

King Alfred's Scholarly Writings and the Authorship of the First Fifty Prose Psalms

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Abstract: A great part of King Alfred's renown comes from his translations of Latin writings into Old English. The group of translations that he gets credit for, however, has changed over the years. Presently four translations are attributed to him: the *Pastoral Care*, the *Boethius*, the *Soliloquies*, and the first fifty Prose Psalms. The first three works openly name Alfred as translator and provide strong internal evidence that they are Alfred's work. The Prose Psalms, however, lack Alfred's name. Although now widely endorsed as Alfred's on the basis of studies by Janet Bately and Patrick O'Neil, the Prose Psalms do not allow the same confidence in Alfred's authorship as with the three named translations. Bately's and O'Neill's arguments exhibit several weaknesses. Their conclusion, moreover, breaks down when stylometric analysis is applied to the translations associated with Alfred. The statistical methods employed in this study indicate that Alfred should not be regarded as the translator of the Prose Psalms after all.

Alfred the Scholar-King

Alfred he was in enkelonde a king;
wel swiþe strong 7 lufsum þing.
He was king 7 cleric;
ful wel he louede godis werc.
He was wis on his word;
7 war on his werke.
He was þe wiseste mon;
þad was in engelonde on.
Þus quad alfred
englene frowere...

(*Proverbs of Alfred* Text T 1.17-2.26)¹

So King Alfred is presented at the outset of the Middle English poem that we call the *Proverbs of Alfred*. This poem, as we have it, was written down over three hundred years after Alfred's death

¹ "Alfred he was in England a king.
An altogether strong and beloved thing.
He was king and clerk.
He loved full well God's work.
He was wise in his word
And shrewd in his work.
He was the wisest man
That was in England then.
Thus spoke Alfred,
The comfort of Englishmen..."

(Unless otherwise specified all translations of Latin and early English texts are Michael Treschow's)

in 899. It offers an endearing portrait. The great king, seated before his assembled bishops, clerks, nobles, and warriors at Seaford (1.1-10), is about to address them and offer them his guidance. And they are ready to listen. For he is the guide of the English people (*englene hurde*: 1.10) and their beloved leader (*englene derling*: 1.11). He has come before them as their cherished possession (*lufsum þing*: 1.18). He is their scholar-king (*king 7 cleric*: 1.19). Through his wise words and deeds he is their comfort (*frowere*: 2.26). This loving depiction of King Alfred as scholarly, gracious, and wise complements William of Malmesbury's earlier description of Alfred in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. William the historian 12th century historian is less effusive than the thirteenth century poet, but he still makes much of Alfred's learning and scholarship. He attributes to Alfred the work of translating Orosius's *Historia Adversus Paganos*, Gregory the Great's *Liber Pastoralis*, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, and also the excerpts of scholarly writings that he had collected in his own "Handbook" or *Enchiridion*. William adds, moreover, that Alfred translated a portion of the Psalms shortly before his death (2.4).

That is a very impressive list of scholarly translations, especially for a man who successfully and ably managed the burdens of kingship in tumultuous times and died not yet full of years, at the age of about 51.² William's list turns out to be a bit too impressive. Alfred no longer gets credit for translating the Old English *Bede* or the Old English *Orosius* (Bately 2003, 107-109; Keynes 2003, 179-180). As far as most Old English scholars are concerned four works now comprise the canon of Alfred's own writings: Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, Augustine's *Soliloquies*, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, and the First Fifty Prose Psalms in the Paris Psalter.³ The first three works each actually bear his name and claim his authorship. But they do not each name him in the same way or with the same force and directness. The text of Prose Psalms, however, makes no mention of Alfred at all.

