all this light, lighter than ?.....⁷⁴

Though it is difficult to say much about the poem, it is clear that Exeter 92 also favors short sense units, some only a half-line in length, and that it was not structured purely as a set of antitheses. In lines 5-6, for example, relatively little has been lost, and subtler:dearer and dearer:lighter make no sense as antitheses. They must, as in Exeter 66, be a series of unconnected assertions. In this way the fragments that remain of Exeter 92, along with Exeter 66, reveal the care the translator of Exeter 40 must have taken in order to translate his source so precisely and distinctively. This care, evident from a quick comparison of Exeter 40 with the other creation riddles in the Exeter Book, becomes vividly apparent with a sustained look at the poem.

The first 15 lines of Exeter 40 have probably received the most attention as evidence of careful translation. Since Tupper, scholars have remarked that these lines diverge significantly from Aldhelm's Latin, and that they are the best evidence of the Anglo-Saxon translator's artistry.⁷⁵ Though these claims are perfectly true, they obscure the fact that the Old English poet does not match Aldhelm's rhetorical sophistication, avoiding the glittering ornaments of the Latin while carefully preserving its overall structure:

Ece is se scyppend, se þas eorþan nu
wreðstuðum wealdeð ond þas world healdeð.
Rice is se reccend on on ryht cyning,
ealra anwalda; eorþan ond heofones
healdeð ond wealdeð swa he ymb þas utan hweorfeð.
He mec wrætlice worhte æt frymþe

⁷⁴ Text of Exeter 92 from Williamson; translation is the author's.

⁷⁵ For careful analyses of these lines, see O'Brien O'Keefe, "Art" 110-12 and Steen 101-2.

þa he þisne ymbhwyrft ærest sette;
 heht me waccende wunian longe
 þæt ic ne slepe siþþan æfre,
 ond mec semninga slæp ofergongeþ--
 beoð eagum min ofestum betyred.
 Þisne middangeard mechtig dryhten
 mid his onwalde æghwær styreð;
 swa ic mid waldendes worde ealne
 þisne ymbhwyrft utan ymbclyppe.⁷⁶

Eternal is the Creator, who now guards the pillars of the Earth and protects this world. Powerful is the Ruler and rightfully king, the sole ruler of all: He guards and protects Heaven and Earth just as he winds around it from the outside. He wondrously made me at the beginning when he first established the world; He ordered me, wakeful, to abide for a long time, that I not sleep ever after, and immediately sleep overcame me—my eyes are often shut. The mighty Lord governs this world with His authority everywhere; just so I embrace this world from without with the Ruler's every word.

Aldhelm's Latin, as I have shown above, is marked by alliteration and chiasmic structures. The 8-line introduction consists of three periods: lines 1-4, lines 5 and 6, and lines 7 and 8. The Old English translator is guided by Aldhelm's periods, but simplifies the syntax by sub-dividing them. He divides the first period, which is both long and complex, into four main clauses: ll. 1-2, 3-4a, 4b-5, and 6-7. He thus does not observe the "standard" 2:1 ratio of Old English to Latin lines in his translation. Aldhelm's second period, lines 5 and 6, corresponds with lines 8-11 of the Old English poem, which contain two main clauses. Aldhelm's third period, lines 7 and 8, furnishes the material for lines 12-15, which consist of two clauses connected by "swa." Though O'Brien O'Keefe is surely correct in saying that the length of Aldhelm's periods contributes to the unusual length of the clauses in the Old English

⁷⁶ Old English and Latin text from Williamson 91 and 266, respectively. Translations are the author's.

poem, she neglects to mention that the Old English translation still simplifies and shortens those periods considerably.⁷⁷

I have described above how Aldhelm ornaments his introduction with a number of stylistic devices: alliteration is the most prominent, accompanied by dynamic word choice, metrical patterning and variations on the golden line. By contrast, Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe has argued that the Old English translator replaces these many devices by his frequent use of generative composition. That tendency is easy to see in this passage, which contains 9 of the 35 instances of generative repetition O'Brien O'Keefe counts in the poem: "eorþan" (1b and 4b), "wealdeð" (2a and 5a), "healdeð" (2b and 5a), "utan" (5b and 15b), "slepe/slæp" (9a and 10b), "anwalda/wealdeð" (4a and 5a), "hweorfeð/ymbhwyrft" (5b and 7a), "onwalde/waldendes" (13a and 14a), and the complex series "ymb...hweorfeð/ymbhwyrft/ymbhwyrft/ymbclippe" (5b, 7a, 15a and 15b) (O'Brien O'Keefe, "Art" 113).

In some cases, the repetition lines up well with Aldhelm's rhetoric. For example line 15, "þisne ymbhwyrft utan ymbclyppe," in which the repetition of "ymb" seems to punctuate the end of the introduction in the same way as the alliteration in Aldhelm line 8, "Sic ego complector sub caeli cardine cuncta." This is not always the case, however. The repetition of "ymb" within line 15 may help punctuate the passage, but the other uses of "ymb" in ll. 5b and 7a tie the different clauses together in a way that Aldhelm does not; as I have shown, Aldhelm is quite

⁷⁷ O'Brien O'Keefe, "Art" 110 for her observation that "...the syntactic configuration of many of the Old English lines may well have been determined by the pressure of Aldhelm's periods..."

consistent in the way he keeps his sense units rhetorically as well as thematically separate. As an Old English poetic technique, this sort of generative repetition is familiar from (among other places) the *Phoenix*, whose introduction also makes good use of repetition to communicate the singular beauty of the phoenix's eastern paradise. Though the effect in riddle 40, as in the *Phoenix*, is powerful, it does blur the boundaries of Aldhelm's regimented aesthetic, expressing the glory of Creation as a tangle of interconnected ideas rather than in a discrete series.

These tendencies of the Anglo-Saxon translator are also visible in his translation of the "typical" passage from Aldhelm cited above, *Engima* 100 27-34, which correspond to Exeter 40 50-65. I include both passages here for the sake of comparison:

Ic eorþan eom æghwær brædre
ond widgielra þonne þes wong grena;
folm mec mæg bifon ond fingras þry
utan eaþe ealle ymbclyppan.
Heardra ic eom ond caldra þonne se hearda forst,
hrim heorugrimma, þonne he to hrusan cymeð;
ic eom Ulcanus upirnendan
leohtan leoman, lege hatra.
Ic eom on goman gena swetra
þonne þu beobread blende mid hunige;
swylce ic eom wrapre þonne wermod sy
þe her on hyrstum heasewe stondeþ.
Ic mesan mæg meahtelicor
ond efnetan ealdum þyrse;
ond ic gesælige mæg symle lifgan,
þeah ic ætes ne sy æfre to feore.
(Exeter 40 50-65)

I am everywhere broader than the Earth and more expansive than this green plain; a hand may grasp me and three fingers may easily surround me from outside. I am harder and colder than the hard frost, fierce rime, when it falls to the earth; I am hotter in my fire than Vulcan when his beam of light rises up. Moreover I am sweeter to men than the honeycomb laden with honey; just as I am more bitter than the wormwood which stands here grey in the woods. I may eat very mightily, equal

to the giants of old; and I may live, happy with my feast, though no food ever add to my life.

Lator, en, patulis terrarum finibus exto
Et tamen in media concludor parte pugilli,
Frigidior brumis necnon candente pruina,
Cum sim Vulcani flammis torrentibus ardens,
Dulcior in palato quam lenti nectaris haustus
Dirior et rursus quam glauca absinthia campi.
Mando dapes mordax lurconum more Ciclopum,
Cum possim iugiter sine victu vivere felix.
("Creatura" 27-43)

I am wider, oh, than the broad boundaries of the Earth and yet I can be shut up in the middle part of a closed fist, I am colder than midwinter and shining frost, though I burn with Vulcan's raging flames, I am sweeter to the taste than a draught of delicate nectar, and on the contrary I am more bitter than green wormwood from the field. Biting, I devour my feast after the fashion of the gluttonous Cyclopes, though I, happy, am able to live indefinitely without food.

Here Aldhelm's periods are quite short; each line of his Latin is a complete clause, frequently assuming the addition of an "est" by the reader. The antitheses in this passage are all exactly two lines long, and consist either of two independent clauses (27-28, 31-32) or an independent clause followed by a concessive "cum" clause (29-30, 33-34). Though these "cum" clauses are technically subordinate clauses, they are syntactically similar to the independent clauses in the passage, and do not detract from the passage's paratactic feel: "cum sim" in l. 30 might easily be replaced by "sed sum." The translator follows this regular structure closely, translating each of Aldhelm's lines by two lines of Old English and producing antitheses of exactly four lines.

Though he maintains the balance of Aldhelm's antitheses exactly, the translator does not preserve the ornamentation so scrupulously. Lines 50-53, which correspond to Aldhelm's lines 27 and 28, do not preserve the word-pictures in their

source, or compensate for their absence with any other rhetorical flourish. Ex. 40 50-53 are perfectly good lines of Old English poetry, excepting perhaps the single alliteration in line 51, but they are not marked out in the same way as Aldhelm's lines.

In lines 54-57, there is perhaps an echo of Aldhelm's rhetoric. Aldhelm 100 ll. 29-30 are distinguished mainly by the spondaic heaviness of l. 30, which sets it apart from l. 29. In the Old English translation, lines 56-7, which correspond to the spondaic line 30, are metrically very spare, in contrast to the large number of unstressed syllables in ll. 54-5. The relative prominence of the stressed syllables in 56-7 imitates the heaviness of the spondees in Aldhelm's line 30.

Aldhelm's next two lines are distinguished by their syntax: both use a comparative adjective followed by a "quam" clause. Lines 58 and 60 of Exeter 40 both use "ic eom" plus a comparative adjective followed by "þonne," but this construction is not as distinctive in the Old English poem as the "quam" clause is in the Latin. Lines 50-51 and 54 use the same construction, while the "quam" clauses only occur in ll.31-32 in this passage from Aldhelm.

The final two lines of this passage from Aldhelm are distinguished by their alliteration, but the Old English translator does not use any comparable device in his poem. These lines alliterate no better than the rest of his poem, and there is no significant assonance, rhyme or metrical patterning. The Old English poet also does not seem to translate the etymological play on "victus" and "vivere," highlighted in Aldhelm by the alliteration of the two words and their placement next to one another.

Of the four antitheses translated in this passage, the Old English poet creates ornamentation analagous to his source in only one case. Though this reveals the Old English poet's ability to detect Aldhelm's rhetorical play, it also suggests that he does not consciously replicate it continuously throughout his own poem.

These same tendencies hold even when the Anglo-Saxon poet translates the less typical parts of his source. The description of the flowers in lines 13-17 of Aldhelm 100 is an excellent example; it contains long periods, an unbalanced antitheses and a particularly challenging vocabulary:

Ic eom on stence strengre micle
þonne ricels oþþe rose sy
* * * on eorþan tyrf
wynlic weaxeð; ic eom wræstre þonne heo.
Peah þe lilie sy leof moncynne,
beorht on blostman, ic eom betre þonne heo;
swylce ic nardes stenc nyde oferswiþe
mid minre swetnesse symle æghwær,
ond ic fulre eom þonne þis fen swearte
þæt her yfle adelan stinceð.
(Riddle 40 23-32)

I am much stronger in scent than incense or the rose . . . grows joyfully on a clod of earth; I am more delicate than she. Though the lily be dear to man, bright in its blossom, I am better than she; so also of necessity I surpass the fragrance of nard with my sweetness always and everywhere, and I am fouler than this dark fen which reeks here with evil disease.

Prorsus odorato ture flagrantior halans
Olfactum ambrosiae, necnon crescentia glebae
Lilia purpureis possum conexa rosetis
Vincere spirantis nardi dulcedine plena;
Nunc olida caeni squalentis sorde putresco.
("Creatura" 13-17)

Straightaway I more sweetly breathe out the odor of ambrosia than fragrant incense, and I am also able to overcome lilies growing on the earth mixed with purple (red?) roses, full of the sweetness of sweet-smelling nard; now I stink, redolent with the odor of foul muck.

Aldhelm's Latin in this passage presents a particular challenge to the Anglo-Saxon translator for two reasons: the four-line period in lines 13-16, and the fact that the whole antithesis is unbalanced. Most of Aldhelm's antitheses are split into equal parts, with the thesis and antithesis occupying the same number of lines, usually two or four. This antithesis, however, has a five-line thesis with only a single line antithesis.

The long period is also complex, including three verb-forms: "halans" (l.13), "possum" (l.15) and "vincere" (l.16). The object of "vincere" is quite complex, occupying almost all of line 15: "lilia purpureis conexa rosetis." The complexity of line 15 is underscored by the fact that the adjectives and nouns are arranged around the verb as a golden line, with the noun-adjective pairs interlocked:

n1 a2 v a1 n2
lilia purpureis possum conexa rosetis

The passage is also distinguished by its rich and varied vocabulary of scent: "odorato," "halans," "olfactum," and "spirantis" are all words for smells or smelling, matched by "olida" and "putresco" in the antithesis.

The Anglo-Saxon translator overcomes these challenges creatively, but in doing so he changes the tone of his poem a great deal. He tackles Aldhelm's long period by splitting it into three parts: the discussion of roses in ll.23-6; the description of lilies in ll.27-8; and the description of nard in 29-30, linked by "ond" to a two-line translation of Aldhelm's antithesis. Thus, rather than weaving the lilies and roses together as Aldhelm does in his golden line, the translator separates them

into their own clauses, improving the poem's clarity at the expense of complex ornamentation.

The same aesthetic guides the translator in his treatment of Aldhelm's vocabulary; he reduces Aldhelm's rich and varied vocabulary of smelling to two instances of "stenc" (23 and 29) and one of "stinceð" (32). This change is precisely what O'Brien O'Keefe meant when she wrote that the Old English poet "reduces by identity," creating a "starker" poem than his source (O'Brien O'Keefe, "Art" 114). In contrast to my earlier examples of generative composition, though, this one occurs entirely within a single antitheses, and so mimics the way Aldhelm's rhetoric tends to tie discrete sense units together.

The evidence of these three passages shows that the Old English translator was a sensitive reader and capable translator, but that he rejected Aldhelm's most elaborate rhetorical and stylistic choices in favor of a simpler, clearer poem in which the separation of the antitheses is mitigated by the generative repetition of words and word-elements across the boundaries of the sense units.

The care with which the translator of Exeter 40 modifies his source suggests that he was well-educated and sensitive to the careful construction of Aldhelm's hexameters and the structure of his antitheses. Both Riddle 35 and Riddle 40 are appreciative of the intellectual and etymological outlook of their sources, and strive to capture the way Aldhelm mirrors the content of his riddles in their form. Though the translated Riddles might not display the same virtuosity as the *Phoenix*, they nonetheless possess the same close relationship to their Latin sources, typified by

their authors' sensitivity to Latin rhetoric and learned appreciation of the etymological and intellectual subtleties of Aldhelm's verse.

Chapter 3: Theory into Practice: the Alfredian *Meters of Boethius*

The previous two chapters on the *Phoenix* and the *Exeter Book* riddles have, among other things, significantly complicated the Alfred-centered model of translation. The high level of Latinity and poetic ambition displayed by those poems suggests that any description of translation in Anglo-Saxon England must take into account several different, though equally vital, moments of engagement with Latin literature. This chapter uses the *Meters of Boethius* to investigate the Alfredian cultural moment, illuminating the rhetorical strategies and intellectual agenda particular to Alfred's program of translation. That analysis helps to define the contrasts among the different Anglo-Saxon contexts for translation, providing a stronger basis for comparison than the theoretical considerations of Alfred's prefaces alone.

The Alfredian style is primarily that of the glossator, concerned with elucidating difficult moments in Boethius' text and leaving the reader with no doubt as to the spiritual import of the *Consolatio*. This narrow focus on meaning, however, comes at the expense of style: with a few exceptions, the translator of the *Meters* takes little inspiration from Boethius' rhetorical strategies. In this respect, the *Meters* represent a kind of translation quite different from the *Phoenix* and riddles 35 and 40. The same is true of the *Meters'* intellectual engagement with their source. While the *Phoenix* poet took great joy in complicating the allegorical dimension of the *De Ave*, the translator of the *Meters* always strives to simplify, avoiding ambiguity in favor of clear and specific meaning. These two principles, one

on the level of form, the other on the level of content, encompass Alfred's distinctive contribution to the practice of poetic translation in Anglo-Saxon England.

The *Meters of Boethius* are, as their name suggests, translated from the metrical portions of Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae*, one of the masterpieces of Late Antique philosophy.⁷⁸ The *Meters of Boethius* are challenging texts to discuss for a number of reasons. Their textual tradition is vexed, their relationship to the rest of the Alfredian corpus uncertain.⁷⁹ As it has come down to us, Alfred's Boethius exists in two distinct and quite different versions. The first, Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 180, which Godden calls the B text, contains a translation of the *Consolatio* into Old English prose. The second manuscript is Godden's C text, British Library Cotton Otho A vi, which contains an Old English version in which prose and verse passages alternate according to the model of the Latin original.⁸⁰

The Cotton manuscript was among the victims of the Cotton Library fire of 1731, and many of the *Meters* were damaged or destroyed. Fortunately there is a transcription, made by Franciscus Junius before the fire, which includes a critical text of the OE prose sections as well as the text of the *Meters* from the Cotton manuscript.⁸¹ Junius' transcript preserves much information about MS C destroyed

⁷⁸ Text of the *Consolatio* from the CSEL edition. For a thorough overview of Boethius' life, as well as his cultural and intellectual context, see Chadwick 1-66 and Matthews *passim*.

⁷⁹ See Godden, *Boethius* i 140-5, as well as Godden, "Alfred" and Bately for contrasting points of view on Alfred's role in the production of the Alfredian materials.

⁸⁰ See Godden, *Boethius* i. 9-24 for full descriptions of these manuscripts.

⁸¹ See Godden, *Boethius* i.24-34 for an analysis of Junius' efforts to edit the two manuscripts in a single, composite text, as well as the value of his transcript as a witness for those parts of MS C destroyed in the Cotton fire.

in the Cotton fire, though it is impossible to be sure his transcript is an accurate representation of those poems that were completely destroyed.⁸²

In addition to these complete texts, there is a mysterious witness known only as the "Napier fragment," a single leaf reportedly bound into Bodleian MS Junius 86, transcribed by Napier in 1886 and subsequently lost.⁸³ The Napier fragment is significant since it seems to have been the earliest witness to the text, though it is unclear whether it came from a prose or prosimetric version. Even if the fragment were found, though, it is unlikely that it would by itself be an important witness to the text of the Old English Boethius.

According to the prose preface, which survives in both B and C, Alfred translated the *Consolatio* into prose and then later returned to his project to adapt his prose translations of the meters into verse.⁸⁴ Virtually every particular of this narrative has been questioned at some point, but Godden cautiously supports it as an accurate description based on the evidence that has come down to the modern period: "it seems on the whole likely that the [prose version] represented by B was designed to be read and circulated, and that the [prosimetric version] represented by C was a subsequent adaptation, but this cannot be certain" (Godden *Boethius* 46).

⁸² Godden suggests that Junius "was not, and did not intend to be, an accurate transcriber of the manuscript" (*Boethius* i.34). Griffiths, on the other hand, characterizes Junius' alterations as "usually minimal," and concludes that "it would be wretchedly ungrateful not to acknowledge how much we owe to Junius for painstakingly preserving the text of the *Metres of Boethius*, that would otherwise be sadly defective" (18).

⁸³ For more information on the Napier Fragment, see Godden, *Boethius* 34-41 and Kiernan *passim*.

⁸⁴ See Godden, *Boethius* 44-6 for an exploration of the implications of this relationship, and 141-2 for the possibility that the prefaces are not reliable evidence of authorship.

This project takes the same stance as Janet Bately in identifying Alfred as the authorizer, if not the author, of the four texts at the heart of the Alfredian canon. For this reason I refer to Alfred's method of translating. Though I recognize that Alfred may have had significant help, may not truly be the "author" of these texts in the modern sense of the word, the Alfredian texts nonetheless reflect the king's intentions and perspective on Latin literature.

In addition to the debates about authorship and text, the two-part composition of the *Meters* raises another question: can a poem adapted primarily from a prose version truly be considered a poetic translation? In my view, there are two major reasons why it can. First, there is evidence that indicates that some of the differences between the *Meters* in C and their prose equivalents in B reveal the direct influence of the Latin text on C.⁸⁵ That is to say, the versifier(s) may well have consulted the original Latin in composing the Old English verse texts, giving the *Meters* a claim to be thought of as a direct translation.

Second, there is no reason to assume that it was standard practice for a poet to translate Latin verse directly into Old English verse. Though no prose draft survives from the composition of the *Phoenix*, the Exeter Riddles, or *Judgment Day II*, it does not therefore follow that the existence of such a draft disqualifies a text from being considered a poetic translation. The desire to disqualify the *Meters* as poetry may come more from scholars' dim view of their poetic technique than any

⁸⁵ See Godden, *Boethius* 80 n.3 for a list of such instances.

intellectual principle.⁸⁶ Despite their bad reputation as poetry, the *Meters* have much to offer as sources for the Alfredian practice of translation.