The legendary sage depicted by the Anglo-Normans is not quite the historical Alfred that we understand today. We still, of course, tend to see him as a scholarly ruler, though the question arises whether that image might be too good to be true. Should we believe that Alfred, amidst all his efforts and troubles, actually laboured through any translation at all? Is this propaganda playing to our wishful thinking? Janet Bately quietly concedes that possibility at the end of her important article in which she argues for Alfred's authorship of the Prose Psalms. In her last footnote she remarks: "I have heard it suggested that King Alfred's involvement in 'his' translations was possibly purely nominal. Lexical studies cannot, of course either prove or disprove that theory" (1982, 95). Bately dismisses the possibility of any such proof because she herself has already concluded from her own lexical study "that the overall responsibility [for Alfred's translations] rested with one man" (1982, 95). Her conclusion does not absolutely certify that the work is Alfred's. He may have had a single ghost writer writing all his books. That is the particular point, as Bately acknowledges, that lexical studies cannot prove or disprove.

Some scholars now openly suggest that Alfred may not have been the principal translator of his translations. Alfred Smyth opines that "there may be less of Alfred to be found in works ascribed personally to him" than we like to think (Smyth 1995, 541). Malcolm Godden mentions the difficulty of knowing whether Alfred himself "or one of his courtiers" was responsible for

² According to current reckoning, Alfred lived from 848 to 899.

³ All references to the *Pastoral Care* come from Sweet's edition (1871), to the *Soliloquies* from Endter's edition (1922), to the *Boethius* from Sedgefield's edition (1899), to the Prose Psalms from O'Neill's edition (2001). Notations for the words *ðæt* and *and* have been expanded.

writing his works (Godden 2003, 150). Janet Bately herself not lately reiterated that we cannot prove on linguistic grounds “who the primary author of the Alfredian canon was,” but she also added that neither can we really tell how much these translations depended on the influence of others, or even on the actual work of a committee (Bately 2003, 111). Although we may be less assured of Alfred’s direct authorship, it has become abundantly clear through the criticism of the late twentieth century that Alfred took great interest in representing himself and his ideas through literature (Keynes 2003). The question of authorial voice therefore remains important to Alfredian studies.

Among Anglo-Saxonists today most of us would probably like to think that we have moved on from the Victorian “cult of King Alfred.” But that has not stopped us from giving him acclaim. Take for instance the title of Janet Bately’s well-deserved *Festschrift: Alfred the Wise* (Roberts 1997). Although the word “wise” allows room for suspicion, since it can mean both sagacious and clever (or even Machievellian; cf. Nelson 1986, 68), even so the title of this *Festschrift* looks to the essential point in one of Bately’s essays: “The Literary Prose of King Alfred’s Reign: Translation or Transformation?” (1980). The Alfredian Corpus, she explained, is centred around the getting of wisdom, a real and transformative power. Alfred continues to impress us with the “wisdom” he displayed in his achievements and writings. Simon Keynes lately urged us with gentle iconoclasm to demythologize that old cult of King Alfred and work instead from a realistic and historical understanding of Alfred’s reign (1999). And yet in arguing against the “the received tradition of Alfred’s ‘greatness’” (1999, 352) he still concludes that “we may respect [Alfred] for the promotion during his reign of an extraordinary scheme for the revival of religion and learning among his people” (1999, 356). Although Keynes adds that this revival was “driven by the circle of learned men assembled at King Alfred’s court, of Frankish, Welsh, Mercian and West Saxon extraction,” he does not mean to suggest that Alfred took credit where it was not due. He adds at once in words far from iconoclastic, “Yet above it all was the presiding genius of the king himself, known to us from the sympathetic narrative of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, from Asser’s extraordinarily perceptive ‘Life,’ and from the corpus of the king’s own writings” (1999, 356).

Genius is indeed a form of greatness. And if we believe that the writings attributed to Alfred are somehow or other his own, we find that he still makes a very solid impression. We have come to understand Alfred as a very gifted at promoting himself and his aims. Has any piece of Old English Prose received half as much attention among Anglo-Saxonists as Alfred’s *Preface to the Pastoral Care*? And why is it so regularly studied? In large part because Alfred appears so strikingly present and instructive. What other king from long gone centuries can still come to us so personably? Tom Shippey says that Alfred’s words in this preface sound like those of “brilliant natural public speaker,” who is “*wis wordcwida*, ‘full of wise words’” (1979, 355).

Three Writings in Alfred’s name

How assured can we really be that the works currently ascribed to Alfred were really meant to be understood as his? Among the three works that bear Alfred’s name the *Pastoral Care* easily makes the clearest and strongest claim to Alfred’s authorship through its epistolary preface written in Alfred’s first person voice under his own name. This preface makes a strong claim to authenticity. The Hatton Manuscript of this text (Hatton 20) is contemporary with Alfred. It is addressed to Bishop Waerferth of Worcester and appears to have come from Alfred’s own scriptorium (Ker, 15-16).

The Old English translation of Alfred's *Soliloquies* is a more difficult case. It also has a preface, written in much the same quality of voice, but without direct attribution to Alfred. Like the preface to the *Pastoral Care* it moves from the personal to the prescriptive. In an extended metaphor the first person voice describes himself going into the woods to gather lumber for making tools and building a homestead. The imagery has to do with the activities of pious scholarship. Milton McC. Gatch sums up its tenor: "the writing of a vernacular version of the *Soliloquies* is but one instance of the gathering of material from the forest of Christian knowledge for the building of one's heavenly habitation" (1986, 25). In the midst of this metaphor the author turns to his readers and urges them to the same effort: "Therefore I instruct everyone who is able and has many a wagon to make his way to the same wood where I cut down these posts. Let him fetch more there for himself..." (1.8-9).⁴ Alfred makes a similar rhetorical move in the *Preface to the Pastoral Care*; after describing the decline in scholarship in his troubled times, he urges his bishops with gentle insistence to share with him in labouring for its revival (7.6-15). The preface to the *Soliloquies* maintains its exhortational tone to the end. The author continues to develop his metaphor of seeking one's heavenly home through good homesteading here and now, and ends with a display of exemplary yearning: "May he [i.e. God] who created both and rules over both grant me to be suitable for both, yea, to be useful here and moreover to come there" (2.9-11).⁵ In the preface to the *Pastoral Care* Alfred likewise puts himself forward as an example of doing the work that he wants his bishops to help with: "then I began amidst the varied and manifold tasks of this kingdom to translate into English that book that is called *Pastoralis* in Latin and *Pastorbook* in English" (7.17-19).⁶

Unlike the *Pastoral Care* Old English translation of the *Soliloquies* does not begin in Alfred's name. At least it does not do so in our only surviving copy, which is in the Southwick Codex and dates from the mid-twelfth century.⁷ In this copy the preface to the *Soliloquies* begins with an incomplete sentence. The first word, *Gaderode*, has a large red capital *G*, as if meant to open the text. But this verb lacks a subject and throws us abruptly into the text. Although some take the manuscript's opening at face value and see the preface as complete (Potter 1949, 28), such a reading makes little sense. Most scholars understand the manuscript to have descended from a defective tradition where the opening sequence was lost in transmission (Endter 1922, 71; Carnicelli 1969, 2).

How then do we judge it to be Alfred's, aside from the similarity in voice? There is only one moment of direct evidence that explicitly links the Old English *Soliloquies* with Alfred. At the very end of the translation we find an *explicit* that names Alfred: "Here end the sayings which King Alfred selected from the book that we call in ..." (70:20-21).⁸ Since this *explicit* is

⁴ "Forþam ic lære ælcne ðara þe maga si and manigne wæn hæbbe, þæt he menige to þam ilcan wuda þar ic ðas stuðansceaftas cearf, fetige hym þar ma..."

⁵ "Se ðe ægþer gescop and ægðeres wilt, forgife me þæt me to ægðrum onhagige: ge her nytwyrde to beonne, ge huru þider to cumane."

⁶ "ða ongan ic ongemang oðrum mislicum and manigfealdum bisgum ðisses kynesices ða boc wendan on Englisc ðe is genemned on Læden Pastoralis, and on Englisc Hierdeboc."

⁷ The Southwick Codex was later bound with the Nowell Codex into the volume now called Cotton Vitellius A.xv.