The Alfredian *Meters* are most interesting in the ways they depart from their Latin sources. Alfred is creative in his treatment of Boethius' metaphors, often elaborating at length, sometimes great length, on what he finds in the *Consolatio*. In fact, these elaborations typify Alfred's approach to translation in the *Meters of Boethius*. Boethius' poems are terse and abstract, leaving the reader to figure out the philosophical weight of the metaphors they use. The *Meters*, by contrast, are quite specific and concrete, due to Alfred's frequent explanatory interpolations.

These interpolations feel very much like explanatory glosses. In fact, some of them have been shown to derive from manuscript glosses or commentaries on the *Consolatio*. For a time, scholars believed that most of Alfred's additions derived from the Remigian commentary tradition, one of two major strands of commentaries on the *Consolatio*. Recent work, however, has called that traditional narrative into question, and it is now unclear whether Alfred made systematic use of any commentary at all.⁸⁷

Regardless of whether Alfred borrowed his material from glosses or created it himself, the need to extract a specific, spiritual meaning from Boethius' meters is paramount. It is this need to digest the Latin source and prepare it for popular

⁸⁶ See Griffiths' somewhat oblique comment, "critical comments on the verse technique of the *Metres* have been consistently adverse..." (45).

⁸⁷ For an overview of the Remigian and St. Gall traditions of commentary on the *Consolatio*, see Beaumont 282-95. See Wittig for the argument that the *Boethius* does not seem to have strong affinities with any particular commentary tradition. Godden, "Latin Commentary Tradition" is a recent re-examination of the case for the influence of Remigian commentary on the Old English *Boethius*.

consumption, to replace ambiguity with clarity, that distinguishes Alfred from the other translator-poets in Anglo-Saxon England.

In its most basic form, Alfred's strategy of explanatory glossing may be observed in meter 10, a translation of *DCP* II met. 7. In that poem, Boethius decries the futility of seeking earthly glory, illustrating his point (somewhat disingenuously) by referring to several famous Romans whose memories have faded away in spite of their great deeds. It is these three names, Brutus, Cato and Fabricius, that provide the occasion for Alfred's glosses, designed to make the impact of those three names clear to an audience that might not have recognized them. In the case of Fabricius, Alfred seems to have decided that the name was so obscure that an explanatory gloss would not suffice—Alfred replaces Fabricius with Weland in his version, a choice which has generated a certain amount of commentary, but whose significance is still open for discussion. Boethius' style is typically terse, though not without touches of artistry:

Quicumque solam mente praecipiti petit
summumque credit gloriam,
late patentis aetheris cernat plagas
artumque terrarum situm;
breuem replere non ualentis ambitum
pudebit aucti nominis.
Quid, o superbi, colla mortali iugo
frustra leuari gestiunt?
Licet remotos fama per populos means
diffusa linguas explicet
et magna titulis fulgeat claris domus,
mors spernit altam gloriam,
inuoluit humile pariter et celsum caput
aequatque summis infima.
Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent,
quid Brutus aut rigidus Cato?
Signat superstes fama tenuis pauculis
inane nomen litteris.

Sed quod decora nouimus uocabula
num scire consumptos datur?
Iacetis ergo prorsus ignorabiles
nec fama notos efficit.
Quodsi putatis longius uitam trahi
mortalis aura nominis,
cum sera uobis rapiet hoc etiam dies
iam uos secunda mors manet.
(*DCP* II met. vii 1-26)

Whoever seeks glory alone with a headlong mind, and believes it to be the highest good, let him regard the broad expanses of the sky and the narrow compass of the Earth; he will be ashamed of a name unable to fill such a small space. Why, o arrogant men, do your necks struggle in vain to be released from Death's yoke? Even if wide-ranging fame, wandering through distant peoples, should disentangle their various languages, and a great house might shine forth with clear titles, Death spurns high glory--the lofty head and the humble turn out the same, and the lowest is made equal to the highest. Where now do the bones of faithful Fabricius lie, what of Brutus or strict Cato? Fame marks their remains and empty names with a few feeble words. But what do we recognize from those ornamented letters, if not that they are gone? Therefore you lie utterly ignoble, nor does fame make you known. But if you think that life may be prolonged by the breath of a mortal name, when at last Time takes even this from you, then a second death awaits you.

Boethius' Latin consists of alternating iambic trimeters and dimeters, without the rhetorical extravagance of the Jeweled Style and its inheritors. The terse and abstract diction is typical of Boethius, as in ll. 3-4, where he juxtaposes the "patentes plagas aetheris" with the "artum terrarum situm" to imply that a man concerned with wordly glory should realize how very small the earth is in the grand scheme of things, and by extension how vain the quest for earthly fame truly is. A similar compression characterizes ll. 21-2, in which "mortalis aura nominis," the "breath of a mortal name," stands in for the more complex idea that widespread fame can confer a kind of immortality on a man after death: though his body is gone, something of him lives on in the constant repetition of his name. There is a certain elegance in this economy, though: the compact syntax makes the contrast between

"artum," "narrow," and "patentes," "wide," all the more poignant. The fact that the "patentes plagas" are described in the trimeter while the "artum situm" is described in the dimeter further reinforces the contrast between wide and narrow.

The Old English translator, be he Alfred or someone working at the king's behest, goes to great lengths to expand the poem's terse language and render concrete its various abstractions. To return to one of the above examples, Alfred translates lines 3 and 4 with 7 lines of Old English:

þonne ic hine wolde wordum biddan
þæt he hine æghwonan utan ymbþohte,
sweotole ymbsawe suð, east 7 west
hu widgil sint wolcnum ymbutan
heofones hwealfe: higesnotrum mæg
eaðe ðincan þæt þeos eorðe sie
eall for ðæt oðer ungimet lytel:
(Meter 10 ll.3-9)

then I would bid him in words, that he look everywhere around him, clearly see to the south, east and west, how spacious the skies are around the vault of Heaven: a wise man may easily realize that this Earth is extremely small in comparison with that other.

The translator of this passage is careful to spell out in no uncertain terms the comparison implicit in Boethius' Latin: the heavens are broad, the earth is small, and any thinking man should realize that earthly fame has no significance when compared to the vastness of the universe. For Alfred, ambiguity and abstraction are the leaves and branches in the forest of Classical wisdom, and he carefully trims them away as he cuts the timbers for his own well-ordered house. This desire for concrete language governs the whole translation: at 70 lines of Old English compared to 26 of Latin, the Old English poem significantly exceeds the putative 2:1 ratio of Old English to Latin for a verse translation of a Latin poem.

Alfred's impulse to expand extends to his treatment of the three famous men Boethius uses as *exempla*. The Latin is characteristically terse: Fabricius is "fidelis," Cato "rigidus," but Boethius relies on his audience to know who these men were, and to appreciate the fact that even such famous figures from the past are slowly fading into obscurity, sliding towards the "secunda mors" that will erase their reputations along with their earthly remains. For reasons of space I do not quote the whole of *Meter* 10, only the part that deals with the three names:

hwær sint nu þæs wisan Welandes ban,
 þæs goldsmipes þe wæs geo mærost?
 (forðy ic cwæð þæs wisan Welandes ban
 forþy ængum ne mæg eorðbuendra
 se cræft losian þe him Crist onlænð,
 ne mæg non æfre þy eð ænne wræccan
 his cræftes beniman þe mon oncerran mæg
 sunnan onswifan 7 ðisne swiftan rodor
 of his rihtryne rinca ænig)--
 hwa wat nu þæs wisan Welandes ban
 on hwelcum hlæwa hrusan þeccen?
 hwær is nu se rica Romana wita
 7 se aroda þe we ymb sprecað--
 hiora heretoga se gehaten wæs
 mid þæm burgwarum Brutus nemned?
 hwær is eac se wisa 7 se weorðgeorna
 7 se fæstræda folces hyrde
 se wæs uðwita ælces ðinges,
 cene 7 cræftig, þæm wæs Caton nama?
 hi wæron gefyrn forð gewitene,
 nat nænig mon hwær hi nu sindon:
 hwæt is hiora here buton se hlisa an?
 (Meter 10, ll. 33-54)

Where now are the bones of the wise Weland, of the goldsmith who was once most famous? (for this reason I have said "the bones of the wise Weland," since no man dwelling on Earth may lose the skill which Christ has given to him, nor may anyone more easily deprive an exile of his skill than a man may divert the course of the sun or move the swift heavens from their proper place)--who knows now of wise Weland's bones, what grave or barrow conceals them? Where now is the great counselor of Rome, the bold man whom we speak about--their consul who was called Brutus by the citizens? Where too is the wise and high-souled and well-

counseled guardian of the people who was a sage in all things, keen and crafty, who was called Cato? They died long ago, and now no man knows where they might be: what is their greatness except their reputation alone?

Alfred's impulse to gloss stems in part from the fact that Boethius was correct: household names from the fifth century have lost much of their luster by the ninth. Fabricius especially seems to have suffered, so much so that Alfred chooses to replace him rather than explain his history to an Anglo-Saxon audience.

Why Alfred chose Weland to replace Fabricius is not entirely clear, though several commentators on Alfred's *Boethius* have advanced plausible suggestions, including a persuasive explanation of Alfred's comment about the sun.⁸⁸ Godden sums up scholarly consensus on the matter thus:

It would seem, then, that the author deliberately substituted the Germanic hero Weland, presumably as a kind of joke or imaginative play on the *faber*--goldsmith echo. There is no other evident parallel between the two heroes, and the concern of the Latin metre is with famously honest statesmen. Perhaps the fact that Weland flew away from his captivity gives added point to the rhetorical question about the location of his bones. (Godden, *Old English Boethius* ii, 326).

Though Weland certainly does not qualify as a statesman, or even as famously honest, there is another (albeit tentative) connection between him and the three famous Romans. Brutus, Cato and Fabricius are all examples of Roman civic virtue, "honest statesmen," but they are all also famed for their stoic resistance to tyranny.

Proving this claim is complicated somewhat by the fact that no one has yet decided which Brutus and which Cato Boethius meant in his poem. In the case of Brutus, it hardly matters. Both the first Brutus, who expelled King Tarquin, and the

⁸⁸ On the substitution of Weland for Fabricius, see Godden, *Boethius* 19.16-21 and Griffiths on Meter 10 l.33, as well as Donaghey and Bradley *passim*.

later Brutus who killed Julius Caesar were hailed as tyrannicides acting in defense of Rome. The case of Cato is slightly more complicated. As Godden summarizes,

Modern translations differ on whether Cato the censor (234-149 BC) or his great-grandson Cato the conspirator (95-46 BC) and contemporary of Brutus and Cassius is meant by Boethius. Ambiguous references to a Cato are frequent in the writings of Boethius, and in his commentary on Aristotle's *De interpretatione* he actually offers the statement 'Cato is a philosopher' as an example of a logical ambiguity because it is true of the second Cato but not of the first. OEBo's reference could be to either, since the first was a consul and the second known as a philosopher. The manuscripts offer as glosses both *phylosophus* (Y) and *consul* (F3Go) (Godden, *Old English Boethius* ii, 329).

The text of Boethius seems to offer us little help; he describes Cato only as "rigidus."

Terse as it is, this description recalls another famous description of Cato the conspirator in book II of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, during his austere re-marriage of his former wife, Marcia:

Ille nec horrificam sancto dimovit ab ore
Caesariem, duroque admisit gaudia vultu. -
Ut primum tolli feralia viderat arma,
Intonsos rigidam in frontem descendere canos
Passus erat, moestamque genis increscere barbam.
Uni quippe vacat studiisque odiisque carenti,
Humanum lugere genus. - Nec foedera prisci
Sunt tentata tori: iusto quoque robur amori
Restitit. Hi mores, haec duri immota Catonis
Secta fuit: servare modum, finemque tenere,
Naturamque sequi, patriaeque impendere vitam;
Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo.
Huic epulae, vicisse famem: magnique penates,
Submovisse hiemem tecto: pretiosaque vestis,
Hirtam membra super Romani more Quiritis
Induxisse togam: Venerisque huic maximus usus,
Progenies; Urbi pater est, Urbique maritus:
Iustitiae cultor, rigidi servator honesti:
In commune bonus: nullosque Catonis in actus
Subrepsit partemque tulit sibi nata voluptas.
(*Pharsalia* II, 372-91)

Nor did that man move his bristling hair aside from his righteous face, and he banished joy from his harsh countenance. Since first he saw savage arms taken up,

he let his uncut hair fall onto his stern ("rigidam") face, and his beard to grow wet on his cheeks. To him alone, who was free from love and hatred, was it proper to mourn for the human race. Nor were the bonds of their former bed tried again: his strength resisted even just love. These were the customs, this the fixed path of hard Cato: to keep the middle way, to hold to the goal, to follow Nature, and to weigh his life against his fatherland; to believe himself to have been born not for himself, but for the whole world. To him it was a banquet, to have conquered hunger: a magnificent dwelling, to have kept out winter with a roof: a rich garment, to have put on a hairy toga after the custom of the Romans of old: to him offspring were the highest use of Venus; he was father of the City, and husband of the City: a cultivator of justice, guardian of rigid ("rigidi") honesty: good in common; and inborn desire did not snatch away or carry off any part of Cato's deeds.

In this passage, which celebrates Cato's inflexible character and status as a pinnacle of moral virtue, Lucan uses Cato's "rigid countenance" ("rigida frons," l.375) as a physical reflection of his stewardship of "rigid honesty" ("rigida honestas," l.389). Godden notes how the manuscripts of Boethius "record an odd story about [Cato's] hair and beard to explain the adjective *rigidus*," which may have derived from Lucan's comments about Cato's hair in ll. 372-6.

The association of Boethius' text and the manuscript glosses with Lucan's description of Cato suggests that readers of Boethius understood Cato to be either Cato the conspirator or a conflation of the two Catos. The latter seems more likely in the case of Alfred, who refers to Cato as a consul, "hyrde," which would only have been true of the older Cato.

Fabricius, too, had a long association with Roman virtue, though his career is perhaps less well-known to the modern reader. He was consul in 282 and 278 BC and censor in 275, famous for his role as ambassador to Pyrrhus, a Hellenistic king who opposed Rome's expansion in the 3rd century BC.⁸⁹ Fabricius' literary pedigree

⁸⁹ On the life of the historical Fabricius, see Drummond, "Fabricius Luscinus, Gaius" in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

goes back to Ennius' *Annales*, a pre-Vergilian epic which survives only in fragments. He also appears in Vergil's parade of Roman heroes in *Aeneid* VI, 843-4 as "parvo potentem Fabricium," "Fabricius, powerful in his poverty."⁹⁰ From here, stories about Fabricius' studied poverty and moral rectitude seem to have worked their way into the popular imagination, through Boethius and into several later commentaries on the *Consolatio*, including Nicholas Trevet's (Godden 326).

What this brief exploration of Cato and Fabricius' literary afterlife reveals is that they, Brutus and Weland had something in common: all were used as examples of fortitude in the face of adversity, specifically the threat of tyranny. Thinking about Weland tends to focus on the more exceptional parts of his story, as Bradley points out, many of which are preserved in the ninth-century *Völundarkviða* (Bradley 43). For an Anglo-Saxon audience, better evidence of Weland's reputation might be found in the enigmatic short poem *Deor*, which begins with an oblique reference to Weland's story:

Weland him be wurmum wræces cunnade,
 anhydig eorl earfoða dreag,
 hæfde him to gesiþþe sorge ond longað,
 wintercealde wræce; wean oft onfond,
 siþþan hine Niðhad on nede lege,
 swoncre seonobende on syllan monn.
 þæs ofereode, þisses swa mæg!⁹¹
 (*Deor* 1-7)

Weland knew affliction by worms, the single-minded man suffered miseries, had sorrow and longing as companions, an exile in the cold of winter; he often found woe, after Niðhad lay him in distress, supple sinew-bands on a worthy man. That passed away, so may this also!

⁹⁰ Text of the *Aeneid* from Mynors; translation by the author.

⁹¹ For the text of *Deor*, see Krapp and Dobbie, *ASPR* III. Translation mine.

The basic outline of Weland's history with Niðhad, which may be extracted from *Völundarkviða*, is this: Weland's enemy, king Niðhad, captured him and hamstrung him in order to prevent his escape. He forced Weland to work as his smith until the artificer contrived to escape by flying away, after killing Niðhad's sons to make drinking cups out of their skulls, and raping and impregnating his daughter.⁹² But it is not this bloody revenge that interests the *Deor* poet; it is Weland's stoic resistance in the face of the miseries inflicted upon him that gives the poet a measure of consolation: this too shall pass, as the poem's refrain asserts. Finally the fact that Weland suffers and ultimately prevails over an unjust king puts him in the same class as Brutus, Cato and Fabricius: each one of those figures of virtue had a king (or would-be king, in the case of Brutus the assassin) as their adversary.

There is one further point of contact between Weland and Boethius' famous Romans. Weland, like Brutus, Cato and Fabricius to a fifth-century audience, is caught in the limbo between his first and second deaths, a collection of "decora vocabula" well on his way to oblivion. He is already a shadowy figure in Anglo-Saxon literature, part of a mythical backdrop against which the stories of the present are told. Fabricius reveals the fate that awaits him: he has already met his second death in Anglo-Saxon England, with even his "inane nomen" erased to make room for a more familiar figure. Though Alfred could not have intended this irony, it cannot help but strike the modern reader contemplating Boethius' philosophical position along with the textual tradition of his work.

⁹² For text, translation and commentary on *Volundarkviða*, see Dronke 234-338.

As complicated as it may be to resolve some of the issues raised by Alfred's interpolations in meter 10, the "glosses" themselves are relatively simple. Aided in some way by the commentary tradition, perhaps filtered through his circle of court scholars, Alfred has augmented the text just enough to make clear to his Anglo-Saxon audience the significance of the names Boethius has chosen: these are famous men, but even fame has its limits. We may contrast this relatively circumscribed interpolation with some of Alfred's more elaborate, imaginative interventions in meters 7, 26 and 20, in which the Alfredian "glosses" do much more than simply render the Latin intelligible to a 10th century, Anglo-Saxon audience.

Meter 7 adapts its source, *DCP* II m.4, with the same glossatorial strategy as Meter 10, but does so in a more elaborate and convoluted way. Meter 7 thus represents the next step in the evolution of Alfred's glossing strategy: rather than simply augmenting the poem by glossing unfamiliar names, Alfred uses his glosses on Boethius' imagery (many of which come from glossed manuscripts of the *Consolatio*) to build up a consistent allegorical interpretation of the entire poem.⁹³ Outlined in this way, Alfred's strategy sounds very similar to the *Phoenix* poet's, but an analysis of the poem will show that Alfred's method is quite different. The *Phoenix* is distinguished by its formal virtuosity, inspired by its source, and its elaborate allegory, in which the phoenix is associated with a number of different

⁹³ See Godden, *Boethius* 296: "In 2m4 Philosophia illustrates her argument with the image of a man building his house not on a mountain top or beside the sea but on a lowly rock. She offers no explicit interpretation but the glossators supplied many, suggesting that the house is a heavenly home and the mountain and shore images of worldly dangers and preoccupations, or prosperity and adversity. In rewriting the meter the OE author builds into it his own interpretation of the imagery, which sees the building as a house of wisdom."

symbols. In Meter 7, the formal qualities of poetry take a back seat to its ethical and spiritual meaning, and Boethius' abstractions are eschewed in favor of concrete metaphors with fixed meanings.

DCP II m. 4 is a compact poem, written in iambic dimeters alternating with pherecratics. It instructs the wise man to seek happiness in a calm place, far from windy mountaintops and turbulent seas:

Quisquis uolet perennem
cautus ponere sedem
stabilisque nec sonori
sterni flatibus Euri
et fluctibus minantem
curat spernere pontum,
montis cacumen alti,
bibulas uitet harenas;
illud proteruus Auster
totis uiribus urguet,
hae pendulum solutae
pondus ferre recusant.
Fugiens periculosam
sortem sedis amoenae
humili domum memento
certus figere saxo.
Quamuis tonet ruinis
miscens aequora uentus,
tu conditus quieti
felix robore ualli
duces serenus aeuum
ridens aetheris iras.
(*DCP* II m.4 1-22)

Whichever prudent man might wish to establish a lasting home and, stable, not to be overthrown by the gusts of roaring Eurus, and hopes to spurn the threatening Ocean's waves, let him avoid the high peak of a mountain and the thirsty sands; violent Auster will assault the former with all his power, and the latter, once they are dissolved, refuse to bear any weight from above. Fleeing the dangerous fate of a beautiful place, be sure and remember to establish your house upon a humble rock. Though the wind may thunder, stirring the waters with ruin, you, happy, established in a valley with quiet strength, may serenely lead your life laughing at the rage of the winds.