⁸ "ær endiað þa cwidas þe ælfred kining alæs of þære bec þe we hatað on..." So the actual manuscript reads (56v). The ellipsis provided at the end of that sentence indicates that the text in our only surviving copy ends in the same way as it begins, with a fragment of the text broken off. Little would seem to be missing, though. Endter completed the sentence in his edition by adding "læden de uidendo deo, and on englisc: be godes ansiene" ("[in] Latin *De Videndo Deo*, and in English *On the Beholding of God*") (70.21). Why does Endter think that the ending should refer to the Augustine's *De Videndo Deo* instead of the *Soliloquies*? At the end of the second book of the *Soliloquies* the Old English text announces that the translation will move on to the *De Videndo Deo* (65.12-15).

the only direct evidence of authorship that we have and dates from the very same time that William of Malmesbury was writing, it may not inspire the greatest confidence. It is possible to imagine that the attribution to Alfred entered the text as an interpolation sometime during the two and a half centuries that separate this manuscript from Alfred. For Alfred's reputation as a scholar-king grew over the years and he started to get credit for more work than was actually his. Less than a century after his death Æthelweard the Chronicler says that Alfred translated a multitude of texts: *uolumina numero ignoto* (4.3). Around the same time Ælfric comments that Alfred had translated Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (Godden 1979, 72). We do not know when the idea started that Alfred also translated Orosius's *History against the Pagans*. William of Malmesbury either thought it up himself or learned it from tradition. Did this sort of mistaken attribution come to be written into the *Soliloquies* as an interpolation? There are good reasons not to think so. For one thing, the Old English text has an *explicit* and *incipit* to all three books in the translation.⁹ The last *explicit*, the only one that names Alfred, forms part of a larger pattern of *incipit* and *explicit* throughout the text. It presents itself as part of the original form and structure of the text. For another thing, since Ælfric and William regarded the *Bede* as Alfred's, surely others did as well. But we find no evidence of any scribal initiative to write such an attribution into the Old English *Bede*.¹⁰ No such initiative was taken with the *Orosius* either.

We should also note that the third person voice attributing the *Soliloquies* to Alfred is consistent with the two other texts. Both the *Pastoral Care* and *Boethius* use the third person voice in naming Alfred. After Alfred's first person letter to the bishops prefacing the *Pastoral Care* there comes a short poetic introduction to the text of the translation, which finishes with this sentence:

King Alfred afterwards translated each of my words [i.e. of the *Pastoral Care*] into English, and he sent me south and north to his scribes; he commanded them to bring him more of the same from that copy so that he could send them to his bishops. For some of them, those who knew very little Latin, had need of it. (9.12-16)¹¹

The *Boethius* opens with a short introduction to the translation. There are in fact two versions of this introduction, one in prose and the other in verse.¹² The prose is blandly matter of fact. It

Even though the third book turns out to have virtually nothing to do with Augustine's *De Videndo Deo* Endter supposes that the *explicit* would round out by naming that text all the same. But it could also be the case that this *explicit* refers to the translation as whole.

⁹ Book 1 introduces the author and title of the text: "Agustinus, Cartaina bisceop, worhte twa bec be his agnum ingeþance; þa bec sint gehatene Soliloquiorum" (2.13-14: *trans.* "Augustine, Bishop of Carthage, made two books about his own inner thoughts; the books are called *Soliloquiorum*"). The *explicit* to Book 1 reads, "er endiað þa blostman þære forman bocum" (55.8: *trans.* "here end the flowers of the first books"). The *incipit* to Book 2 reads, "er onginnð seo gaderung þære blostmena þære æftran bec" (55.10: *trans.* "here begins the gathering of the flowers of the second book"). The *explicit* to Book 2 reads, "ær endiað þa blostman þære æftran bec" (65.15: *trans.* "here end the flowers of the second book"). Book 3 does not begin with its own *incipit*, for Book 2 has already served that purpose by cueing the *De Videndo Deo* immediately before its *explicit* (65.12).

¹⁰ There is one manuscript of the Old English *Bede* that has a Latin inscription attributing the translation to Alfred (Bately 2003, 113). But that is in Latin and does not form part of the text. Moreover, according to Neil Ker the hand that wrote the Latin is from the sixteenth century. This attribution simply follows what was reported by William of Malmesbury.

¹¹ "Siððan min on Englisc Ælfred kyning awende worda gehwelc, and me his writurum sende suð and norð; heht him swelcra ma bringan bi ðære bisene, ðæt he his biscepum sendan meahte, forðæm hi his sume ðorfton, ða ðe Lædenspræce læste cuðon."