The artistic achievement of this poem is Boethius' ability to do much with little, to capture the rage of the winds or the peace of a tranquil valley in four or five words. Alfred's translation, though it communicates the sense perfectly well, fails to capture the laconic tone of Boethius' Latin. His distinctive contribution is to attach symbolic meaning to all the images in Boethius' poem:

Ða ongon se Wisdom his gewunan fylgan,
 gliowordum gol gyd æfter spelle,
 song soðcwida sumne þa geta,
 cwæð þæt he ne herde þæt on heane munt
 monna ænig meahte asettan
 healle hroffæste: ne þearf eac hæleða nan
 wenan þæs weorces þæt he wisdom mæge
 wið ofermetta æfre gemengan:
 herdes þu æfre þætte ænig mon
 on sondbeorgas settan meahte
 fæste healle? ne mæg eac fira nan
 wisdom timbran þær ðær woruldgitsung
 beorg oferbrædað: baru sond willað
 ren forswelgan: swa deð ricra nu
 grundleas gitsung gilpes 7 æhta,
 gedrinced to dryggum dreosende welan,
 7 þeah þæs þearfan ne bið þurst aceled:
 ne mæg hæleþa gehwæm hus on munte
 lange gelæstan forðæm him lungre on
 swiftwind swaped: ne bið sond þon ma
 wið micelne ren manna ængum
 huses hirde, ac hit hreosan wile,
 sigan sond æfter rene:
 (Meter 7 1-23a)

Then Wisdom began to follow his custom: he sang with wise words, story after story, [and] a certain song of truths as well. He said that he had not heard that any man might set a well-roofed hall on a high mountain. Nor is there need for any man to expect this work, that he may ever mingle wisdom with pride. Have you ever heard that any man might set a stable hall on sand-banks? Nor may any man build wisdom where covetousness covers the ground. Rain will wash away bare sand; so now does the groundless desire of rich men for fame and wealth: they drink [their] perishable riches to the dregs, and still the thirst of their need is not cooled. Nor may any man's house last long on a mountain, because the swift wind soon sweeps it away. Nor is the sand a better protector for any man's house against a great rain, but it will sink, [for] sand settles after rain.

Alfred begins by repeating Boethius' warnings about where a man might build a house. From lines 7-8, though, Alfred begins to be precise about what exactly that means: building a house means cultivating wisdom, the mountaintop symbolizes pride, and the sands stand for covetousness.⁹⁴ As one might expect, wisdom cannot be joined to pride or founded upon covetousness, but must be anchored by the stone of humility, as Alfred goes on to explain:

...swa bioð anra gehwæs
monna modsefan miclum awegede,
of hiora stede styrede, þonne hit strong dreceð
wind under wolcnum worulearfoða
oþþe hit eft se reða ren onhrereð
sumes ymbhogan, ungemet gemen:
ac se ðe þa ecan agan wile
soðan gesælða, he sceal swiðe flion
ðisse worulde wlite, wyrce him siððan
his modes hus þær he mæge findan
eaðmetta stan unigmet fæstne,
grundweal gearone:
(Meter 7 23b-34a)

So may any man's thoughts be carried away, pushed off of their foundation, when a strong wind of earthly miseries afflicts him under the heavens, or after a rain of dreadful things excites his anxiety, a harmful excess. But he who will possess the eternal truth of happiness, he should flee this beautiful world, and build for himself afterwards a house for his mind where he may find the very firm stone of humility, a ready bulwark.

As before, Alfred's allegorical reading appears to be a combination of received and original material. The specific identification of the wind as earthly misery and the rain as anxiety has no known source in the glosses, but the passage as a whole is

⁹⁴ These interpretations are also present in the prose Boethius. Godden 297 suggests that the mountaintop frequently stands for pride in the glosses, but that the interpretation of the sands as covetousness seems to be Alfred's own.

reminiscent of Matthew 7:24-7 and Luke 6:47, the parable of the wise and foolish men, here quoted in the version in Matthew:

omnis ergo qui audit verba mea haec et facit ea adsimilabitur viro sapienti qui aedificavit domum suam supra petram. Et descendit pluvia et venerunt flumina et flaverunt venti et inruerunt in domum illam et non cecidit fundata enim super petram, et omnis qui audit verba mea haec et non facit ea similis erit viro stulto qui aedificavit domum supra harenam, et descendit pluvia et venerunt flumina et flaverunt venti et inruerunt in domum illam et cecidit et fuit ruina eius magna (Matt. 7:24-7).

each man therefore who hears these words of mine and does them, he is like a wise man who has built his house upon a rock. And the rains fell and the floods came and the winds blew and rushed against the house and it did not fall, founded as it was on a rock, and each man who hears these words of mine and does not do them is like a foolish man who has built his house upon the sand, and the rains fell and the floods came and the winds blew and they rushed against his house and it fell, and his ruin was great.

Though the mountaintop is conspicuously absent from the Biblical passage, it is hard to avoid comparing rock to rock and sand to sand, so to speak. Though this passage may have inspired Boethius as well as Alfred, it is worth noting that the Old English translation brings the set of images even closer to the Biblical source. As Godden points out, Boethius' concern is the waves of the ocean; only Alfred and the Bible discuss the rain (Godden, *Boethius* 297). Despite this similarity, though, the specific interpretation of the wind as misery and the rain as anxiety does not derive from glosses on Boethius or glosses on the Bible.

To this point, Meter 7 has stayed quite close to the prose Boethius, with only a few modifications. Beginning in line 34, though, that changes. As Godden remarks,

Like its prose equivalent, the Metre provides an explicit moralistic interpretation of Boethius's more allusive imagery, focusing on the need for each person to build a house of wisdom as a means of countering earthly adversities. The versifier tends towards amplification of the prose source in this Metre, with substantial additions at lines 34b-36 and 53-4 (Godden, *Boethius* 503).

Here is the rest of the meter, with the additions marked out in bold:

...se togliden ne þearf
þeah hit wecge wind woruldearfoða
oððe ymbhogena ormete ren,
forþæm on þære dene drihten selfa
þara eadmetta eardfæst wunigað,
þær se wisdom a wunað on gemyndum:
forðon orsorg lif ealnig lædað
woruldmæn wise buton wendinge
þonne he eall forsihð eorðlicu good
7 eac þara yfela orsorgh wunað,
hopað to þæm ecum þe þæræfter cumað:
hine þonne æghwonan ælmihtig God
singallice simle gehealdeð,
anwundigende his agenum
modes gesælðum þurh metodes gife,
þeah hine se wind woruldearfoða
swiðe swence 7 hine singale
gemen gæle, þonne him grimme on
woruldsælða wind wraðe blaweð,
þeah þe hine ealneg se ymbhoga
ðyssa woruldsælða wraðe drecce!
(Meter 7 34b-54)

[Then] it will not need to move, though a wind of worldly cares blow against it or a great rain of tribulation, for in that dwelling God himself dwells established in humility, where Wisdom always endures in the mind. For the wise men of the world always lead a life free from care, without moving. When he forsakes all earthly good, and accustoms himself to evils without sorrow, he places his hope in the eternity that is to come, almighty God then holds him, unmoving, always and in every way, with his own happiness of mind, though the wind of worldly cares may vex him sorely, and the storm always trouble him, when the wind blows fiercely on his worldly blessing, though care for those earthly goods always afflict him sharply.

Godden makes little of these additions. He characterizes ll.34-6 as repetitious, and declines to comment on ll.53 and 54. I would suggest that Godden is essentially correct in his characterization, but that the repetition he observes is in fact that same repetition that characterizes much of Anglo-Saxon poetry. As an example, compare ll. 34b-36 with ll. 26-8: "wind under wolcnum woruldearfoða/ oþþe hit eft se reða ren onhrereð/ sumes ymbhogan, ungemet gemen;" "a wind of worldly cares

under the heavens, or the swift rain of some care afterwards disturbs it, an excessive worry." The addition in 34b-36 repeats several of the words and ideas in 26-8, some exactly, some with variation. The "wind..earfoða," "wind of worldly cares," is repeated from l.26 by l.34, and the "ren...sumes ymbhogan," "rain of some anxiety," in ll. 27-8, described as "ungemet," "excessive," by apposition, becomes the "ymbhogena ormete ren" in l. 36. These same verbal elements reappear later in the poem, most notably in ll. 49-54:

þeah hine se wind woruldearfoða
swiðe swence 7 hine singale
gemen gæle, þonne him grimme on
woruldsælða wind wraðe blæweð,
þeah þe hine ealneg se ymbhoga
ðyssa woruldsælða wraðe drecceð.

though the wind of worldly cares struggle mightily and a continuous storm afflict him, when the wind of worldly prosperity blow swiftly upon him, though the anxiety of worldly prosperity always drench him.

Here again the "wind woruldearfoða" reappears in l.52, as well as "ymbhoga" in l. 53. In addition, "woruldsælða," "worldly prosperity" is repeated in l.54 from l.52, and contrasts nicely with both "woruldearfoða" and the "modes gesælðum" in l.48. From these examples, it is clear that the versifier's additions, repetitious though they may be, are not gratuitous. The repetition of certain verbal elements throughout the poem, generally described as generative composition, is familiar from Exeter Riddle 40. The insertion of ll. 34b-36 also create an envelope pattern with ll.26-28, enclosing the central philosophical point of the poem, introduced by "ac" in l.29:

ac se ðe þa ecan agan wile
soðan gesælða, he sceal swiðe flion
ðisse worulde wlite, wyrce him siððan

his modes hus þær he mæge findan
eaðmetta stan unigmet fæstne,
grundweal gearone:

but he who will possess the eternal truth of prosperity, he shall quickly flee the joy of this world, and make for himself after the house of his mind in that place where he may find the stone of humility firmly established, a prepared rampart.

These lines neatly encapsulate the poem's moral claim: the man who wishes to know wisdom must be indifferent to fortune and misfortune, "woruldearfoða" and "woruldsælða." By the cultivation of humility he may build his "modes hus," "build wisdom" ("wisdom timbran") in the words of l. 12, a claim that echoes Alfred's preface to the *Soliloquies* quite strongly.

Though the versifier of Meter 7 may not have the *Phoenix* poet's knack for adapting Latin rhetoric into Old English, he is perfectly willing and able to use the familiar devices of Anglo-Saxon poetry to make his poem more impactful. But as he does so, he also strengthens the particularly Alfredian quality of the Boethius. The verbal elements and collocations he repeats are precisely those that give concrete meaning to Boethius' abstractions: the rain is the rain of anxiety, the wind is the wind of worldly cares, and the stone is the stone of humility. In this way the poet still treats his Latin source as something to be glossed and pondered, cut down and carried off to build his own "modes hus."

This work of collecting, sorting and constructing continues in Meter 26, which provides an even more elaborate example of Alfred's interpolations. Meter 26 translates *DCP* IV m. 3, which tells the story of Ulysses and Circe to illustrate the difference between men's inner and outward natures:

Vela Neritii ducis
Et vagas pelago rates

Eurus appulit insulae,
 Pulchra qua residens dea
 Solis edita semine
 Miscet hospitibus novis
 Tacta carmine pocula.
 Quos ut in varios modos
 Vertit herbipotens manus,
 Hunc apri facies tegit,
 Ille Marmaricus leo
 Dente crescit et unguibus.
 Hic lupis nuper additus,
 Flere dum parat, ululat.
 Ille tigris ut Indica
 Tecta mitis obambulat.
 Sed licet variis malis
 Numen Arcadis alitis
 Obsitum miserans ducem
 Peste solverit hospitis,
 Iam tamen mala remiges
 Ore pocula traxerant,
 Iam sues Cerealia
 Glande pabula verterant
 Et nihil manet integrum
 Voce corpore perditis.
 Sola mens stabilis super
 Monstra quae patitur gemit.
 O levem nimium manum
 Nec potentia gramina,
 Membra quae valeant licet,
 Corda vertere non valent!
 Intus est hominum vigor
 Arce conditus abdita.
 Haec venena potentius
 Detrahunt hominem sibi
 Dira quae penitus meant
 Nec nocentia corpori
 Mentis vulnere saeviunt.
 (DCP IV m.3 1-39)

Eurus forced the sails of the lord of Neritus (i.e., Ulysses) and his ships wandering on the ocean to an island on which a beautiful goddess dwelled, sprung from the race of the Sun. She mixed for her new guests drinks touched by magic. Her hand, powerful with herbs, changed them into various shapes; this one the face of a boar covers, while another as a Marmarican lion grows fangs and claws. Another, just now changed to a wolf, howls as he prepares to weep. That one, as an Indian tiger, roams tame under the roof. But though the god with the Arcadian wings (i.e., Mercury),

taking pity on the embattled leader, freed him from the malice of his host, the sailors nevertheless brought those poisonous cups to their mouths, until as swine they traded bread for acorns. And nothing of those men, lost in face and voice, remained untouched. Only the mind, still unchanged, groans at the sight revealed to it. O too weak hand and insufficient magic, which are able to change the limbs, but not to change the heart! The secret force of man is inward, founded in a secret citadel. These venoms are more powerful, which move more deeply and drag a man away from himself; they are not harmful to the body, but savage the mind instead.

This poem, written in the glyconic meter, uses the story of Circe and Ulysses to dramatize Lady Philosophy's claim, articulated in 4 prose 3, that evil men cease to be human in the way that matters most:

Hoc igitur modo quidquid a bono deficit esse desistit; quo fit ut mali desinant esse quod fuerant, sed fuisse homines adhuc ipsa humani corporis reliqua species ostentat. Quare versi in malitiam humanam quoque amisere naturam.

Therefore in this way whatever falls away from the good ceases to be; by which it is that evil men cease to be what they were, but the form of a human body which remains to them reveals them to have been men once. For which reason those turned to wickedness have also rejected their human nature.
(DCP 4 p.3, 15)

Philosophy goes on to explain how various vices change a man inwardly into a wild animal: an angry man becomes a dog, a deceitful man a fox, a lustful man becomes a sow, and so forth.

As usual in Boethius, the poem is relatively spare, ornamented only with a few striking images and artful juxtaposition. The "secret citadel," "arce abdita" of a man's heart is one such image, and the neat *figura etymologica* in ll.31-2 underscores the main point of the poem: "membra quae valeant licet,/ corda vertere non valent." The juxtaposition of "valeant" and "non valent" dramatizes Lady Philosophy's claim about man's double nature: a man who is physically corrupted may have a sound mind, but a man corrupted in his mind is no better than a beast.

It comes as little surprise, then, that Alfred, for whom wisdom is a favorite theme, found this poem a fruitful point of departure for his own thinking. In addition to the poem's consideration of wisdom, however, *Consolatio* 4 met. 3 offers Alfred another opportunity: in contextualizing the story of Ulysses and Circe, Alfred has a chance to weave together a variety of explanatory material into a trenchant moral argument, much more pointed than that of his source. In doing so, he expands Boethius' poem considerably, particularly in the beginning.

The first 50 lines of Meter 26 supply material not present in the Latin. Lines 4-20 narrate, in brief, the material of the *Iliad*, and lines 21-33 recount the plot of the *Odyssey* up until Ulysses encounters Circe. Lines 34-50, then, reveal the historical process by which pagan kings came to be worshipped as gods by the "dysige folc" (l.39), and line 51 begins the story of Ulysses and Circe, picking up at line 5 of the Latin. Alfred's narrative of the Trojan war and his excursus on the pagan gods are only two of four major additions and changes he makes to the Latin poem. The others are his rendition of the Ulysses and Circe myth at ll. 51-97, and his enhanced moral postscript at 98-115.

Alfred's interpolations here have provided much grist for the scholarly mill. Meter 26's puzzling statement that Ulysses was king of Thrace and Retia ("he wæs Pracia ðioda aldor/ 7 Retie rices hirde"; "he was lord of the people of Thrace and guardian of the kingdom of Retia") in ll. 7-8 has occasioned several theories, and the question of what version of the Trojan war story Alfred knew has provided a focus for the constant inquiry into the materials that provided the intellectual foundations

for the Old English *Boethius*.⁹⁵ In his synthesis of scholarship in his commentary on Meter 26 and its corresponding prose section in B, Godden suggests that Alfred drew his information from wide variety of sources including manuscript glosses, Orosius, general knowledge, and Classical poetry (Godden, *Boethius* 442-5; 515-6). Though Alfred's version of the Trojan War nicely focuses the question of his sources, it is in fact the least important of the four major additions for the poem's moral argument. The story of the Trojan war is, in Alfred's mind, one "lying story" that sets the stage for another.

Alfred does use that narrative, though, to introduce a more morally charged theme: the falseness of the pagan gods and the delusion of the people who worshipped them. He is spurred to make a statement on the topic by Boethius' poetic periphrasis for Circe, "Solis edita seminis," a "woman sprung from the seed of the Sun": the daughter of Apollo. As soon as he introduces "Apolines dohtor" in ll.32-3, Alfred is moved to comment:

wæs se Apollinus æðeles cynnes,
 Iobes eafora, se wæs gio cyning:
 se licette litlum 7 miclum,
 gumena gehwylcum, þæt he god wære
 hehst 7 halgost: swa se hlaford þa
 þæt dysige folc on gedwolan lædde
 oð ðat him gelyfde leoda unrim
 forðæm he wæs mid rihte rices hirde,
 hiora cynecynnes:
 (Meter 26, 34-42)

⁹⁵ For Ulysses' kingship of Thrace and Retia, see Anlezark 15 and Donaghey 22-4 as well as Godden, *Boethius* 515. Griffiths accepts Donaghey's suggestion that "Retie" is an error for "Neritii" (128 n.5). For broader considerations of Alfred's sources (or lack thereof) for the Trojan war and the pagan gods, see Irvine *passim*, Donaghey 38-9, and Wittig 169-77.

This Apollo was of a noble race, the son of Jove, who was once a king: he pretended before great and small, before all men, that he was the highest and holiest god: so the lord then led that deluded people into error, until numberless men believed him, because he was their ruler by right, descended from their king.

This move is of course not unexpected in a Christian author treating pagan material: it rather neatly solves the problem of how to read pagan literature without descending into theological error, and lets Alfred reiterate his concern for the "deluded people."

Alfred's third major change in his translation is his treatment of Ulysses' adventures on Circe's island, which occupies ll. 51-104 of his poem. Godden summarizes the the state of affairs in his commentary on the prose version, but his summary applies equally well to the verse:

OEBo has here reversed the traditional story. In Ovid and Homer, Circe follows her usual practice with visitors and transforms his men into animals as soon as they arrive; Ulysses is preserved by the help of Mercury, forces her to change them back and then marries her, eventually leaving with his men much later. Boethius implies the same version, at least up to the preservation of Ulysses by Mercury. The OE author instead has Ulysses and Circe falling in love and marrying first, and Circe only transforming his men when they try to persuade him to leave.⁹⁶

Susan Irvine offers a reading of Alfred's changes as a statement about kingship (Irvine 394-7). By reversing the order of events, Alfred places the blame for his men's transformation on Ulysses, depicting him as "a king who abuses his royal responsibilities" (Irvine 395). Alfred thus borrows Boethius' contrast between physical and moral infirmity to suggest that the sailors, changed physically, remain

⁹⁶ See Godden, *Boethius* 444. Godden also notes how various scholars (especially Irvine and Bately) have suggested that Alfred changed the Ulysses narrative to bring it more in line with other Classical stories, and himself suggests that allegorical glosses may have contributed to the change. Whatever the source(s), Godden believes the change is "a deliberate and imaginative adaptation" rather than the result of confusion or poor scholarship.

sound in mind while Ulysses, outwardly unchanged, reveals the depravity of his soul through his actions on Circe's island (Irvine 395-6).

In its outline this is a compelling reading, and Alfred's language certainly urges his audience to draw a moral conclusion. In fact, his language in the Ulysses episode recalls some of his moralizing language elsewhere, in Meter 26 as well as other Meters. For example, he begins the story thus:

sceolde eac wesan Apollines
dohtor diorboren, dysiges folces
gumrinca gyden: cuðe galdra fela,
drifan drycræftas: hio gedwolan fylgde
manna swiðost manegra þioda,
cyninges dohtor, sio Circe wæs
haten for herigum: hio ricsode
on ðæm iglonde þe Aulixes,
cining þracia, com ane to,
ceole liðan:
(Meter 26, 51-60)

The noble-born daughter of Apollo therefore became a goddess of men, of that deluded people: she knew many enchantments, how to fashion spells: she followed the errors of many tribes of men very much, that king's daughter, who was called Circe by the people: she ruled over that island to which Ulysses, king of Thrace, came alone, sailed on his ship.

In line 52, Alfred returns to his idea of the "dysige folc," those deluded pagans who believed the great men of the past to be gods. He also repeats the idea that the so-called gods were complicit in that deception: just as Jove led the people "on gedwolan" (l.39), Circe cultivates deception as well: "hio gedwolan fylgde..." (l.54+ff.). This emphasis on deception repeats Alfred's concern with "lying stories" throughout his poem; he is always attentive to the perils of using pagan fiction to illustrate Christian truth.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ On Alfred's use of "leasum spellum," see Irvine 389-90.

In the section immediately following, Alfred returns to a favorite theme of his, familiar from Meter 7: the importance of moderation. When he describes the relationship between Ulysses and Circe, he explains that the two loved one another out of measure:

...cuð wæs sona
eallre þære mænige þe hire mid wunode,
æþelinges sið: hio mid ungemete
lissum lufode lidmonna frean
7 he eac swa same ealle mægne
efne swa swiðe hi on sefan lufode
þæt he to his earde ænige nyste
modes mynlan ofer mægð giunge
(Meter 26 60b-67)

Soon the journey of the prince was known to all the many who dwelt with her (Circe): she loved the lord of the people with immoderate lust and he also, in the same way, [loved her] with all his might: so much did he love her in his mind that he did not know any longing of his thoughts for his homeland more powerful than his love for that young maiden.

"Ungemete" in line 62 recalls Alfred's frequent use of "ungemete" and "ormete" in Meter 7 to describe the immoderate anxieties that vex a man whose mind is not grounded on the rock of humility. Ulysses, who reciprocates Circe's love "mid ungemete lissum," certainly seems to be such a man.

In his final addition to Boethius' poem, Alfred brings these moralizing themes to a sharp point. Though he is inspired by Boethius' ethical statement about physical and mental poisons in ll. 29-39, his translation, which occupies lines 98-118 of his own poem, makes a much stronger statement about the subordination of the body to the mind, and the mind to God:

hwæt, ða dysegan men þe ðysum drycræftum
longe gelyfdon, leasum spellum,
wisson hwæðre þæt þæt gewit ne mæg
mod onwendan monna ænig

mid drycræftum, þeah hio gedon meahte
 þæt ða lichoman lange þrage
 onwende wurdon: is þæt wundorlic,
 mægen-cræft micel moda gehwilces
 ofer lichoman lænne 7 sænne!
 swylcum 7 swylcum þu meht sweotole ongitan
 þæt þæs lichoman listas 7 cræftas
 of ðæm mode cumað monna gehwylcum,
 ænlepra ælc: þu meht eaðe ongitan
 þætte ma dereð monna gehwelcum
 modes unðeaw þonne mettrymnes
 lænes lichoman: ne þearf leoda nan
 wenan þære wyrde þæt þæt werige flæsc
 þæt mod mæge monna æniges
 eallunga to him æfre onwendan,
 ac þa unðeawas ælces modes
 7 þæt ingeðonc ælces monnes
 þone lichoman lit þider hit wile.
 (Meter 26 98-111)

O, the confused men who long believed in this magic, in this lying story, know that that power may not change any man's mind with magic, though she [Circe] might cause the body to be changed for a long time: that is wonderful, the great power of each man's mind over his decaying and sluggish body! By such [examples] you might understand clearly that the skills and abilities of this body come from each man's mind, of each individual: you might easily understand that wickedness of the mind harms each man more than infirmity of his decaying body: nor is there need for any man to expect of Fortune that his weary flesh may ever turn the mind of any man to itself, but the wickedness of every mind and the inward thought of every man moves the body in whatever direction it desires.

Here Alfred returns to the "dysigan men" he invoked in ll. 39 and 52, those deluded believers in "leasum spellum," to show that even those men, confused as they were, understood that no man has the power to change another's inward thoughts, his "ingeþonc." The mind, on the other hand, has the power to lead the body in whatever direction it desires, and so a corrupted mind is infinitely more dangerous than a corrupted body.

The passage is also quite critical of the body, which is described as "lænne 7 sænne" (106), "læne" (113), and "werige" (114). Alfred also dismisses the

seriousness of bodily infirmity in 111-113, a subject which may have been of some personal interest to him.⁹⁸ These characterizations, which are not present in the Latin, are also reminiscent of the Old English *Soul and Body* poems, and recapitulate the serious interest in the relationship of the soul and body in Meter 20.

At the end of his translation Alfred thus arrives at a strong moral conclusion, further strengthened by its connections with the other Meters: the health of the mind is paramount for a happy existence, since the movement of the mind controls the movement of the body. Even the deluded men who worshipped their kings as gods knew this to be true; how much more, then, should Christian men, whose minds are illuminated by the true God, recognize this fact?

Alfred's conclusion is powerful because he takes care to set it up; all of his interventions in the poem, though they do serve to provide certain facts to the reader (Circe is Apollo's daughter; Ulysses sailed to her island after he left Troy), also introduce the themes to which he will return in his moral postscript. The repeated appearance of the "deluded men" with their "lying stories," in implied contrast to Alfred's enlightened readers, help to knit these original passages together, to draw the various strands of Alfred's thinking together into a coherent whole, one that expresses themes already familiar to the reader of the other Meters.

Meter 26 thus reveals that Alfred's explanatory "glosses" can explain more than simple facts. Though in Meter 10 they served only to mark unfamiliar names, Meters 7 and 26 reveal a more sophisticated, and more radical, mode of explanation. In these two poems, the glosses individually serve to explain difficult, abstract or

⁹⁸ For the possible influence of Alfred's physical infirmity on Meter 26, see Irvine 396.

unfamiliar passages, but also work together to add layers of moralistic meaning either vaguely implied or not at all present in Boethius' Latin. The next (and last) poem to be discussed in this chapter is Meter 20, probably the most elaborate example of the glossatorial strategy among the Meters. A close look at this poem will reveal exactly how powerful and how transformative Alfred's "glosses" can be.

Meter 20 is a translation of book III metrum 9, perhaps the most important poem in the entire *DCP*. In the words of Henry Chadwick, "it is a nodal point in the work as a whole, and Boethius knew it" (Chadwick 234). Chadwick further points out, following Gruber, that "the various metres of the poems in the *Consolation* are grouped in an ordered and symmetrical structure round *O qui perpetua* which occupies a central position."

All this symmetry is for a good reason: III, 9 occurs at a pivotal moment in the narrative of the *DCP*. Lady Philosophy has just led Boethius to realize that happiness cannot arise from material goods or circumstance; only lasting good can create lasting happiness. Lady Philosophy is excited by her student's progress at this point, and tells him that all he has left is to learn where he might pursue that lasting good. Boethius looks forward to this new task, and sees fit to dedicate himself to it with a prayer. At his urging, Lady Philosophy sings III m.9, which is a brief rumination on two aspects of creation--the four elements and the soul--followed by a prayer for enlightenment:

O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas
Terrarumque caelique sator qui tempus ab aevo
Ire iubes stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri,
Quem non externae pepulerunt fingere causae
Materiae fluitantis opus, verum insita summi
Forma boni livore carens, tu cuncta superno

Ducis ab exemplo, pulchrum pulcherrimus ipse
 Mundum mente gerens similique in imagine formans
 Perfectasque iubens perfectum absolvere partes.
 Tu numeris elementa ligas ut frigora flammis
 Arida conveniant liquidis, ne purior ignis
 Evolet aut mersas deducant pondera terras.
 Tu triplicis mediam naturae cuncta moventem
 Conectens animam per consona membra resolvis.
 Quae cum secta duos motum glomeravit in orbes,
 In semet reditura meat mentemque profundam
 Circuit et simili convertit imagine caelum.
 Tu causis animas paribus vitasque minores
 Provehis et levibus sublimes curribus aptans
 In caelum terramque seris quas lege benigna
 Ad te conversas reduci facis igne reverti.
 Da pater augustam menti conscendere sedem,
 Da fontem lustrare boni, da luce reperta
 In te conspicuos animi defigere visus.
 Dissice terrenae nebulas et pondera molis
 Atque tuo splendore mica! Tu namque serenum,
 Tu requies tranquilla piis, te cernere finis,
 Principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus idem.
 (DCP III m.9 1-28)

O you who govern the world with an unchanging law, Father of Heaven and Earth, you who command Time to move from the beginning and, yourself remaining stable, cause all things to move, whom no external causes urged to create the world from shifting matter, truly the innate form of the highest good, devoid of envy, you bring forth all things from a celestial pattern, yourself the most beautiful, fashioning a beautiful world with your mind and creating it in a like image and ordaining a perfect whole out of perfect parts. You bind the elements with your rule so that cold is mixed with hot and dry with wet, lest the purer fire fly away or its own weight submerge the earth. You resolve the soul in harmonious parts, fixing its motion in the midst of a threefold nature. Which, when it, separated, comes together into two spheres of motion, moves to return to itself and encircles the deep mind, and turns the heaven into a similar image. You drive souls and lesser lives with equal causes, and, fitting them for light chariots, scatter them across heaven and earth, which, when they have turned back towards you, you call back like leaping flames by your gracious law. Father, grant that I may ascend to your high seat, grant that I may lay eyes upon the fountain of all good, grant that, with the light found, the open sight of my soul may alight on you. Banish the cloud and the weight of worldly affairs and let your splendor shine! For you are serenity itself, the peaceful rest of pious men, to see you their goal; you are the beginning, end, leader, path and goal.

Anyone who has tried to translate this poem, or indeed to make sense out of a literal translation, understands why it was the focus of so much commentary during the Middle Ages. Boethius' imagery, drawn from Plato's *Timaeus* and compressed almost beyond recognition, takes some effort to unpack and understand. The task was made that much harder by the fact that the *Timaeus* was known only in translation in the early Middle Ages, while Boethius was presumably reading it in the original. One important point of clarification is that the "soul" Boethius refers to in ll. 13-21 is the Platonic world-soul described in the *Timaeus*, a fact which explains the soul's three-fold nature and constant revolution. It is also worth noting that Plato mentions the four elements just before he describes the world-soul in the *Timaeus*. The rationale is that the four elements compose the "body" of the universe into which the world-soul was placed. By invoking God's joining of the elements as well as his creation of the world-soul, Boethius celebrates all of creation, visible and invisible, crude and rarified.

Though III m.9 can be difficult to understand, there is no denying that it is an elegant and powerful poem. In contrast to Boethius' generally terse, unadorned style, III m.9 is ornamented with several rhetorical flourishes, and the choice to use dactylic hexameters adds a certain gravity (Tennyson might say "stateliness") to an already serious subject. There are examples of *figura etymologica* ("pulchrum pulcherrimus"; "perfectas...perfectum"), several instances of alliteration ("frigora flammis"; "mundum mente"; "circuit...convertit...caelum," to name a few), and the whole poem concludes with a holonomastic line that proclaims God's all-

encompassing providence: to the believer, he is "principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus idem;" "beginning, ending, leader, path and goal."

It is easy to see why this poem would have particularly excited Alfred's imagination: it was a focus for early scholarship on Boethius and it contained much that demanded explanation or glossing, but once explained, it proved to be a repository of Christian truth, a celebration of God's infinite power and grace-- exactly the sort of text Alfred's educational program required.

In typical fashion, though, Alfred could not resist making a few changes, adding a few explanations and elaborations into his version of Boethius' poem. In the course of doing so he turned Boethius' 28 lines of Latin into 281 lines of Old English: a substantial addition, even allowing for the general tendency of Latin to expand when translated into English. As usual, Alfred follows the basic model of his Latin source. Both poems have the same basic outline: praise of God's power, Creation, and goodness; a mention of the four elements and the tripartite soul; and a concluding prayer. It is the content of these individual sections that differ, and a survey of Alfred's changes reveals that he did more than just elaborate upon his source.

Boethius begins his poem by drawing a contrast between God's eternal stability and the constant motion of the universe: God is the fixed point around which every else rotates, the uncaused cause of all celestial motion. Alfred catches the spirit of this passage and develops it into a series of contrasts:

hwæt, ðu, ece God, ealla gesceafta
wundorlice wel gesceope,
ungesewenlica 7 eac swa same
gesewenlica, softe wealdest

scirra gesceafta mid gesceadwisum
 mægne 7 cræfte: þu þysne middangeard
 from fruman **ærest** forð oð **ende**
 tidum totældes, swa hit getæsost wæs,
 endebyrdes þæt hi æghwæðer
 ge **ær farað** ge **eft cumað**:
 þu þe **unstill**a agna gesceafta
 to þinum willan wislice astyrest
 7 þe self wunæst swiðe **stille**,
 unawendenlic a forð simle:
 (Meter 20 1-14)

O, you eternal God, crafted well all the wonders of creation, the invisible and also the visible, you gently control bright creation with wisdom, might and skill: you have counted the time of this world from its earliest beginning until its end, as it was most practical, that in orderly fashion they either go before or come after: you wisely move your own creation to your will, as you yourself remain unmoving, never turning aside at all.

In this passage Alfred includes a number of oppositions which illuminate God's grandeur: he created all things visible and invisible, he has counted time from its earliest beginning to the end of days, and, surrounded by the rush of all created things, he alone remains majestically still.

The sense of God's separation from creation created by these oppositions is carried forward into the next portion of the poem, which explores the wonder of creation and God's goodness. In the Latin poem, Boethius emphasizes the way God has patterned the universe after himself, figured rhetorically in the use of *figura etymologica*. God, "pulcherrimus ipse," has created a world that is "pulchrum" from a divine exemplar, "ab superno exemplo." The implication, spelled out in the prayer at the end of the poem, is that an appreciation of creation can bring the mind closer to God. Alfred's emphasis is quite different, as the following passage shows:

...is ðæt micel, gecynd
 þines goodes (þencð ymb se ðe wile)
 forðon hit is eall an ælces þinges,

þu 7 þæt ðin good: hit is þin agen
forðæm hit nis utan, ne com auht to ðe,
ac ic georne wat þæt ðin goodnes is,
ælmhtig God, eall mid ðe selfum:
hit is ungelic urum gecynde:
us is utan cymen eall þa we habbað
gooda on grundum from Gode selfum:
næfst þu to ænegum andan genumenne,
forðam þe nan þing nis þin gelica
ne huru ænig ælcræftigre,
forðæm þu eal good anes geþeahte
þines geþohtest 7 hi þa worhtest:
(ll.26b-40)

that is great, the kind of your goodness (let him ponder it who will), because it is all one in every respect, you and your goodness: it is your own because it is not external, nor is it come in the least to you from without, but I know that your goodness, Almighty God, is entirely within yourself: it is unlike our kind: everything of good that we have in the world comes to us from without, from God himself: you have not taken to any enmity, since no thing is like you, nor indeed anything all-crafty, because you devised all good counsel of yourself alone and then acted upon it.

These lines clearly correspond to lines 5-9 of the Latin, and, on the surface at least, say much the same thing: all good comes from God, who wrought all good things in the universe by virtue of his own perfection. Though his meaning may be substantially the same, Alfred's emphasis is quite different. The Latin emphasizes the relationship between the created and the Creator: the goodness of one flows from and imitates the goodness of the other. Alfred is more concerned with the vast gulf that separates the two. He emphasizes that God's goodness is internal to him while man's is external, insisting that nothing else is like God. Lines like "hit is ungelic urum gecynde" and "forðam þe nan þing nis þin gelica" make it abundantly clear that the Creator is infinitely removed from his creation.

These differences are of course not theological. It seems unlikely that Alfred would take issue with the idea that the universe was patterned after its creator, or

that Boethius would reject the notion that God's goodness is of a different kind than man's. Still, the emphasis chosen by each author has a powerful impact on the story he tells, and at the risk of being reductive, Boethius' story and Alfred's are opposites: one insists that God and the universe are fundamentally alike, the other that they are fundamentally unlike.

Alfred's departure from his source becomes even more pronounced in the next section of his poem, which translates Boethius' lines on the four elements. In Boethius, the "discussion" of the elements occupies three lines, only vaguely alluding to the theory, which was presumably commonplace for an educated audience. What was commonplace in the fifth century may not have been in the ninth, however, as Alfred includes a lengthy explanation of the elements, the qualities of heat, cold, dryness and wetness, and the way that combinations of the warring elements create life on earth. His discussion then moves on to a model of the cosmos in the shape of an egg, which precedes his discussion of the soul in the next section. The theory of the four elements Alfred presents is slightly different than the standard model, though it is unclear whether these differences result from some accident in the transmission of the Alfred's text.

The standard version of the four elements theory, best known in Anglo-Saxon England through Isidore and Bede, has two components.⁹⁹ First is the relative weight and position of the elements: earth is the heaviest, and thus the lowest. Next

⁹⁹ Godden suggests several sources for the version of the four elements theory found in Meter 20: Ambrose's *Hexameron*, Isidore's *De Natura Rerum* and Bede's *De Natura Rerum*. Though Godden never points to one of those as a principal source, his notes suggest that Meter 20's version of the theory most resembles that contained in Bede's *De Natura Rerum* (*Old English Boethius* ii, 380-84).

is water, then air, then fire, the lightest and highest of the four. Each element may also be classified as hot or cold, and dry or wet. Earth is cold and dry, water cold and wet, air hot and wet, fire hot and dry. For the most part, Alfred agrees with this model, but he differs in two particulars, both of which appear in ll. 79-85:

lyft is gemenged, forþæm hio on middum wunað:
nis þæt nan wundor þæt hio sie wearm 7 ceald,
wæt wolcnes aer, winde geblonden,
forðæm hio is on midle, mine gefræge,
fyres 7 eorðan: fela monna wat
þætte yfemest is eallra gesceafta
fyr ofer eorðan, folde neoðemest:
(Meter 20 79-85)

The air is mixed, for it dwells in the middle: nor is it any wonder that it be warm and cold, the wet air of the sky, stirred up with wind, since it is in the middle, as I have heard, of fire and earth: many men know that fire is the highest [thing] of all creation over the earth, and earth the lowest.

Alfred's explanation of the elements here indicates that air is both warm and cold (rather than warm, as in the traditional model) because it is located between fire and earth, not between fire and water.

Though these minor differences suggest that Alfred was using some other source(s) than Boethius for his information, they are not as peculiar as other aspects of Alfred's treatment of the elements. For Boethius, the concord of the elements testifies to God's power: the elements are naturally opposed to one another, and all of creation would therefore fly apart in the absence of God's harmonizing law.

Though Alfred admits as much, his concern manifests itself in a more concrete way, with the language of warring thanes, borders and boundaries:

...7 mid mægne eac
fæder ælmihtiges fæste gebunden,
gesiblice, softe togædre
mid bebode þine, bilewit fæder,

þætte heora ænig oðres ne dorste
meorce ofergangan for metodes ege,
ac geþwerod sint ðegnas togædre,
cyninges ceman: cele wið hæto,
wæt wið drygum winnað hwæðre:
(Meter 20 67b-75)

And with his power also the almighty Father has bound them fast, peacefully, gently together by his command, the merciful Father, so that none of them dares to overstep its bounds for fear of the Lord, but those thanes are at peace together, the champions of the king: cold contends with hot, wet with dry.

Here the concern is not so much with the elements flying apart, but rather with them impinging on one another's territory. Alfred's *discordia concors* is a peace agreement amongst rival territories, that they may mingle without hostility and destruction. It has already been suggested that this is one of those moments where Alfred's political concerns impinge on his philosophical concerns. Though that is surely true, it is also worth noting that this is part of Alfred's general tendency to make the abstract concrete and, in this poem in particular, to replace the cosmic with the human.

This last tendency is most evident in Alfred's treatment of Boethius' lines on the Platonic world-soul. Though he preserves many of the details that describe the world-soul, Alfred clearly describes the human soul instead, and at great length: he transforms Boethius' nine lines of Latin into 70 of Old English.¹⁰⁰ The challenge of applying Boethius' description of the world-soul to the human soul spurs Alfred to great heights of creativity, and results in a fascinating fusion of Neoplatonic cosmology and Christian doctrine.

¹⁰⁰ That Alfred means the human soul is clear from ll. 176-77a, "hwæt, þu, ðioda God, ðriefalde *on us*/ sawle gesettest..." "O, you, lord God, have placed a three-fold soul *within us*."

Alfred begins modestly, by explaining the soul's three-fold nature, and continues to discuss the circular movements of the soul, which he equates to mental activity:

hwæt, þu ða saule, sigora waldend,
þeoda þrymcýning, þus gesceope
þæt hio hwearfode on hire selfre
hire utan ymb swa swa eal deð
rineswifte rodor, recene ymbscriðeð
dogora gehwilce drihtnes meahtum
þisne middangeard: swa deð monnes saul,
hweole gelicost hwærfeð ymbe hy selfe,
oft smeagende ymb ðas eorðlican
drihtnes gesceafta dagum 7 nihtum:
(Meter 20 205-14)

O, lord of victory, king of the people, you created the soul thus that it revolves around itself from without just like the whole of the swift heaven, quickly moves around the earth every day through God's might: so does man's soul, most like a wheel, revolve around itself, often pondering the Lord's earthly creation by day and by night.

In Alfred's translation rotation, a property of the Neoplatonic cosmos, is equated to consideration: just as the heavens physically revolve around the earth, the soul "revolves" around earthly creation by thinking about it. This relatively innocuous metaphor becomes the basis for a much bolder move on Alfred's part: by asserting that the soul is drawn towards the things it thinks about, he turns the Neoplatonic idea of a moving cosmos into a moral argument:

þonne hio ymb hire scyppend mid gescead smeað,
hio bið up ahæfen ofer hi selfe,
ac hio bið eallunga an hire selfre
þonne hio ymb hi selfe secende smeað:
hio bið swiðe fior hire selfre beneoðan
þonne hio þæs lænan lufað 7 wundrað,
eorðlicu þing, ofer ecne ræd:
(Meter 20 219-25)

When it [the soul] ponders its creator by means of the faculty of reason, it is taken up over itself, but it remains entirely one with itself when it, seeking, considers itself. It is [drawn] very far beneath itself when it loves and marvels at this transitory [creation], this earthly mass, instead of the eternal counsel.

Because the soul is attracted to what it considers, the soul that contemplates God is drawn to Heaven, while the soul obsessed with material creation is trapped in the world. This addition gives Alfred's poem a moralistic edge that Boethius' lacks: though it is the nature of the soul to revolve, where it chooses to revolve has significant consequences. The notion of consequences gathers some momentum in the next lines, in which the reader is reminded that souls, like stars, have a place set aside for them in the heavens, but not all stars shine equally bright.