¹² The *Boethius* survives in two manuscripts. The older of the two, Cotton Otho A.vi, dates from the mid-tenth century. It offered both the prose and verse versions of the introduction. But it is now a badly damaged manuscript and that evidence is lost to us. But Junius recorded this portion of the manuscript in his transcription of Alfred's

begins by saying, “King Alfred was the translator of this book, and translated it from Latin into English, just as it now has been done” (1.1-2).¹³ The verse form of the introduction is more engaging. Its reference to Alfred shifts at the end from the third to the first person.

Thus Alfred told us old tales,
the King of the West-Saxons uttered his skill,
the composer his art. It was his great desire
that he recite poems for these peoples,
mirth for men, many kinds of sayings,
lest languor drive away
the smug man, since he for such things
cares little because of his boast. I must still speak,
gather commonly known counsel into fits,
and speak it to men. Listen up, whoever wants to!¹⁴

Alfred need not have written wrote these brief introductions himself.¹⁵ They state Alfred’s authority over these texts in much the same way as the Alfred jewel declares, “Alfred ordered me to be made.”¹⁶ Whether Alfred or one of his secretaries prepared these introductions, they were included in the transmission of the text as a kind of seal upon his work. In the case of the *Soliloquies*, however, we have only the *explicit* at the very end. The lost opening to the *Soliloquies* preface may well have begun like the *Preface* to the *Pastoral Care* or the *Prologue* to Alfred’s Law Code, by identifying the first person voice as King Alfred’s.¹⁷ As it is, however, this *explicit* is the only direct evidence or claim that we have of Alfred’s authorship of the *Soliloquies*. Not even William of Malmesbury gives us a clear attribution of this text to Alfred – whatever his endorsement might be worth. The possibility that William meant Alfred’s *Soliloquies* by the term “Handbook” was carefully considered by Dorothy Whitelock. She judged it unlikely that he meant the *Soliloquies* (1969, 91).¹⁸

Boethius (Junius 12). The older manuscript, Bodley 180, dates from the early twelfth century. It preserves only the prose version of the introduction.

¹³ “Ælfred kuning wæs wealhstod ðisse bec, and hie of boclædene on englisc wende, swa hio nu is gedon.”

¹⁴ Ðus Ælfred us ealdspell reahte,
cyning Westsexna, cræft meldode,
leoðwyrhta list. Him wæs lust micel
ðæt he ðiossum leodum leoð spellode
monnum myrgen, mislice cwidas
þy læs ælinge ut adrife
selflicne secg, þonne he swelces lyt
gymð for his gilpe. Ic sceal giet sprecan,
fon on fitte, folccuðne ræd
hæleðum secgean. Hliste se þe wille! (Krapp 1932, 153)

¹⁵ Allen J. Frantzen strangely attributes the verse introduction to the *Boethius* to Alfred, but not the prose introduction (2003, 133-4).

¹⁶ The Alfred Jewel is a precious ornament made of gold and cloisonné enamel, and depicting a human figure. It is wrapped in golden letters that read, “AELFRED MEC HEHT GEWYRCAN.”

¹⁷ After the *Prologue* to his Law Code Alfred opens the way into the laws themselves by twice naming himself as authorizing this text: “Ic ða ælfred cyning...” (49.9) and “Ic ða ælfred Westseaxna cyning...” (49.10).

¹⁸ What William meant by Alfred’s “Handbook” (*Encheridion, id est manualem librum*) we cannot be sure. The idea that William meant the *Soliloquies* comes from the references to “blooms” (*blostma*) in the *incipit* and *explicit* to Books 1 and 2 (see footnote 13). Perhaps William took these *blostma* to indicate and identify the book composed of gathered excerpts (*flosculos*) described in Asser’s *Vita*. This supposition also has to take it that William saw fit to

In contrast to the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies*, the Old English *Boethius* has no preface with an authorial *ic* leading the reader (or listener) into the translation.¹⁹ It has only one moment of internal attribution to Alfred: the short third person introduction (whether in prose or verse) There are also two external witnesses to Alfred's authorship. First comes the witness of Æthelweard the Chronicler, who mentions the *Boethius* in his description of Alfred's many translations: "Nam ex Latino rhetorico fasmate in propriam uerterat linguam uolumina, numero ignoto, ita uarie, ita præopime, ut non tantum expertioribus sed et audientibus liber Boetii lachrymosus quodammodo suscitaretur motus" (4.3)²⁰ William of Malmesburys' listed is the second witness. As a librarian William might have seen the Old English *Boethius* and read its introduction.