Alfred concludes his discussion of the soul in a fashion familiar to Anglo-Saxonists: a consideration of the soul's union with the body and a reminder that, while a man's soul returns to God after his death, his body remains behind on earth:

hwæt, þu, ece God, eac gemengest
þa heofoncundan hider wið eorðan,
saula wið lice: siððan wuniað
þis eorðlice 7 þæt ece samod,
saul in flæsce: hwæt, hi simle to ðe
hionon fundiað: forðæm hi hider of ðe
æror comon, sculon eft to ðe:
sceal se lichama last weardigan
eft on eorðan forðæm he ær of hire
weox on weorulde: wunedon ætsomne
efen swa lange swa him lyfed wæs
from þæm ælmihtigan þe hi æror gio
gesomnade: þæt is soð cining!
(Meter 20 235-47)

O, you, eternal God, also have mingled the heavenly here with the earthly, the soul with the body: afterwards they dwell together, this earthly thing and that heavenly one, the soul in the flesh: o, they go hence to you together: for they came hither from you before, so shall they afterwards [go] to you. The body shall remain behind after on the earth because it grew from it in the world: they dwelled together

as long as it was granted by the almighty, who joined them together: that is the true king!

Though it would be easy to dismiss this passage as an Anglo-Saxon commonplace, just another instance of the "soul and body motif," it is much more. By reminding his audience of the soul's eventual return to God, Alfred makes his moralizing changes that much more pointed: all souls, sooner or later, will reap the rewards of their deeds on earth, and those rewards will depend on whether the soul has spent its time attracted to God or bogged down in the transitory pleasures of the material world. While Boethius' poem is concerned with the state of the mind in the present, Alfred's has its eye very much on the future.

This difference is also evident in the concluding prayer to Alfred's version.

Much like Boethius', Alfred's poem asks for God to open the eyes of the mind, allowing the virtuous man to perceive the workings of the universe:

ge þa eagan hal ures modes
þæt we hi on ðe selfum siððan moten
afæsnian, fæder engla:
todrif þone þiccan mist þe þrage nu
wið ða eagan foran usses modes
hangode hwyle hefig 7 þystre!
(Meter 20 262-7)

Heal the eyes of our mind, that we may fasten them on you yourself, father of angels. Drive away the thick mist that throngs now around the eyes of our mind, hanging about them, heavy and dark.

For Boethius, the goal of such illumination is to perceive the body and soul of the cosmos, the *discordia concors* of the elements and the machinations of the world-soul. For Alfred, on the other hand, the workings of the universe are somewhat different. Though he discusses the elements, he does so in terms of human strife over borders and boundaries, and he replaces the somewhat impersonal invocation

of the world-soul with a description of the need for the human soul to use its faculty of reason to draw near to God before it returns to him entirely. Alfred's prayer thus has more urgency, and is less cerebral than its Latin counterpart. While Boethius is concerned with the happiness derived from reasoned contemplation of the architecture of the universe, Alfred is concerned with the rewards and fate of the soul.

From the relatively minor additions to Meter 10 to the elaborate revision of Meter 20, Alfred's basic strategy remains unchanged: he glosses unfamiliar terms and, by glossing, brings his Latin source in line with his own preoccupations and moral interests. Though there is much of Boethius in Alfred's *Meters*, an audience familiar with both may perceive the vast differences that often separate the two. Alfred takes Boethius' abstractions and makes them concrete, turning a fairly recondite exploration of Neoplatonism into a practical guide to Christian thinking. Every metaphor is carefully spelled out, every point of doctrine painstakingly illustrated. To return to the governing metaphor of the *Soliloquies*, Alfred makes sure that each piece of wood he has gathered is used for its own specific purpose. Though the wildness of the Classical forest may be exciting, Alfred is more comfortable in his well-built cottage, with all extraneous branches pruned away and the remaining wood put to good use.

In the final analysis, Alfred's metaphor proves to be an apt one for his own translation. A cottage and a forest resemble one another about as much as the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* resembles the *Meters*: both are made of wood, but beyond that, they have little in common. Though this mindset produces some wonderful

literature, it is quite different than the approach to translation we have seen in the poetic translations produced outside of Alfred's aegis, the *Phoenix* and Exeter Riddles 35 and 40. In my last chapter, I will show that *Judgment Day II*, the one poetic translation that almost certainly post-dates Alfred's reform, also has little in common with his approach, and that Alfredian translation, though undeniably important, cannot be taken as identical with the practice of translation in Anglo-Saxon England generally.

Chapter Four: *Judgment Day II* and the Poetics of Confession

The final case study in this project focuses on the Old English *Judgment Day II* and its Latin source, a well-known Latin poem usually called *De Die Iudicii* and generally attributed to Bede.¹⁰¹ *JDII* is preserved in Cambridge Corpus Christi College 201, an eclectic collection of vernacular religious verse and translated prayers that also includes the Old English Apollonius.¹⁰² Though the precise reason behind CCC 201's collation is not known, there is strong evidence that the manuscript is linked to Wulfstan and the Benedictine reform.¹⁰³ That association suggests a late 10th or early 11th century date for *Judgment Day II*, along with the rest of the poems in the manuscript.¹⁰⁴

This chapter will show that *Judgment Day II* and the *De Die* were part of a new kind of poetry that emerged in England in response to a tradition of private penance which emphasized emotionally charged confession and a direct appeal to God over the lengthy physical penances prescribed by the penitentials. This tradition of penance flourished in England in the eighth century, died out somewhat

¹⁰¹ On Bede's authorship of *De Die*, see Caie 32-3 and Whitbread, "After Bede" 251-4. For the case against Bede as the poem's author on metrical grounds, see Lapidge, *Bede the Poet* 949. Steen provides a summation and analysis of the cases for Bede and Alcuin (72-4).

¹⁰² For the poem's manuscript context, see Caie 15-19.

¹⁰³ For a summary of the manuscript's connection to Wulfstan and the Benedictine Reform, see Caie 19-24.

¹⁰⁴ Fulk argues that *Judgment Day II* should be dated "no earlier than the second half of the tenth century" on dialectical grounds (264), a suggestion which Caie accepts in his edition of the poem (Caie 10).

in the ninth, and then returned in the tenth, spurred on by religious reforms that had recently taken place on the continent.¹⁰⁵

Judgment Day II thus provides a window into the richest and best-documented cultural context for translation outside of Alfredian England. The analysis of *JDII* in this chapter will demonstrate that it is a highly original and effective translation, made according to principles quite different from those that governed the composition of the *Meters of Boethius*. While the *Meters* strove to capture the content of their source texts with little regard for poetic form, *Judgment Day II* expresses its fidelity to its source text by re-creating its language.

As a tenth-century translation of an eighth-century source, *JDII* was part of an effort to revive and update the English tradition of private penance, an effort whose impetus came from the tenth-century Benedictine reform. *Judgment Day II's* translator accomplishes this goal through close attention to the language of the *De Die*, a language which has its ultimate source in the practice of confessional prayer at the heart of the tradition of private penance. In translating this language of prayer from Latin into the vernacular, the *JDII* poet was imitating Frankish scholars, who had done much the same thing on the continent at the end of the ninth century.¹⁰⁶ This chapter will trace the use of confessional language from the prayers, through the *De Die* and into *JDII*, and conclude by situating *JDII* against the background of the English Benedictine reform.

¹⁰⁵ See Frantzen 122-3 for the idea that tenth-century penance was a revival of an eighth-century tradition, and 127-32 for the connections to Continental practice.

¹⁰⁶ See Frantzen 185 n.28

To represent the tradition of confessional prayer, I rely on the prayers contained in the *Book of Cerne*. The *Book of Cerne* was probably written in ninth century Mercia, the prayers contained in it are presumably older, and there are enough of them to provide an accurate sense of the particular ways in which the confessional prayers use language.¹⁰⁷ My purpose is not to propose the *Book of Cerne* as a direct source for the *De Die*, but to demonstrate that the use of language in the poem is designed to imitate the use of language in the prayers, thereby identifying it with the tradition of private penance encoded within the *Book of Cerne*.

Such an analysis offers some fringe benefits. Though the *De Die* has been studied as the source of *Judgment Day II*, it is not often appreciated for its artistic merit.¹⁰⁸ A close analysis of its language, though, will reveal the care with which the Latin poet, be he Bede, Alcuin, or some nameless Anglo-Saxon, fashioned the language and rhetoric of the confessional prayers into a moving, if sometimes florid, poem. This artistry was recognized and imitated by the author of *Judgment Day II*, who, in translating the unusual vocabulary and peculiar rhetoric of the *De Die* into Old English, participated in the creation of a new type of Old English poetry.

The usefulness of this model lies primarily in how different the confessional mode is from other modes of poetic composition. The confessional prayers are not in any sense classical Latin poetry, though a few are written in classical meters. *De Die* is thus a fusion of classical quantitative verse with a less refined, but equally

¹⁰⁷ On the date and history of the *Book of Cerne*, see Brown 28-44. For further information on the prayers specifically, see Brown 136-43.

¹⁰⁸ See for example Whitbread's comment that "it can only be reckoned a minor work of Bede, and in theme and tone is perhaps not greatly to modern taste" ("After Bede" 250-51).

vital, kind of poetry. For the prayers are poetry of a sort: they use rhythmical and syntactic patterning, alliteration, paronomasia, repetition and asyndeton to communicate their spiritual message. It is little surprise, then, that *De Die* relies on many of the same devices, deployed in substantially similar ways.

The structure of the *De Die*, however, is much more intricate than that of the prayers. While the *De Die* draws on the style of the prayers, it far exceeds them as a work of literature. An analysis of the *De Die*'s structure, rhetoric and language will illuminate the poem's debt to the confessional prayers while drawing attention to its unique poetic qualities, setting the stage for a re-consideration of its relationship with *Judgment Day II*.

The *De Die* is in many ways a fascinating poem. Whitbread lists 39 surviving copies of the poem, excluding its Old English translations, which range in date from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries.¹⁰⁹ More than thirty of these manuscripts identify Bede as the poem's author (Whitbread, "After Bede" 251). Whitbread provisionally identifies three stages in the poem's transmission: the original Northumbrian version, a continental tradition derived from it, and a tenth-century southern English recension which he ties to the Benedictine reform ("After Bede," 261-2). Cotton Domitian A.i, the manuscript from which Caie edits his text of the poem, comes from this last group.¹¹⁰

De Die is 162 lines in its full form, though the poem is slightly shorter in those MSS that do not include Bede's dedication to Acca. Other than the dedication, the

¹⁰⁹ See Whitbread, "After Bede" 262-66 for a short-title list of MSS containing the poem.

¹¹⁰ See Caie xii-xiii for his rationale in choosing this MS for his copy-text.

poem divides broadly into three parts: an introduction to the penitent's remorseful state of mind (ll.1-49), a long list of the signs of judgment (ll.50-86), and an even longer catalogue of the torments of the damned and joys of the blessed (ll.87-157). The first 11 lines of the poem reveal many of its stylistic idiosyncracies as they lay out its principal thematic concerns:¹¹¹

Inter florigeras fecundi cespitis herbas,
Flamine ventorum resonantibus undique ramis,
Arboris umbriferae maestus sub tegmine solus,
Dum sedi, subito planctu turbatus amaro,
Carmina praetristi cecini haec lugubria mente,
Utpote commemorans scelerum commissa meorum,
Et maculas vitae, mortisque inamabile tempus,
Iudiciiue diem horrendo examine magnum,
Perpetuamque reis districti iudicis iram,
Et genus humanum discretis sedibus omne,
Gaudia sanctorum necnon poenasque malorum.¹¹²
(*De Die* 1-11)

Among the flowering grasses of a fertile field, with the branches on all sides rustling with the breath of the wind, beneath the cover of a shady tree, as I sat sad and alone, suddenly disturbed by a bitter complaint, I sang these mournful songs with a sad mind, all the while remembering the sins I had committed, and the blemishes on my life, and the unlovely hour of my death, and the great day of judgment in a terrible swarm, and the anger of the strict judge towards the guilty, and the whole human race in its varied domains, the joy of the saints and also the punishments of the wicked.

These first lines reveal *Judgment Day II* to be a profoundly personal poem: the narrator's experience, which fuels the next 150 lines, arises from his contemplation of his own past life as he sits alone in a pastoral landscape. As the narrator's grief at his sins grows, the world of the poem expands, from a man sitting alone in a meadow to the entire human race spread across the whole world. The poet sums up the theme of his poem in the haunting final line, a leonine hexameter in which the

¹¹¹ See Caie 58-64 for his analysis of these opening lines.

¹¹² Text of the *De Die* from Caie. Translations are the author's.

joys of the blessed and the torments of the wicked are neatly separated by the strong caesura, yet linked by syntactic parallelism.

The passage is ornamented by light touches of alliteration: "florigeras fecundi" in line 1, "resonantibus...ramis" in line 2, "sedi subito" in line 4, and several more such examples. The numerous objects of "commemorans" in lines 5-11 reveal the poet's predilection for building tension by heaping up parallel words or clauses. In this case, he communicates the narrator's grief upon the audience by creating the impression of an endless parade of troubles. This technique is a form of the inexpressibility topos, beloved of many Anglo-Latin writers.¹¹³

The feeling of abjection inspired by his sins moves the narrator to speak, to declare his desire for God and to stress the need for total, emotional repentance:

Haec memorans mecum tacito sub murmure dixi:
Nunc rogo, nunc venae fontes aperite calentes,
Dumque ego percutiam pugnibus rea pectora vel dum
Membra solo sternam, meritosque ciebo dolores,
Vos, precor, effusis lacrimis non parcite statim,
Sed maestam salsis faciem perfundite guttis.
Et reserate nefas Christo cum voce gementi,
Nec lateat quicquam culparum cordis in antro.
Omnia quin luci verbis reddantur apertis,
Pectoris et linguae, carnis vel crimina saeva;
Haec est sola salus animae et spes certa dolendi,
Vulnera cum lacrimis medico reserare superno,
Qui solet allisos sanare et solvere vinctos,
Quassatos nec vult animos infringere dextera,
Nec lini tepidos undis extinguere fumos.
(*De Die* 12-26)

Remembering these things I said to myself in a quiet murmur: "Now, I beg, now, veins, open your hot fountains, and while I beat my guilt breast with blows, or while I strew my limbs on the ground, I will produce the grief I deserve, and you, do not cease from gushing tears, but flood your sad face with salty drops. And lay open

¹¹³ On the inexpressibility topos in the *De Die*, see Steen 81. On the topos generally, see Curtius 159-62.

your sins to Christ with a mournful voice; do not allow any sin to lie hidden in the cave of your heart! Let all things be given to the light with open words, the savage crimes of the breast, the tongue, or the flesh. That is the only hope of the soul and sure remedy for the grieving, that your wounds be laid open to the Supernal Physician with tears, to him who is accustomed to heal the sick and to free the captive, and does not wish to shatter shaken souls with his right hand, nor to extinguish the tepid smoke of flax.

This passage shows the same rhetorical proclivities as the last: there is alliteration throughout, most notably in lines 12 ("memorans...mecum...murmure") and 22 ("sola salus...spes"). The poet also continues to display a tendency to heap up nouns and clauses, most obviously in line 21, "pectoris et linguae, carnis vel crimina saeva," where he draws attention to the sins of the heart, tongue and flesh as a way of emphasizing how desperately sinful he really is. It is this line that led Allen Frantzen to connect *Judgment Day II* with the language of confessional prayer, citing l.21 as an instance of an "anatomical motif" common in prayers (Frantzen 185).

The real significance of this passage, though, is the perspective on repentance it reveals. In these lines, repentance is personal, emotional and immediate. The narrator's only hope, "spes sola," is that he committ his sins to God with tears. Immediately after this passage, the poet drives the point home with a reference to St. Dismas in ll. 27, that "pendens...in cruce latro," whose true confession, "confessio vera," opened the gates of Paradise for him. Dismas, an unrepentant sinner who turned to God in dire extremity, is proof of the absolute power of true confession over sin.

This attitude towards repentance is significant because it is very different than anything in the penitentials. The penitentials, handbooks listing the type and duration of penance appropriate for various kinds of infractions, create what might

be called an economy of sin. The nature and degree of the penitent's offense is weighed against his gender, age, and social or religious status, resulting in the assignment of a specific action to be performed for a certain period of time. This construction is readily apparent in the preface of the penitential attributed to Bede:

For not all are to be weighed in one and the same balance, although they be associated in one fault, but there shall be discrimination for each of these, that is: between rich and poor; freeman, slave; little child, boy, youth, young man, old man; stupid, intelligent; layman, cleric, monk; bishop, presbyter, deacon, subdeacon, reader, ordained or unordained; married or unmarried; pilgrim, virgin, canoness, or nuns; the weak, the sick, the well. He shall make a distinction for the character of the sins or of the men: a continent person or one who is incontinent willfully or by accident; [whether the sin is committed] in public or in secret; with what degree of compunction he [the culprit] makes amends by necessity or by intention; the place and times [of offenses] (McNeill and Gamer 223).

Once all these considerations are applied, the penance, usually reciting the psalter, fasting, or a similarly beneficial pursuit, is set for a specified term. These terms range from months for minor offenses to periods of ten to fifteen years for major ones. This insistence that repentance be carried out over a period of time, often a long one, is quite different from the example of St. Dismas in the *De Die*. There, a moment of repentance suffices for a lifetime of sin, so long as it is sincere.

The penitentials also insist on mediated confession, figuring the priest as the "physician of souls":

How much more, therefore, O priests of God, is it proper to weigh and set forth for men the diverse remedies of their invisible souls lest through a foolish physician the wounds of souls grow worse, as saith the prophet: 'my sores are putrefied and corrupted because of my foolishness.' O foolish physician, do not deceive thine own soul and his lest thou receive a double, nay a sevenfold or a thousandfold, penalty. Hear Christ when he saith: 'if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit' (McNeill and Gamer 222).

In the *De Die*, by contrast, the narrator urges his readers to trust in the "supernus medicus," Christ, as the only physician able to heal their souls. The narrator of the

De Die thus bypasses the whole economy of the penitentials, stripping away all the institutional layers between him and God. Lest this sound too anachronistically Protestant, it is important to remember that Dismas is a Biblical figure, and that Christ himself participates in the same sort of emotionally charged prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane:

Et factus in agonia, prolixius orabat. Et factus est sudor eius, sicut guttae sanguinis decurrentis in terram. Et cum surrexisset ab oratione et venisset ad discipulos suos, invenit eos dormientes prae tristitia. Et ait illis: Quid dormitis? Surgite, orate, ne intretis in tentationem (Luke 22:43-6).

And he (i.e., Christ) prayed more fervently in his agony. And his sweat came forth, like drops of blood falling onto the earth. And when he had risen up from prayer and come to his disciples, he found them sleeping because of their sadness. And he said to them: why do you sleep? Rise up, pray, lest you enter into temptation.

In this memorable passage, Christ's prayer is so emotional that sweat pours "like drops of blood" from his face. And when he finds his disciples sleeping, he wakes them up and instructs them to pray in the same way, to protect themselves from temptation.

The point of these considerations is not to argue that the author of the *De Die* is doing something radically new, but that he was choosing between two authorized models for confession and repentance. He passes over the model of considered, protracted repentance in the penitentials in favor of a more immediate, emotional form that, as I will show later, may be identified with the confessional prayers.

After revealing his desperate need for emotional repentance in the first part of the poem, the *De Die* poet goes on to paint a vivid picture of the Last Judgment, drawing on the language and rhetoric of the confessional prayers to create a similar

need in his audience as he describes Christ enthroned in majesty, preparing to judge the souls of men:

Ille sedens solio fulget sublimis in alto;
Ante illum rapimur, collectis undisque turmis,
Iudicium ut capiat gestorum quisque suorum.
Sis memor illius, quis tum pavor ante tribunal
Percutiet stupidis cunctorum corda querelis.
Dum simul innumeris regem comitata polorum,
Angelica advenient caelestibus agmina turmis,
Atque omnes pariter homines cogentur adesse,
qui sunt, qui fuerant, fuerint vel quique futuri,
Cunctaque cunctorum cunctis archana patebunt.
(*De Die* 59-68)

He (i.e., Christ) shines over the earth, sitting on high; we are brought before him, with the waves collected in a crowd, so that each man might receive judgment for his deeds. Be mindful of Him, what fear then shall strike the hearts of all with its paralyzing complaints. At the same time a numberless host of Angels shall come, accompanying the king of the world, arrayed in celestial hosts, and all men shall equally be driven to appear [before them], all who are, who were, and who will be, and all the secrets of all shall be laid open to all.

Again in this passage we see several instances of alliteration: "sedens

solio...sublimis" in line 59, "cunctorum corda" in line 63, "angelica

advenient...agmina" in line 64, and of course the alliteration caused by the repetition

of forms of "esse" and "cuncta" in lines 67-8. It is that repetition, though, that truly

displays the poet's virtuosity. Paronomasia occurs frequently in the *De Die*, but

rarely as intensely as at this moment. Line 67 contains four different forms of

"esse," to make the point that the Last Judgment includes all mankind, unbounded

by space or by time. Line 68 uses three forms of "cuncta" to insist on the

completeness of the Judgment: since all will be revealed at the end of days, it is best

not to conceal anything now. This rhetorical virtuosity also highlights the poet's

concern for structure; the lines act as a sort of punctuation, preparing the reader for

the succession of powerful images that follow as the poet goes on to describe the physical signs that will attend Christ's return to earth.

The poet begins his description by restating the promise of lines 67-8:

"quod cor, lingua, manus, tenebrosis gessit in antris/ et quod nunc aliquem
verecundans scire verebat,/ omnibus in patulo pariter tunc scire licebit"; "what the heart, tongue, and hand have done in dark caves and what the shameful person would be anxious for anyone to know at this time, will then be equally fitting for all to know openly" (ll.69-71). These lines are significant in that they draw once again on the inexpressibility topos, enumerating parts of the body ("cor, lingua, manus") to emphasize how no part of the penitent is free from sin. This warning ushers in a grim description of the terrors of the Last Judgment:

Tunc tribus et populi ferient rea pectora pugnīs,
Stabit uterque simul timidus pauperque potensque,
Et miser et dives simili dititione timebunt;
Fluvius ignivomus miseros torquebit amare,
Et vermes scelerum mordebunt intima cordis.
Nullus ibi meritis confidit iudice praesans,
Singula sed nimius percurrit pectora terror
Et stupet attonito simul impia turma tremore.
(*De Die* 79-86)

Then the tribes and peoples will beat their guilty breasts, and the powerful man and the pauper will stand together, afraid, and the wretch and the rich man will dread the same judgment; a burning river will torment the wretched bitterly, and worms will gnaw the innermost hearts of the wicked. No-one present there will trust in his virtues before the Judge, but an overwhelming terror will run through the hearts of all, and the impious throng will be struck dumb by a thunderous tremor.

As in the other passages, the alliteration is immediately striking: "tunc tribus" and "populi...pectora pugnīs" in line 79, "stabit...simul" and "pauperque potensque" in line 80, "dives...dititione" in line 81, "percurrit pectora" in line 85, and "turma tremore" in line 86. The passage also contains some memorably terrifying images:

the burning, literally "flame-spewing" river, "fluvius ignivomus," in line 82, the worms who gnaw the bones of the wicked in line 83, and the massive tremor that shakes the earth in line 86.

The poet drives home the impact of these grisly images with a pair of rhetorical questions in lines 87-8: "quid, caro, quid facies, illa quid flebilis hora,/ que modo, vae! misera servire libidine gaudes"; "what, o flesh, what shall you do, tearful in that hour, in what way, alas, shall you rejoice to be a slave to miserable pleasure?" These rhetorical questions help to signal the poet's movement from listing the signs of judgment to cataloguing the joys of the blessed and the pains of the damned, reiterating the theme that all men will be made equal at the Day of Judgment.

As the poet begins to enumerate the pains of the damned, he relies on a Scriptural image borrowed from the Gospel of Matthew:

Ignibus aeternae nigris loca plena gehennae,
Frigora mixta simul feruentibus algida flammis:
Nunc oculos nimio flentes ardore camini,
Nunc iterum nimio stridentes frigore dentes.
His miseris vicibus miseri uoluuntur in aeuum,
Obscuras inter picea caligine noctes.
(*De Die* 94-99)

At the same time bitter cold will be mixed with burning flames: now [they see] eyes weeping at the terrible heat of the furnace, and now teeth chattering with too much cold. Those wretches endure these torments by turns through the ages, through nights obscured with the deepest darkness.

In this passage the poet makes use of interlocked word order to highlight his bizarre and disturbing images. The "black fires", "ignibus nigris" are interlocked with "aeternae gehennae," and "frigora algida" is mixed with "feruentibus flammis" so that the shape of the line mimics the image described: a place where bitter cold and fierce heat are mingled together to torment the damned.

The preference for interlocked word order continues with "oculos nimio flentes ardore" and "nimio stridentes frigore dentes" in the following two lines, whose syntactic parallelism adds a further degree of artistry to the construction of the passage. The use of "vicibus" and "volvuntur" in 98 also helps create the sense of an endless cycle of torment. This passage is also interesting because it seems to derive from a Biblical image. Though the language is much more elaborate than anything in the Vulgate, the collocation of darkness, weeping and "stridentes dentes" are reminiscent of the references to the "outer darkness" in Matthew: "tunc dixit rex ministris ligatis pedibus eius et manibus mittite eum in tenebras exteriores ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium"; "then the king said to his ministers, 'bind his feet and hands and cast him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'" (Matt. 22:13).

The poet saves arguably his best trick for late in the poem—lines 114-120 contain the *De Die's* first holonomastic lines, probably the poem's most distinctive rhetorical feature. Holonomastic lines, as the name suggests, are lines composed entirely of substantives, celebrated by Bede for their ornamental use in the poetry of Fortunatus:

Aliquando versum nominibus tantum perficere gratum est, ut Fortunatus:

Lilia, narcissus, viole, rosa, nardus, amomum,
Oblectant animos germina nulla meos.

Quod idem et in propriis fecit nominibus:

Sarra, Rebecca, Rachel, Hester, Iudith, Anna, Noemi,
Quamvis precipue culmen ad astra levent.

Fecit et in verbis:

Blanditur, refovet, veneratur, honorat, obumbrat,
Et locat in thalamo membra pudica suo.

(Bede, *De Arte Metrica* XI)

Sometimes it is pleasing that a line be composed of nouns, as in Fortunatus:

The lily, narcissus, violet, rose, spikenard, and amomus delight my mind with no blossoms.

Which may also be done with proper nouns:

Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Esther, Judith, Anna, Naomi, so precipitously lift their eminence to the stars.

It may also be done with verbs:

he cherishes, refreshes, praises, honors, covers, and places her chaste limbs in his bed.

This type of line is particularly challenging to compose due to the constraints of the dactylic hexameter: the poet must select a series of nouns whose quantities lend themselves to arrangement into a hexameter line. The poet of the *De Die* is quite fond of this virtuoso move, and uses it several times in his poem, beginning in ll.

114-120:

Sed dolor et gemitus, stridor, pavor et timor horrens,
Taedia, tristitiae, trux, indignatio, languor,
Errantesque animae flammis in carcere caeco.
Noxia tunc huius cessabunt gaudia saeculi:
ebrietas, epulae, risus, petulantia, iocus,
Dira cupido, tenax luxus, scelerata libido,
Somnus iners, torporque gravis, desidia pigra.
(*De Die* 114-120)

But sadness and moaning [are present there], clamor, fear and shuddering terror, wretchedness, grief, grimness, indignation, langor, and souls wandering through the flames in a black prison. Then the noxious joys of this age will come to an end: drunkenness, feasts, laughter, immodesty, laughter, harmful desire, clinging luxury, wicked lust, inert slumber, and heavy stupor, lazy slackness.

Rhetorically and thematically, these lines represent the poem's climax. The penitent's experience has been distilled to a rapid succession of images which he

parades before his reader, joined together by meter but unbound by ordinary concerns of syntax. This list of torments reserved for the damned evokes fear, struggling to capture the inexpressible misery reserved for the wicked. In lines 130-8, however, the poet uses the same technique to evoke hope, inciting the reader to virtue with a long list of earthly miseries absent from Heaven:

Non sitis, esuries, somnus et [sed nec] non labor ullus
Non febres, morbi, clades, non frigora flammae,
Taedia, tristiae, curae, tormenta, ruinae,
Fulmina, nimbus, hiemps, tonitrus, nix, grando, procelle,
Angor, paupertas, moeror, mors, casus, egestas;
Sed pax et pietas, bonitas, opulencia regnant.
Gaudia, letitiae, virtus, lux, vita perennis,
Gloria, laus, requies, honor et concordia dulcis,
Insuper omne bonum cunctis Deus ipse ministrat.
(*De Die* 130-8)

[There is] no thirst, hunger, sleep, nor any labor, no fevers, illnesses, disaster, no cold or fire, no wretchedness, sadness, cares, torments or ruin, no lightning, clouds, winter, thunder, snow, hail, or storms, no distress, poverty, grief, death, ill fate, destitution; but peace and piety, goodness and plenty reign. Joy, happiness, virtue, light, eternal life, glory, praise, rest, honor and sweet accord, above every good thing God himself cares for all.

This passage signals a welcome change from the poet's grim representations of Hell, promising a better future for the penitent who is sincerely moved to confess his sins.

Where previously the inexpressibility topos worked to create fear, it now works to create hope, painting a picture of the many joys which await the blessed in Heaven.

In the final lines of the poem, the poet turns his rhetorical questions in the same way. While lines 87 and 88, "quid, caro, quid facies..." revealed the helplessness of the fleshly sinner, lines 152-155 speak to the bliss of the truly repentant:

Quid, rogo, quid durum saeclo censetur in isto,
Utque illos inter liceat habitare cohortes,
Sedibus et superum semper gaudere beatis
Ac dominum benedicere secla per omnia Christum

(*De Die* 152-5)

What, I ask, what harsh thing may be accounted in that age, when it is allowed [to us] to dwell among those cohorts, and to rejoice forever in [our] blessed seats, and to bless our Lord Christ through every age.

It is fitting, of course, that "Christ" is the poem's last word, excluding the text of the dedication to Acca present in some MSS.¹¹⁴

From these examples, it is evident that the *De Die* has a particular style all its own. The poet's knack for alliteration and striking images, frequent use of the inexpressibility topos, and especially of holonomastic lines all combine to create a memorable and original poem. I will demonstrate that, in this respect, the *De Die* mimics the style of confessional prayers such as those preserved in the *Book of Cerne*. Though the prayers in the *Book of Cerne* do not seem to be a source for the *De Die*, the prayers' affinity with the language of the poem suggests that the *De Die*'s author was deliberately invoking the tradition of confessional prayer in his poem.

The *Book of Cerne*, Cambridge University Library MS Ll. 1.10, is a fascinating text in its own right. It is composed of three separate manuscripts, bound together in the 18th century, as described in Dom. Kuypers' edition.¹¹⁵ The second of these manuscripts, the so-called "Prayer Book of Bishop Aedeluald," is the earliest of the three, and the one most relevant to the *De Die* and *Judgment Day II*. The prayer book seems to date from ninth-century Mercia, though the prayers contained in it are likely older and more geographically diverse.¹¹⁶ The prayer book, which I refer to as

¹¹⁴ Those MSS that do not include the dedication stop after line 155; see Caie 133 n.154.

¹¹⁵ For the division of the MS, see Kuypers ix-x and Brown 18-20.

¹¹⁶ On the provenance of the prayers preserved in the *Book of Cerne*, see Kuypers xiv-xxx and Brown 136-43.

the *Book of Cerne* following Kuypers' practice, may itself be divided into three parts: a series of Gospel extracts (ff.1-40a), a collection of 74 prayers and hymns (ff.40b-87b), and a partial psalter (ff.87b-99b). Kuypers gives a helpful index to the prayers by number and first line in his edition (Kuypers, xxxiv+ff).

Given the number and diversity of the *Cerne* prayers, it is hardly practical to consider them all. This analysis will therefore focus on two prayers of particular interest, drawing on others to help illuminate the general nature of some stylistic trends. In his index, Kuypers identifies three prayers as confessions, "confessiones": prayers 8, 9 and 10. Of these, 8 and 10 exemplify an emotionally-charged mode of confession, while 9 is significantly more concise and restrained (Kuypers xxiv-v). These prayers share the *De Die*'s conception of penance as an absolute, unmediated and emotional experience, and rely heavily on the inexpressibility topos and long strings of nouns to get their point across.

Prayer 8 is titled in the manuscript "confessio sancta penitentis," "the holy confession of a penitent."¹¹⁷ It begins with an invocation of God and a request for true repentance: "rogo te ut mittas in cor meum veram penitentiam et veram confessionem omnium peccatorum meorum"; "I ask you that you send true repentance and true confession into my heart for all my sins." This same sentiment appears in *De Die* line 28: "peccati quantum valeat confessio vera?"; "how valuable might a true confession of sin be?" Prayer 8 also shares the *De Die* poet's desire to atone for all his many sins in a single, all-encompassing moment of repentance:

¹¹⁷ Text of the *Cerne* prayers from Kuypers; translations are the author's. I cite Kuypers' text by page and line number, since he does not number the lines of the prayers continuously. I preserve the punctuation in his text, but do not preserve the lineation for reasons of space.

Ego sum confitens omnia genera peccatorum quos diabolus portat animabus ad inmundatiam confiteor tibi sodomitam fornicationem falsum testimonium adulterium gulam et avaritiam infidelitatem malam pertinaciam fiduciam et malam concupiscentiam et adoptionem iniquorum voluntatum et malorum remissionum · confiteor tibi domine omnia peccata me id est fornicationem naturalem et in naturalem · tam apud masculos quam apud feminas cordisque mechationum et turpem effusionem seminis · homicidium et periurium fraudes et insidiae invidiam obprobrium detractionem et bilinguitatem zelum vanam gloriam discordiam (*Cerne* 92, 15+ff.)

I am confessing all manner of sins which the devil brings for the pollution of souls; I confess to you sodomy and fornication, false witness, adultery, gluttony and greed, faithlessness and enduring bad faith, and wicked desire and the adoption of longed-for iniquities and of a vicious slackness. I confess to you, O Lord, all my sins, that is natural fornication and fornication in nature, as much with men as with women, and adultery of the heart and the wicked emission of my seed. Homicide and the deceits of perjury and the vice of slander, the crime of scandal, a two-tongued zeal, vain glory and fractiousness.

The length of this list suggests that it may not correspond to remembered experience. Instead, it too is a version of the inexpressibility topos, designed to encompass the whole spectrum of sin beneath its vast umbrella. Presumably this strategy makes the prayer more broadly applicable to individuals, as there is something for just about anyone to confess to. The long list of sins, mostly devoid of syntactic markers, is reminiscent of the *De Die*'s holonomastic lines.

Somewhat later, the prayer contains another list which enumerates the parts of the penitent's body which have betrayed him by sinning. This list is an example of Frantzen's "anatomical motif," one of the clues which first led him to connect *Judgment Day II* and the confessional poetry:

Confiteor tibi cordis mei cogitationes et verba oris mei vel pro natura carnis mei pro pelle · pro renibus · pro ore pro lingua · pro labiis · pro faucibus · pro dentes · pro capillis · pro unguibus pro lacrimas · pro sputo pro medullas pro cerebro · pro semine viri vel mulieris pro omni durum vel molli umido vel arido quodcumque umquam contigisset intas vel foras ·
(*Cerne* 94, 5-11)

I confess to you the thoughts of my heart and the words of my mouth either from the nature of my flesh, from my skin, from my kidneys, from my mouth or tongue, from my lips, from my jaws, from my teeth, from my hair, from my nails and my tears, from my spittle, my marrow and my brain, from the seed of a man or a woman, from everything hard or soft, dry or wet, whatever has ever touched [me] inwardly or outwardly.

Though the language of this section is decidedly ungrammatical, its meaning is easy enough to work out.¹¹⁸ The penitent here lists all the parts of his body which have, at one time or another, led him into sin, moving beyond his own body in the final lines to include anything he has ever touched. Again, the impulse to list the parts of the body likely does not come from a recollection of actual sins the penitent has committed. Instead, it is a way of declaring the whole body to be sinful, in need of redemption. This same topos may be found in the "loricae," prayers which invoke God's protection, sometimes over every part of the body individually. Prayer 4 in the *Book of Cerne*, a lorica attributed to a certain "Loding," uses this technique to good effect.¹¹⁹ Among the prayers in the *Book of Cerne* are many more such lists: of body parts, of sins, of angels and archangels, of saints.¹²⁰ In each case, the effect is the same. These lists are intended to move the reader to repentance by revealing the pervasiveness of sin, to be matched only by the vastness of God's grace.

¹¹⁸ See Kuypers' apparatus on p. 94 for a list of the many forms that have been altered by a later scribe, presumably to correct the improper use of "pro" with the accusative. Unfortunately, since not all the forms are corrected, the text as we have it varies between using the ablative and the accusative with "pro." The problem is most pronounced in phrases like "pro omni durum vel molli," where the adjectives are clearly supposed to be parallel, but are in fact in different cases.

¹¹⁹ See Kuypers 85-8 for the text of the Lorica of Loding.

¹²⁰ Further examples of this motif are listed in Kuypers xxv. Kuypers believes that this "litanic" type of prayer has affinities with Irish devotional materials, which he contrasts to the Roman character of some of the other prayers.

A final point of contact between the *De Die* and prayer number 8 is their shared conception of "confessional time," the idea that a single moment of repentance can reach back, and even forward, in time to encompass a life's worth of sin. Prayer 8 's version of this idea appears close to the prayer's end:

dominus meus ego sum confitens tibi atque angelis tuis et omnibus sanctis tuis ·
quod diabolus numquam vincat nec in die exitus mei nec in die iudicii quod sine
confessione peccatorum e saeculo migrassem · pro hoc confiteor vobis quaecumque
feci in puerili aetate vel in iuventute vel in senectute ·

My Lord, I confess to you and your angels and all your saints, that the devil might never prove it true, either on the day of my death or the Day of Judgment, that I have passed from this earth without confessing my sins. For this reason I confess to you whatever I have done, in my boyhood, my adolescence, or my old age.
(*Cerne* 94, 11-17)

This passage demonstrates quite clearly that a single act of confession could cover a multitude of sins, committed over a long span of time. I insist on this point because it, more than anything else, separates the confessional approach to repentance from the penitential. The penitentials insist on a separate penance for every sin, a separate rule for the young, the mature and the old. The confessional prayers, as we see here, make no such distinctions. A single confession is valid for all sins committed at all times, just as Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient to save all of mankind. The prayer revisits this idea in its conclusion, in which the penitent confesses all his sins "ad emendationem omnium scelerum quos cumque contraxi ab infantia mea usque in praesentem diem"; "for the correction of all crimes which I have committed from my infancy until the present day."

Prayer 10, titled "Alma Confessio" in the manuscript, shows many of the same characteristics as prayer 8. The first 17 lines of the prayer are a long list of different names for God: "liberator credentium," "spes laborantium," "paracletus

dolentium" and so forth. Page 96 line 18 shows the same all-inclusive approach to confession as prayer 8, revealed in the phrase "nunc volo confiteri omnia peccata mea"; "now I wish to confess all my sins." In fact, prayer 10 insists on the impossibility of confessing individual sins, since there are simply too many: "quia peccata mea numerum non habent"; "since my sins are without number."

Like prayer 8, prayer 10 makes good use of the inexpressibility topos, in the form of lists of various kinds. P.97 ll.4-15 list the variety of ways in which the penitent has sinned, and p.97 l.16-p.48 l.2 are another example of Frantzen's "anatomical motif," including the surprising phrase "peccavi in naribus"; "I have sinned in my nostrils." It bears repeating that the prayer's author is unlikely to have imagined a specific sin for each body part listed. The point is that no part of the body, be it ever so humble or inoffensive, is free from a share of sin.

Prayer 10 also articulates the emotional approach to repentance found in prayer 8 and the *De Die*, as revealed on p.98 ll.14-17: "Ego te adiuro omnipotens deus meus · quod tu in me collocas amorem tuum et timorem · suscita in me paenitentiam peccatorum meorum et fletum pro nomine tuo" ;" I beg you, my almighty Lord, that you instill love and fear side by side in me; raise up in me repentance for my sins and tears on account of your name." The request that God create a feeling of repentance in the sinner is familiar from the *De Die* and prayer 8. Prayer 10 differs slightly, though, in describing the emotional response as a blend of love and fear, "amor" and "timor," which, when properly juxtaposed, are the foundation of the confessional state of mind. The *De Die* does not use this same language, but line 11, "gaudia sanctorum necnon poenasque malorum,"

acknowledges the same juxtaposition: the joys of the saints urge the reader towards love for God, while the punishments of the wicked instill fear of His judgment.

A detailed analysis of these two prayers has revealed several thematic and rhetorical affinities with the *De Die*, but they fall far short of providing a source for everything in that poem. Most obviously, *Cerne* prayers 8 and 10 are not poetry, though they do rely on rhetorical techniques to heighten their impact. There are other *Cerne* prayers that are poetic, however. Prayer 4 is written in dactylic hexameters, just as the *De Die* is, and prayers 31 and 32 are metrical poems, both identified in the manuscript as "rithmon." Finally, there is the rudimentary poetry of prayers like 16: "ubi est felicitas · ubi et securitas · ubi semper sanitas ubi mentis puritas · ubi nullus dolor ubi nec mentes nec irae furor" ; "where there is happiness, and also security; where there is health, and purity of mind. Where there is no sadness, nor rage of mind or of anger."¹²¹ Though these few lines do not quite pass muster as Latin verse, there is clearly an effort to observe a rule of proportion, making sure all the clauses have similar length and stress patterns, and to create homoioteleuton as much as possible.

While no single prayer provides a perfect analogue for *De Die Iudicii*, the above examples show that the poet's favorite rhetorical techniques appear frequently in the confessional prayers, and that the *De Die*'s model of repentance is, fundamentally, a confessional one. It is precisely this confessional attitude towards repentance that fascinated the anonymous translator of *Judgment Day II*, and that

¹²¹ Kuypers 107 notes that the "e" in "mentes" has been underpointed for deletion, replaced with a superscript "i," correcting the otherwise ungrammatical clause.

merited the poem's inclusion in a manuscript collection mostly concerned with Benedictine spirituality.