Alfred's Voice in these Three Texts

As indirect internal evidence to Alfred's authorship of these three texts, we can attend to the distinctive Alfredian voice that is at work in them. That voice, that familiar *ic* that we know from the prefaces to the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies*, sounds at times in the translated texts of each of these three works. For want of any other name we can only call that voice Alfred's, at least if we are working under the hypothesis that Alfred was to some extent involved in the writings that went forward under his name.

In the process of translating Boethius's dialogue Alfred's voice assimilates itself at times with the voice of the dialogue's learner. When Alfred calls Boethius's plaintive prisoner *Mod* (Mind) he seems to be generalizing the character into a kind of "everyman." Alfred himself may well have identified with the misfortunes that this character complains about and known that others might do so as well. Alfred did not, however, lose sight of the historical figure altogether. Ten times in the translation *Mod* is still named *Boetius*. Alfred sought to preserve the verisimilitude of Boethius's character as the troubled courtier (Godden 2003, 142). But insofar as this character is mostly called *Mod*, he also symbolizes the common human experience of misfortune. Alfred used this character to work out some of his own political thoughts and concerns. In reply to *Wisdom's* complaint that *Mod* has misunderstood and misused the *woruldsælþa* ("gifts of wealth") that have been entrusted to him (19.19-25), Alfred has the character *Mod* reply as a king with a king's problems.

O Reason, look, you know that I never found the greed and the grandeur of this earthly power at all attractive, nor did I yearn terribly strongly for this earthly kingdom. But I wanted the tools all the same and the material for that work that I was commanded to perform, so that I could steer and manage the power that had been entrusted to me without disgrace and in a suitable manner. Look, you know that no man can exercise any skill or steer and manage any power without tools and material. The material of any craft is that without which a man cannot perform that craft. To govern a kingdom a king requires as his material and his tools that the stations of his land be fully manned. He must have men of

call Asser's *book of blooms* (i.e. *florilegium*) an *enchiridion*; but it is described as a book that Alfred kept at hand for his own personal use and reflection.

¹⁹ The *Boethius* does have an introduction, quite different in purpose from the prefaces attached to the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies*. The introduction to the *Boethius* offers some historical background to the text that follows. It explains who Boethius was and how he ended up imprisoned, soon to be executed. The translator of this text makes no mention here of himself or his reasons for translating.

²⁰ "For from the ornate Latin tongue he turned unknown numbers of books into his own language with such variety and richness, that not only for scholars, but for any who might hear it read, the tearful passion of the book of Boethius would be in a measure brought to life" (*trans.* Campbell 1962, 51).

prayer, fighting men, and workmen. Look, you know that without these tools no king can exercise his skill. By way of material he also needs to have the means to provide those tools, those three companies, with their sustenance. This is their sustenance: land to dwell in, gifts, weapons, food, ale, clothes, and anything that the three companies require. Without these things he cannot hold his tools, and without these things he cannot perform any of those things that he is commanded to perform. Therefore I wanted the material for managing power, so that my skill and my power would not be forgotten and obscured. For the exercise of skill and power soon grows old and becomes ignored if it is without wisdom. Therefore no one can manage any skill without wisdom. For whatever is done through folly cannot be reckoned as a skill. Let me put it briefly; I wanted to live worthily as long as I lived, and after my life to leave to those who came after me a memory of myself in good works (40.12- 41.6).²¹

Alfred Smyth thinks that in this passage “the genuine Alfred summarizes his personal attitude toward kingship” (1995, 584). Malcolm Godden, however, does not hear Alfred’s voice in this passage. He thinks that *Mod* is ironically critical of tyrannical kingship and stands at a remove “from Alfred’s own world” (2003, 145). Godden’s position requires a good deal of mental deftness and Smyth’s seems much more sensible. *Mod* claims to have experienced personal difficulty with the demands of kingship, particularly in his need for help and resources. His complaint accords closely with the cares that Alfred expressed in the preface to the *Pastoral Care*. So too does *Mod*’s interest in cultivating wisdom. His concluding sentiment here also accords with that of the preface to the *Soliloquies*: the desire to be useful and beneficial while living in this world.