Judgment Day II translates the 154 lines of *De Die* (without the dedication) into 307 lines of Old English verse. Patrizia Lendinara has published a line-by-line comparison of the two poems, but for the present purpose an understanding of the broad correspondances suffices. *JDII* preserves the three-part structure of the *De Die*, describing the penitent's state of mind (ll.1-98), the signs of Judgment (ll.99-175), and the joys of the blessed and punishments of the damned (ll.176-305). Throughout, the Anglo-Saxon translator is careful to preserve the *De Die*'s emotional approach to penance, and strives to capture some of the *De Die*'s distinctive, confessional rhetoric.

It is generally recognized by scholars that lines 1-9 of *Judgment Day II* are the most exciting and original part of the poem.¹²² The consensus is that these lines translate their source faithfully while foregrounding the spiritual metaphor of an idyllic, natural space (Caie 61). The fact that the Old English version of the scene is longer than its source also allows the poet to draw the reader in more fully, making the turbulence that follows that much more violent and disruptive (Caie 62). Caie assigns these differences to a difference in audience between the Latin and Old English versions of the poem:

Bede's clerical audience would immediately have comprehended the spiritual significance of the brief allusions to garden, wind and disturbed trees, whereas the vernacular poet might have felt it necessary to spell these out to his lay audience (Caie 58).

¹²² See Caie 58-63 for a conspectus of scholarship on these lines, as well as his own analysis. See also Hoffman, "Structure" 170 and Steen 74-9.

Caie's analysis focuses mostly on the vocabulary of *JDII*, and, to a lesser extent, on its structure. He does not note the distinctive rhetoric of those first 9 lines:

Hwæt! Ic ana sæt innan bearwe
mid helme beþeht, holte tomiddes,
þær þa wæterburnan swegdon and urnon
on middan gehæge (eal swa ic secge);
eac þær wynwyrta weoxon and bleowon
innon þam gemonge on ænlicum wonge
and þa wudubeames wagedon and swegdon
þurh winda gryre. Wolcn wæs gehrered
and min earme mod eal wæs gedrefed.¹²³
(*JDII* 1-9)

Lo! I sat alone inside a grove, covered by a covering in the middle of the forest, where the streams of water babbled and ran in the middle of the garden (all as I say); and joyous blossoms flourished and bloomed there, in the midst of everything on that singular plain, and the branches of the trees moved and swayed in the rush of the wind. The sky was disturbed, and my wretched mind was dreadfully troubled.

In these nine lines, we see many of the distinctive features of *JDII*'s rhetoric. There is the occasional use of rhyme: "wæterburnan swegdon and urnon" (l.3); "gemonge...wonge" (l.6); and "wagedon...swegdon" (l.7). In addition to these examples, there is homoioteleuton in "weoxon and blowon" (l.5) and "gehrered...gedrefed" (ll.8-9). Many of these examples also show the *JDII* poet's fondness for verbal doublets, usually thought to reflect the practice of glossing individual Latin words by multiple Old English words to capture the semantic range of the lemma.¹²⁴ Finally, this passage shows the relative frequency of b-line fillers in the poem: lines 2b, 4b and 6b could all be removed without any effect on the meaning of the passage. Lendinara links this phenomenon to a compositional habit

¹²³ Text of *JDII* from Caie. Translations are the author's.

¹²⁴ On word-pairs in *JDII*, see Lendinara 25. On the connection of word-pairs to glosses, see Caie 51-2.

of the translator, who tends to translate individual lines of Latin with two lines of Old English, often inserting a filler in the second b-line for the sake of the meter (Lendinara19-20).

As in the *De Die*, the narrator of *JDII* is deeply moved by his dread of the Last Judgment. Lines 24-42, which correspond to *De Die* 12-21, capture the need for emotional repentance present in the source:

Ic gemunde þis mid me, and ic mearn swiðe,
and Ic murnigende cwæð, mode gedrefed:
"Nu ic eow, æddran, ealle bidde
þæt ge wylspringas wel ontynan,
hate of hleorum, recene to tearum,
þænne ic synful slea swiðe mid fyste,
breost mine beate on gebedstowe,
and minne lichaman lecge on eorðan
and geearnade sar ealle ic gecige.
Ic bidde eow benum nu ða
þæt ge ne wandian wiht for tearum,
ac dreorige hleor dreccað mid wope
and sealtum dropum sona ofergeotaþ,
and geopeniað man ecum drihtne.
Ne þær owiht inne ne belife
on heortscræfe heanra gylta,
þæt hit ne sy dægcuð, þæt þæt dihle wæs,
openum wordum eall abæred,
breostes and tungan and flæscs swa some.
(*JDII* 24-42)

I remembered this myself, and mourned greatly, and as I mourned I said, disturbed in my mind: "now, eyes, I bid you all that you open your fountains quickly for tears, hot over the cheeks. Then I, sinful, will strike with my fist, beat my breast in the place of prayer, and lay my body on the earth and call forth every pain I have earned. I bid you, take care now that you do not turn aside from tears at all, but afflict your wretched cheek with grief and cover it swiftly with salty drops, and bare your sins to the eternal Lord. Let no trace of deep guilt survive in the cave of your heart, that what was concealed not be made known, but let all things be made bare in open words, the sins of the breast and the tongue and the flesh at the same time."

In most respects, this passage is a close translation of its source. It foregrounds the physical manifestations of repentance, tears and the mortification of the flesh, and

makes the same address to the reader as the *De Die*. It also figures confession as an opening to God, an effort to root out those "deep sins" hidden deep within the "cave of the heart," a phrase obviously derived from *De Die* 19, "cordis in antro." The translator of *JDII* also follows *De Die* 21 in referring to the sins of the "breast, tongue and flesh."

This passage is less elaborate than the poem's first 9 lines, though it is not without ornamentation. There is paronomasia with "mearn" and "murnigende" in ll.24-5, near-rhyme with "hleorum" and "tearum" in 28. This passage also contains three of the poem's many *hapax legomena*: "heortscræf" (l.39), "dægcuð" (l.40) and "abæred" (l.41).¹²⁵ The cluster of *hapax legomena* here seems significant since this passage is so important for the poem's confessional outlook. Each of these unusual words emphasizes the idea that repentance is the uncovering of something hidden, and therefore anticipates the Day of Judgment, when all hidden things shall be revealed.

In the lines following this passage, the translator of *JDII* rehearses some of the foundational concepts of confessional repentance. Line 43 refers to the outpouring of tears as "an hæl earmre sawwle"; "the one hope of the wretched soul." Line 46 refers to Christ as "uplicum læce," the "supernus medicus" of *De Die* 23. Lines 49-52 give a slightly altered version of the *De Die*'s promise that Christ desires to have mercy on the repentant sinner:

ne mid swiðran his swyþe nele brysan
wanhydige mod wealdend engla,
ne þone wlacan smocan waces flæscas

¹²⁵ For a complete list of *hapax legomena* in the poem, see Lendinara 32. She also includes helpful analyses of poetic and prosaic vocabulary in the poem.

wyle waldend Crist wætere gedwæscan.
(*JDII* 49-52)

Nor will the Lord of Angels bruise the weak mind, and Christ the ruler will not extinguish the feeble smoke of the weak flesh with water.

As Graham Caie notes, the ultimate source for this passage is Isaiah 42:3, "calamum quassatum non conteret, et linum fumigans non extinguet; in veritate educet iudicium"; "he will not break the bruised reed, and he will not extinguish smoking flax; he shall send forth judgment in truth" (Caie 37-9). The bruised reed and smoking flax are symbolic of weak men, who are unable to refrain from sin. The point of the passage, therefore, is that God is merciful, and will not punish those men who sin through weakness until the appointed time (Caie 37).

The Anglo-Saxon poet's innovation in this passage is to explain the metaphor, glossing the "feeble smoke" with the genitive phrase "waces flæsces," "of the weak flesh." It is worth noting that Krapp and Dobbie, in the *ASPR* edition of the poem, emend "flæsces" to "fleaxes," attributing the difference to scribal error.¹²⁶ If we choose to retain the manuscript reading, however, it suggests that the translator was searching for ways to make clear material that might have been obscure to an Anglo-Saxon audience.

As in the *De Die*, this passage serves as an introduction to the story of St. Dismas, the thief on the cross, whose sincere repentance caused him to be saved by Christ:

Hu ne gesceop þe se scaþa scearplice bysne,
þe mid Criste wæs cwylmed on rode,
hu micel forstent and hu mære is
seo soðe hreow synna and gylta?

¹²⁶ Krapp and Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems* 58

Se sceaþa wæs on rode scyldig and manful
mid undædum eall gesymed.
He drihtene swa þeah, deaðe gehende,
his bena bebead breost-gehigdum;
he mid lyt wordum ac geleaffullum
his hæle begeat and help recene
and in gefor þa ænlican geatu
neorxnawonges mid nerigende.
(*JDII* 53-64)

Did the thief not provide a pointed example for you, who was killed on a cross alongside Christ, of how powerful and how great is the true confession of sin and guilt? The thief was on a cross, guilty and sinful, wholly burdened with wicked deeds. Nonetheless, near his death, he offered his prayers to his Lord from his innermost heart; he with few words, though full of faith, secured his salvation and swift aid, and passed in through the sole gate of Paradise with his Savior.

Again the passage is close to its source, with a small but significant variation. In the *De Die*, the thief cries out in "prayerful words" ("verba precantia"), and becomes worthy of salvation with a "single utterance of faith," "solo...fidei sermone." In *JDII*, the thief "offered prayers from his innermost heart," "his bena bebead breost-gehigdum," and secured his salvation "mid lyt wordum ac geleaffullum," "with few words, though they were charged with faith."

At the end of the passage, though, the Anglo-Saxon poet translates the "portas paradysi...apertas," the "open gates of Paradise," with the phrase "ænlican geatu/ neorxnawonges," the "only gate of Paradise." Caie dismisses the significance of this change: "Either the OE poet misunderstood *apertas* 'open' or he could have adopted *ænlic* as a common adjective to describe heaven, e.g. 283 and 293." It is possible, though, that this is a deliberate change meant to emphasize Christ's role in the process of repentance, made clear in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no-one comes to the Father except through me." Christ is thus the "ænlican geatu neorxnawonges," accessible only through true repentance, "soðe hreow."

The poet further stresses the importance of tears for "true repentance" in lines 75-91, corresponding to *De Die* 42-46:

Ic lære þæt þu beo hrædra mid hreowlicum tearum
and þæt yrre forfoh eces deman.
Hwæt ligst þu on horwe leahtrum afylled,
flæsc, mid synnum? Hwi ne feormast þu
mid teara gyte torne synne?
Hwi ne bidst þu þe beþunga and plaster
lifes læcedomes æt lifes frean?
Nu þu scealt greotan, tearas geotan,
þa hwile tima sy and tid wopes.
Nu is halwende þæt man her wepe
and dædbote do drihtne to willan.
Glæd bið se godes sunu, gif þu gnorn þrowast
and þe sylfum demst for synnum on eorðan.
Ne heofenes god henða and gyltas
ofer ænne syþ wrecan wile ænigum men.
Ne scealt þu forhyccan heaf and wopas
and forgifnesse gearugne timan.
(*JDII* 75-91)

I tell you to be swift with remorseful tears, and forestall the anger of the eternal Judge. Why, o flesh, do you lie in filth, filled with crimes and sins? Why do you not purge your wretched sin with tears? Why do you not ask for poultices and plasters, the medicine of life, from life's Lord? Now must you cry, shed tears, while there is time for grief. Now it is healthy that a man cry and do penance after the Lord's will. God's Son will be glad if you suffer mournfully and judge yourself for your sins on the earth. Nor will Heaven's god avenge the sins of any man more than one time. Do not scorn sorrow and tears and the ready time of forgiveness.

Though the substance of the passage comes from the *De Die*, the Anglo-Saxon translator goes into more detail than his source, and enlivens his colorful description of the need for tears with rhetorical embellishment. He adds several rhetorical questions in the first part of the passage, as well as the rhyme "greotan...geotan" in line 82, followed by the commonplace collocation of "tima" and "tid."

The importance of this passage lies in the way it insists on the confessional model of repentance borrowed from the *De Die* and, ultimately, the confessional prayers. Tears, as a physical sign of sincere emotion, are critical to a proper confession. The translator's expansion of this passage shows that he understands the central place of emotion in the *De Die*'s vision of repentance.¹²⁷

The poem's rhetoric becomes more elaborate as the translator moves from describing the penitential state of mind to enumerating the signs and terrors of the Last Judgment. Lines 123-134 (*De Die* ll.62-7), which occur near the beginning of the second section of the poem, illustrate the heightened pitch of the poem's language:

Ic bidde, man, þæt þu gemune hu micel bið se broga
beforan domsetle drihtnes þænne.
Stent hergea mæst heortleas and earh,
amasod and amarod, mihtleas, afæred.
Þænne samod becumað of swegles hleo
eall engla werod, ecne ymtrymmað.
Þænne bið geban micel and aboden þider
eal Adames cnosl eorðbuendra,
þe on foldan wearð feded æfre,
oððe modar gebær to manlican,
oþþe þa þe wæron, oððe woldon beon,
oþþe towearde geteald wæron awiht.
(*JDII* 123-34)

I bid you, man, remember how great will be the terror before the Lord's throne of Judgment at that time. The greatest of troops will stand heartless and terrified, amazed and stupefied, powerless, afraid. Then together will come from the shelter of Heaven the whole band of angels, surrounding the Eternal One. Then there will be a great call and all the whole race of Adam, of those who dwell on earth, will be ordered there, those who were ever fed on the earth, or whom a mother bore in the form of a man, or who were, or will be, or will be counted at all in the future.

¹²⁷ See Hoffman for a careful and sympathetic analysis of the poem's emotional dimension ("Theme" *passim*).

The passage begins with a hypermetric line, perhaps to add force to the poet's command that his audience remember: "ic bidde, man, þæt þu gemune..." In line 126, there is near rhyme with "amasod," "amarod" and "afæred." The combination of those three participles within a single line also brings to mind the *De Die's* frequent use of the inexpressibility topos, manifested in long lists.

At the end of the passage, the poet emphasizes the fact that judgment comes to all of Adam's race, translating the virtuoso line "qui sunt, qui fuerant, fuerint vel quique futuri." Though the Old English poem's language is not as compact as the Latin poem's, it achieves the same effect through polysyndeton with the repetition of "oððe," compensating for Old English's inability to make the same fine distinctions of tense with participles that Latin may.

The lines that immediately follow this passage show the translator grappling with another virtuoso line in his source: "cunctaque cunctorum cunctis archana patebunt"; "and all secrets of all men will be revealed to all." This line is of course very significant for the poem's content, as it encapsulates the reason why men should fear the Last Judgment: everything they have done will be revealed, and they will no longer be able to hide from their sins. As in the translation of line 67, the Anglo-Saxon poet has to cope with Old English's inability to express itself so concisely, to ring so many changes on a single word. His response in this instance is quite elaborate:

Ðonne eallum beoð ealra gesweotolude
digle geþancas on þære dægtide,
eal þæt seo heorte hearmes geþohte,
oððe seo tunge to teonan geclypede,
oþþe mannes hand manes gefremede
on þystrum scræfum þinga on eorðan.

Eal þæt hwæne sceamode scylda on worulde,
þæt he ænigum men ypte oððe cyðde,
þonne bið eallum open ætsomne,
gelice alyfed þæt man lange hæl.
(*JDII* 135-44)

Then the secret thoughts of all will be revealed to all on that day, every harmful thing the heart has thought, or the tongue has said in malice, and every sinful thing the hand of man has performed on earth in dark caverns. All the sins of which anyone in the world was ashamed, that he might tell or make known to any man, will then be made open to all, and that which men long concealed will likewise be revealed.

In terms of content, there is nothing in the Old English poem not also in the Latin source. What the Anglo-Saxon translator has done, however, is greatly expanded a single line in his source using a considerable variety of rhetorical techniques.

The whole passage is enclosed in a kind of envelope pattern, based on *De Die* l.67. The first two lines and the last line both say essentially the same thing: all the things that men have kept hidden will be revealed at the Day of Judgment. Within that enclosing structure, the poet returns to the collocation of heart, tongue and flesh he treated previously in line 42. In this passage, though, he expands that treatment significantly, associating each organ with a specific kind of sin: the heart thinks wicked thoughts, the tongue speaks evil words, and the hand performs sinful deeds. This correspondance is made clear by the poet's use of alliteration: in the first two lines, the body part in question alliterates with its specific mode of sin. In the case of the hand, the poet joins the line together by alliteration on the homophones "man" (meaning "man") and "man" (meaning "sin"). The three lines are knit together by syntactic parallelism and the repetition of the conjunction "oððe."

The poet goes on to describe the great conflagration that will herald the end of the world, filling the skies and punishing the sinful. This part of the poem is characterized by the same rhetoric we have already seen: verbal doublets, paronomasia, syntactic parallelism and the occasional rhyme. As the translator comes to the end of his poem, he is forced to come to grips with probably the most challenging feature of his source: the holonomastic lines.

As Lendinara shows, the translator of *Judgment Day II* does not follow a single strategy to cope with these lines, translating the sequences of nouns with varying degrees of freedom (Lendinara 21). There is no need to repeat Lendinara's analysis in full, but she does point to one passage in particular that uses holonomastic lines to excellent effect. That passage is the description of the joys of heaven, the part of the poem with the highest density of rhetorical ornamentation. The poet introduces his description of heaven in the following lines:

Eala! se bið gesælig and ofersælig
and on worulda woruld wihta gesæligost,
se þe mid gesyntum swylce cwyldas
and witu mæg wel forbugon
and samod bliðe on woruld ealle
his þeodne geþeon and þonne mot
habban heofonrice: þæt is hihta mæst.
(*JDII* 248-54)

Lo! He is blessed and more blessed, the most blessed of men in all the world, who may well avoid such plagues and torments with health, and at the same time may blithely rejoice in the world with his Lord and then may possess the kingdom of heaven: that is his greatest hope.

This passage is remarkable for its frequent use of paronomasia:

"gesælig...ofersælig...gesæligost" in ll.248-9, "worulda woruld" in 249, and "þeodne geþeon" in 253. The paronomasia in these lines is likely inspired by the

corresponding line in the *De Die*, which reads "felix omnium semperque in saecula felix"; "blessed among all and always blessed through the ages." Though it is only a single line, it is clearly important: it is marked out metrically as one of the poem's few spondaic lines, and the repetition of "felix" at the beginning and end drives the point home. Whether crafted in imitation of the *De Die* or not, these rhetorical markers, as well as the terse and impactful "þæt is hihta mæst," signal the reader that something new, and important, is coming.

That new thing is the poet's description of the joys of heaven, adapted from

De Die ll.127 ff:

þær niht ne genimð næfre þeostrum
þæs heofenlican leohtes sciman.
Ne cymð þær sorh, ne sar, ne geswenced yld,
ne þær ænig geswinc æfre gelimpeð,
oððe hunger, oþþe þurst oððe heanlic slæp.
Ne bið þær fefur, ne adl, ne færlic cwyld,
nanes liges gebrasl, ne se laðlica cyle.
Nis þær unrotnes, ne þær æmelnys,
ne hryre, ne caru, ne hreoh tintegra;
ne bið þær liget, ne laðlic storm,
winter, ne þunerrad, ne wiht cealdes,
ne þær hagulscuras hearde mid snawe.
Ne bið þær wædl, ne lyre, ne deaðes gryre,
ne yrmð, ne agnes, ne ænigu gnornung.
Ac þær samod ricxað sib mid spede
and arfæstnes and ece god,
wuldor and wurðmynt,
swylce lof and lif and leoflic geþwærnes.
(*JDII* 255-72)

There night never takes away the gleam of heavenly light with darkness. Sorrow never comes there, nor affliction, nor worn-out old age, nor does any toil occur there, or hunger, or thirst, or abject sleep. No fever is there, nor illness, nor sudden harm, no crackling of fire, nor bitter chill. There is no despair there, nor weariness, nor decay, care, or cruel torment; there is no lightning there, or savage storm, winter, or thunder, or any cold at all, no showers of hail hard with snow. There is no want there, or affliction, or the horror of death, nor misery, sorrow, or any

mourning. But there peace rules with prosperity and mercy and endless good, wonder and glory, praise and life and loving peace.

It is easy to see the influence of the source's holonomastic lines on this passage, with its long lists of nouns connected by "ne" or "oððe." There is an instance of *figura etymologica* in 257-8 with "geswenced" and "geswinc," and rhyme in l.267 with "lyre" and "gryre." Though this is not the first time the poet has used any of these techniques, it is easily the longest catalogue in the poem, longer even than the elaborate descriptions of hell in lines 176-213. It is fitting, of course, that the poet lay the greatest emphasis on his description of the joys of heaven: having terrified his readers with descriptions of earthquakes and fiery-toothed worms, he attracts them at the end of the poem by enumerating, at great length, the wonderful things that await the sincerely repentant.

After this whirlwind tour of heaven and hell, the poet concludes with one final rhetorical question:

Hwæt mæg beon heardes her on life,
gif þu wille secgan soð þæm ðe frined,
wið þam: þu mote gemang þam werode
eardian unbleoh on ecnesse,
and on upcundra eadegum setlum
brucan bliðnesse butan ende forð?
(*JDII* 302-7)

What of hardship might there be in life here, if you will tell the truth to one who asks, compared to this: you might live spotless in eternity among that multitude, and enjoy bliss forever without end in the blessed seats of the heavenly ones?

For a poem primarily concerned with the terrors of Judgment Day, this ending is quite optimistic: all earthly hardship pales in comparison to the bliss that awaits the true believer in heaven. After almost a hundred lines of torments and punishments, though, this optimism is a welcome end. The way the poet emphasizes the joy of

eternal salvation, in the structure of his poem as well as the rhetoric, suggests that it was intended as a devotional tool for a devout audience, sharing the spiritual outlook of its source and, ultimately, the confessional prayers. It is of course worth repeating that *Judgment Day II* and the *De Die* are much more than prayers. Both are poems of a high order, carefully structured and ornamented with rhetorical strategies which imitate the effect of the prayers without falling prey to their excesses.

Based mostly on the poem's manuscript context, it seems likely that *Judgment Day II* was associated with the Benedictine reform. If *Corpus Christi 201* is truly connected to Wulfstan's commonplace book, as Caie suggests, then the affinities of *Judgment Day II* with the confessional prayers suggests that the confessional model of repentance may have been an important feature of the reform (Caie 10-11). The poem's celebration of personal, emotional, transformative repentance, spurred by contemplation of one's own sins, seems perfectly at home in the reformed monasteries of the tenth century.

The *De Die Iudicii*'s spiritual perspective, founded as it is on the importance of confessional repentance, would have made it an appealing poem for translators associated with the Benedictine Reform. In fact, the *Regula* itself furnishes a close parallel for the situation of the penitent at the beginning of the poem:

Duodecimus humilitatis gradus est si non solum corde monachus, sed etiam ipso corpore humilitatem videntibus se semper indicet. Id est in opere Dei, in monasterio, in horto, in via, in agro vel ubicumque sedens, ambulans vel stans, inclinato sit semper capite; defixis in terram aspectibus, reum se omni hora de peccatis suis aestimans iam se tremendo iudicio repraesentari aestimet, dicens sibi in corde semper illud quod publicanus ille evangelicus fixis in terra oculis dixit:

"Domine, non sum dignus ego peccator levare oculos meos ad caelos." Et item cum propheta: "incurvatus sum et humiliatus sum usquequamque"(RSB VII).¹²⁸

The twelfth step of humility is if the monk always show humility not only in his heart, but also with his very body to those who look upon him. That is at the work of God, in the monastery, in the garden, on the road, in the field or wherever he might be sitting, walking or standing, let him be always with his head inclined, his gaze fixed upon the ground, considering himself in every hour guilty of his sins, let him imagine himself already present at the terrible judgment, saying to himself always in his heart that which the tax collector and evangelist said with his eyes fixed on the earth: "O Lord, I am not worthy, sinner that I am, to lift my eyes to the heavens." And likewise with the prophet: "I am bent over and humiliated everywhere"

This passage, which comes from chapter seven of the *Regula*, "On Humility," urges the monk to imagine himself present at the Day of Judgment, the "tremendum iudicium." The garden, "hortus," which the *Regula* mentions is also reminiscent of the *De Die*'s pastoral setting. Though the language of this passage is not close enough to that of the *De Die* to be sure it is a direct source--in particular the repeated admonitions to fix the eyes on the ground find no expression in the *De Die*--the parallel between the two texts is suggestive. More so, if we consider the context of this passage from the *Regula*.

Chapter seven of the *Regula* deals with humility, and organizes the monk's ascent of the ladder of perfect humility into twelve steps. The first step is for a man to obey and fear God: "primus itaque humilitatis gradus est si, timorem Dei sibi ante oculos semper ponens, oblivionem omnino fugiat et semper sit memor omnia quae praecepit Deus"; "thus the first step of humility is if, holding the fear of God always before his eyes, a man flee from forgetfulness and always be mindful of everything

¹²⁸ Text of the *Regula* from Fry's edition. Translations are the author's.

which God has commanded." Once the monk has ascended the steps of perfection, however, his fear of God gives way to love:

Ergo, his omnibus humilitatis gradibus ascensis, monachus mox ad caritatem Dei perveniet illam quae perfecta foris mittit timorem, per quam universa quae prius non sine formidine observabat absque ullo labore velut naturaliter ex consuetudine incipiet custodire, non iam timore gehennae, sed amore Christi et consuetudine ipsa bona et delectatione virtutum (*RSB VII*).

Therefore, once he has ascended these steps of humility, the monk will soon come to that love of God which, when perfected, dispels fear, through which everything he used to observe with fear he will begin to keep naturally out of habit, no longer from the fear of Hell, but from the love of Christ and good habits and delight in virtues.

The movement from fear of God and Hell to delight in Christ's love exactly parallels the movement of the *De Die* and *JDII*, which begin with the narrator contemplating the depths of his sin, continue with him imagining himself before the Last Judgment, and end with a beautiful picture of the joys of Heaven and a procession of blessed souls. Though neither poem relies closely on the language of the *Regula*, it is easy to see why the *De Die*, even without its popularity or attribution to Bede, would have been an appealing text for an author writing during the English Benedictine Reform.

The *Regula*, of course, could have been a source for the *De Die* as easily as *JDII*. Locating *JDII* within the context of the English Benedictine Reform requires evidence from the poem that does not come from the *De Die*, but represents the Anglo-Saxon translator's own interests and emphases. Such internal evidence would definitively corroborate the large amount of external evidence linking *JDII* to the Reform. That question is complicated, though, by the fact that *JDII* is generally a very close translation: most of the features of the poem that might be linked to the Reform could easily be traced to the source and the *Regula*.

Close as the poems may be, scholars have identified a few of the Anglo-Saxon poet's distinctive contributions. These usually take the form of slight differences of pace or emphasis, not so obvious as the *Phoenix* poet's exegetical coda or Alfred's creative interpolations.¹²⁹ The cumulative impact of these changes is to make *JDII* a much more affective poem than its source.¹³⁰ The opening description of nature, the poet's impassioned address to his body, and the grim accounts of hellfire and torment all give *JDII* a visceral impact that the *Ddi* lacks. Caie sees these differences as the poet's attempts to refashion a theologically rich poem for consumption by a lay audience (Caie 58). Though Caie's claim has merit, I would propose a different explanation for the *JDII* poet's shift in emphasis. By emphasizing the poem's affective dimension, the author of *JDII* brings out the confessional spirit of his source.

That emphasis on affect may be an important connection to the Benedictine Reform. The *Regula* itself, though it includes a few passages like those cited above, is mostly concerned with practical matters: how many psalms should be said at each office, or how the abbot ought to discipline a wayward brother. Though the Reform did not abandon the practical parts of the *Regula*, there is evidence that it emphasized the affective dimension of monastic piety.

¹²⁹ See Caie 58-81 for a useful summary of critical opinion on the relationship of the *Phoenix* and *JDII*.

¹³⁰ For an eloquent articulation of this point, see Hoffman, "Theme," in particular 161: "It [*JDII*] is a homily, preached to all who need to be reminded that this life is a vale of tears," and later, "the preacher's basic message is that man must lay bare his wounds before God by weeping for his guilty life; that God will heal him is the sinner's best hope and only salvation."

Some such evidence may be found in the commentary on the *Regula* written by Smaragdus of St. Mihiel. Smaragdus was an important figure in the Carolingian religious reforms of the early ninth century. Born around 770, he wrote a commentary on Donatus before 800, rendered some service to Charlemagne in 809, and participated in the Aachen synods of 816-17. After those synods, which were designed to regulate monasticism within the Frankish empire, Smaragdus wrote his commentary on the *Regula*, the *Expositio ad Regulam Benedicti*. The *Expositio* is a line-by-line commentary on the entire *Regula*, and was an important source for the Old English Benedictine Rule.¹³¹

Smaragdus' commentary begins with a poem of 75 lines which promotes the *Regula* as a path to spiritual perfection. It begins "quisquis ad aeternum mavult conscendere regnum"; "whoever wishes to ascend to the eternal kingdom," and declares that the *Regula* is the "plana, suavis et ampla via," the "broad, sweet and sufficient path" to the heavenly kingdom (Spannagel and Engelbert 3).¹³² At the end of his poem, Smaragdus highlights the importance of weeping in the monastic life:

Excitat interea cordis compunctio fontem,
Qui sordes animae inluviesque lavet.
Crismate perfuso lacrimarum fusio fonti
Aequiperat, maculas tergit ut ille nigras,
Tergit et ablutos paradisi rite colonos;
Efficit ut habeat iam sine fine cives,
Qui iugiter laudis possint persolvere grates,
Vivere cum domino semper et esse suo.
(Spannagel and Engelbert 4-5)

Meanwhile the compunction of the heart excites the fountain which washes away the filth and stains of the soul. After the chrism has been poured out, the shedding

¹³¹ For the dependence of the Old English translation of the *Regula* on Smaragdus, see Gretsch.

¹³² Text of Smaragdus from Spannagel and Engelbert. Translations are the author's.

of tears is equal to the font--just so do tears erase dark stains, and cleanse even the purified citizens of paradise, so that they might unceasingly offer up thankful praise, and live and be forever with their Lord.

In this passage Smaragdus likens tears to the water of the baptismal font, the "fons," which cleanses the catechumen of his past sins after he has been anointed with chrism. Weeping thus becomes a critical, almost sacramental, part of the process of redemption, making confessional poetry, designed to provoke its readers to emotional response, an attractive tool for the English reformers.

Though *JDII* shows no direct textual connection to Smaragdus' commentary, both texts embrace the same affect-based model of repentance which I have been calling the confessional model. This research is not thorough enough to be definitive, but it at least suggests that the English Benedictine Reform emphasized an emotional approach to repentance borrowed from its Continental predecessors. The sketchy conclusions outlined here suggest that further research into the sources of the English Benedictine Reform, in particular Smaragdus' *Expositio*, might prove very fruitful for scholars interested in late Old English literature and culture.

The preceding analysis shows that the author of *JDII* had a style of translation all his own, distinct from the Alfredian approach as it was from the approach of the *Phoenix* poet and the translators of riddles 35 and 40. Like those other translations, *JDII* is a response to the subtleties of Latin rhetoric and meter, but the poet's keen interest in the language of confessional prayer creates a distinctive Old English poem that cannot easily be identified with the other poetic translations.

Conclusion: Cultures of Translation

The preceding chapters have shown that Anglo-Saxon practices of translation varied widely across different places and times, depending on the education and goals of the individual translators. The variable sophistication and approaches of these different engagements with Latin literature urge some revisions to Stanton's notion of a "culture of translation." This project prefers instead to speak of "cultures of translation," recognizing the diversity of Anglo-Saxon approaches to translation and acknowledging the existence of several different cultural moments during which translation was practiced.

Ideally, the history of translation in Anglo-Saxon England would be written as a description of these various moments, using the individual translations to focus inquiries into orality and literacy, education, style and spirituality in Anglo-Saxon England. The state of the evidence, unfortunately, does not allow for such a history. Or, at least, it does not allow for a *complete* history of that sort. The uncertainty involved in dating the *Phoenix* makes the idea of a ninth-century Mercian culture of translation speculative at best, but with other poems, we find ourselves on firmer ground.

Of all the works examined in this project, *Judgment Day II* provides the most promising way forward. Evidence for the intellectual activity of the Benedictine Reform is rich, even if its precise meaning is still disputed. The poems preserved alongside *JDII* in Corpus Christi 201, as well as those preserved in BL MS Cotton Junius 121, are potentially fruitful, though little-studied, examples of late Anglo-

Saxon engagements with Latin literature. Perhaps most importantly, a study of translation during the Reform brings us face to face with the second great Anglo-Saxon translator: Aelfric of Eynsham. Aelfric, whose precise dates are uncertain, lived in the latter half of the tenth century and died at the beginning of the eleventh. He studied at Winchester under Aethelwold, one of the major players in the 10th-century Benedictine Reform. Aelfric's works thus reveal a monastic austerity appropriate to the cloister and the *Rule*.

Aelfric was a prolific writer. His corpus is nearly as large as Alfred's—larger, if Alfred was not in fact responsible for all the texts attributed to him. Aelfric translated two series of homilies, a collection of saints' lives, and selections from the Old Testament. In addition to his translations, he wrote three works—the *Grammar*, *Glossary* and *Colloquy*—designed as tools for teaching Latin to native speakers of English. Aelfric is known for his distinctive prose style, which imitates (albeit loosely) the alliterative lines used in Old English poetry. It is still a subject of debate whether Aelfric's rhythmic prose represents a degraded form of "classical" Old English poetry, or an analogous, but independent, development still recognized as prose.¹³³

Prose or poetry, Aelfric's works represent the second major group of translations in Anglo-Saxon England. Stanton, whose outlook is consistently synthetic, suggests that we see Aelfric's work as a continuation of Alfred's: "there is good reason to treat Aelfric as a major figure in the history of English translation.

¹³³ For an overview of the whole question, see Kuhn *passim*. Bredehoft argues that Aelfric was in fact a poet, provided we recognize a "radical reorganization of the principles and practices of Old English verse" that took place during the late Anglo-Saxon period (107).

For he was able to achieve three of Alfred's goals on a larger scale than even the king was able to do" (Stanton, *Culture* 145). And somewhat later, "like Alfred the learned king, who disseminated wisdom to his people through bishops and royal officials, Aelfric the pious interpreter transmitted a body of orthodox learning to the faithful through the most important institutional structures around the turn of the millenium" (Stanton, *Culture* 171).

In many ways, Stanton is correct. Still, the implication that Aelfric somehow continued Alfred's work is misleading for two important reasons. First, and most relevant to my interest in the translated poetry, it suggests that Aelfrician and Alfredian translation conceived of their Latin sources in more or less the same way. Second, it obscures the very real cultural differences between Alfred's court and Aelfric's cloister. Though Alfred's efforts at educational reform and vernacular literacy must have helped pave the way for the literature of the Reform, the two movements are very different.

Most obviously, the Alfredian reform was primarily secular, while the Benedictine Reform was primarily monastic. The first text Alfred translated was the *Regula Pastoralis*, Gregory's book of instruction for the secular clergy. Alfred's target audience, according to his preface to the *Regula*, was all the youth of England. Aelfric, on the other hand, was deeply anxious about what might happen once the texts he translated, especially the Scriptures, left the walls of the monastery:

Nu þincð me, leof, þæt þæt weorc is swiðe pleolic me oððe ænigum men to underbeginne, for þan þe ic ondræde, gif sum dysig man þas boc ræt oððe rædan gehyrþ, þæt he wille wenan, þæt he mote lybban nu on þære niwan æ, swa swa þa

ealdan fæderas leofodon þa on þære tide, ær þan þe seo ealde æ gesett wære, oþþe swa swa men leofodon under Moyses æ.¹³⁴
(Aelfric, preface to *Genesis* 6-11)

Now it seems to me, lord, that that work is very hazardous for me, or any other man, to undertake, because I fear, if some confused man should read this book--or hear it read--that he will expect that he might live now, in the new age, just as the patriarchs lived in their time, before the Old Law was established, or as men lived in the time of Moses.

These lines from Aelfric's preface to his translation of Genesis reveal an anxiety about the uses to which his translation might be put, fueled by an awareness of just how wide the audience for his translation would be. He was worried not only about those who might read his books, but also those who might hear them read--it is hard not to imagine that this latter group concerned him the most. Aelfric goes on to recount the perils of unlearned priests who, armed with a translation of the Bible, might fancy themselves teachers and confuse their parishioners due to their lack of spiritual understanding.¹³⁵

This theme is evident elsewhere in Aelfric's writings. He expresses similar sentiments in his Latin preface to his *Lives of the Saints*, a series of homilies focused on those saints who are the subject of monastic, rather than lay, devotion.¹³⁶ The *Lives of the Saints* has two prefaces: one in Latin, the other in Aelfric's trademark rhythmic prose. Though the two prefaces cover more or less the same ground, they differ substantially in their emphasis: the Latin preface focuses on the simplicity of

¹³⁴ Text of Aelfric's preface to *Genesis* from Wilcox 116-19. Translation mine.

¹³⁵ See the preface to *Genesis* 41-54, Wilcox p.117.

¹³⁶ Aelfric reveals as much in his preface to the *Lives* when he writes: "et placuit nobis in isto codicello ordinare passiones etiam vel vitas sanctorum illorum quos non vulgus sed coenobite officii venerantur"; "and it pleased us in this little volume to set in order the passions, and even the lives, of those saints whom the monks, not the common people, honor in their offices" (preface to *Lives* 7-9, Wilcox 119).

the translation's language, Aelfric's famous "sermo humilis."¹³⁷ The Old English preface insists that Aelfric has done nothing new in his translation, but represents his sources as transparently as possible.

In the Latin preface, Aelfric declares his intention not to translate too much: "nec tamen plura promitto me scripturum hac lingua, quia nec convenit huic sermocinationi plura inseri; ne forte despectui habeantur margarite christi"; "and I do not promise that I will write many [saints' lives] in this language [i.e., English], since it is not appropriate that many be translated into this speech; lest by chance the pearls of Christ be held in contempt" (9-11, Wilcox 119). Alfred is not nearly so specific in this preface as in his preface to *Genesis*, but the fear remains the same: sacred texts may receive improper treatment once they are circulated to the general public.

This fear manifests in another, more specific way in Aelfric's prefaces: he is frequently concerned with the threat of careless copyists introducing errors into his work. The prefaces to *Genesis*, *The Lives of the Saints* and the second series of *Catholic Homilies* all include a warning to would-be copyists, for (in the words of the preface to *Genesis*): "micel yfel deð se unwritere, gyf he nele his gewrit gerihtan"; "the careless writer does great evil, if he does not correct his copy" (118, Wilcox 119). The juxtaposition of "gewrit" and "gerihtan" is surely not a coincidence—proper writing is correct, and a careless writer ("unwritere") is not a writer at all.

¹³⁷ In the Latin preface Aelfric promises that "diligenter curavimus vertere simplici et aperta locutione quatinus proficiat audientibus"; "we have scrupulously endeavored to translate in simple and open speech whatever might profit those who hear it" (23-4, Wilcox 120). See Stanton 153-63 for a discussion of the *sermo humilis* and the words Aelfric uses to describe it.

Aelfric's anxieties about publication and artistically conscious language separate him from Alfred, who, as we have seen, displays little of either. It is of course possible that Aelfric, in using the vernacular as a vehicle for sacred truth, is following a precedent set by Alfred. Still, the evidence of the *Phoenix* suggests that credit for vernacular spirituality cannot be laid entirely at Alfred's feet. Whatever the nature of the Alfredian Reform's influence on Aelfric and the Benedictine Reform, it is clear that the two were quite different in their goals and their methods.

This is not the place for a thorough comparison of the Alfredian and Benedictine Reforms, valuable as such a project would be. I have included this brief consideration of Aelfric's thinking about translation to corroborate my findings from the poetic evidence: Alfredian translation, important though it was, was one among many competing approaches to translating Latin literature into English. This brief investigation of Aelfric's approach to translation has served its purpose by revealing several ways in which Aelfric deviates from Alfredian practice, suggesting that the idea of competing cultures of translation derived from the poetry has important implications for prose as well.

I believe that the next step in writing the history of Anglo-Saxon translation is to re-frame our narrative of translation in Anglo-Saxon England to accommodate several "centers," cultural moments when translation was practiced in specific ways for specific reasons. Alfredian England is certainly one such moment, but there are others: the Benedictine Reform, most obviously, but also (and here the evidence forces a degree of speculation) a Northumbrian culture of translation fueled by the

school of Theodore and Hadrian, and perhaps even a Mercian culture that produced the *Phoenix*.

To be sure, arriving at such an understanding is no small task. Old English poetry is notoriously difficult to date, and very little survives from the earliest period of Anglo-Saxon literature. For those reasons, uncovering robust evidence of a Northumbrian culture of translation is highly unlikely, unless new information should somehow come to light. Even the poems that seem to date from the ninth century are difficult to pin down precisely: the ninth-century Mercian dialect features of the *Phoenix* do not necessarily prove a ninth-century Mercian origin.

Even if the challenge of securely dating these poems is too great to overcome, it is nonetheless important to recognize the place of poetry in the history of Anglo-Saxon translation. Alfred's prose, for all its merits, does not possess the sympathetic appreciation of Latin style evident in the verse, and does not marshal nearly so diverse a range of vernacular poetic techniques to imitate, and at times surpass, the artistry of its Latin sources. The poet-translators' sensitive accommodations of Latin style, so much at odds with the violent metaphors often used to describe translation, greatly enhance our understanding of the complex relationship between the long traditions of Latin and Anglo-Saxon literature. Though Anglo-Saxon England may have been a "culture of translation," the poetic evidence reveals that it was composed of a number of different sub-cultures, each with its own approach to and interest in the translation of Latin literature. By investigating each of these cultures of translation as far as the evidence allows, we place ourselves in a much better

position to understand the Anglo-Saxon contribution to the history of translation, and indeed to the history of English literature.

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