Anyone who knows Boethius’s Latin text will see that Alfred was not translating at all in the excerpt just quoted. He shifted away from the Latin and expressed thoughts that we would have to describe as “his own.” He did this frequently, and often at length, in the *Boethius*. He did it even more frequently and at greater length in the *Soliloquies*. Alfred turned this dialogues with *Gesceadwisnesse* (“Reason”) into something quite distinctly his own. Even at the beginning of the Old English *Soliloquies*, where Alfred was still holding fairly closely to the Latin text, we can see him shifting his text to express thoughts substantially different than those in the Latin text. At the outset of the Latin text, Augustine describes himself as turning some questions over in his mind when he hears a voice telling him to entrust his thoughts to a guardian so as not to lose them. When Augustine suggests that his memory could do the job, the voice (namely,

²¹ “Eala, Gesceadwisnes, hwæt þu wast þæt me næfre seo gitsung and seo gemægð þisses eorðlican anwealdes forwel ne licode, ne ic ealles forwiðe ne girnde þisses eorðlican rices, buton tola ic wilnode þeah and andweorces to þam weorce þe me beboden was to wyrccanne; þæt was þæt ic unfracodlice and gerisenlice mihte steoran and reccan þone anweald þe me befæst wæs. Hwæt, þu wast þæt nan mon ne mæg nænne cræft cyðan ne nænne anweald reccan ne stioran buton tolum and andweorce. Þæt bið ælces cræftes andweorc þæt mon þone cræft buton wyrccan ne mæg. Þæt bið þonne cyninges andweorc and his tola mid to ricsianne, þæt he hæbbe his lond fullmonnad; he sceal habban gebedmen and fyrdmen and weorcmen. Hwæt, þu wast þætte butan þissan tolan nan cyning his cræft ne mæg cyðan. Þæt is eac his ondweorc, þæt he habban sceal to ðæm tolum þa þrim geferscipum biwiste. Þæt is þonne heora biwist: land to bugianne, and gifta, and wæpnu, and mete, and ealo, and clapas, and gehwæt þæs ðe þre geferscipas behofiað. Ne mæg he butan þisum þas tol gehealdan, ne buton þisum tolum nan þara þinga wyrccan þe him beboden is to wyrccenne. Forþy ic wilnode andweorces þone anweald mid to reccenne, þæt mine cræftas and anweald ne wurden forgitene and forholene. Forþam ælc cræft and ælc anweald bið sona forealdod and forsugod, gif he bið buton wisdom; forðæm ne mæg non mon nænne cræft bringan buton wisdom; forðæmþe swa hwæt swa þurh dysig gedon bið, ne mæg hit mon næfre cræfte gerecan. Þæt is nu hraðost to secganne, þæt ic wilnode weorðfullice to libbanne þa hwile þe ic lifde, and æfter minum life þæm monnum to læfanne þe æfter me wæren min gemyndig on godum weorcum.” (40.6- 41.6)

Reason) tells him that his memory is not sufficient and that he will have to write his thoughts out. But this does not seem to be a very good solution either, since he is not well enough for such exertion. There is nothing then to do but to pray for strength.

Reason: Therefore, they must be written down. But what are you to do, since your health refuses the labour of writing? They should not be dictated, for they demand utter solitude.

Augustine: What you say is true. So I do not know what I should do.

Reason: Pray for health and help, so that you can make your way to your desires, and commit this prayer itself to writing, so that you become stronger minded as a result of your effort. (1.1)²²

When Alfred translated this interaction he made a very telling change. He did not see the task of thinking deep thoughts as requiring “utter solitude.” He portrayed the frail Augustine’s solitude as a hindrance to his meditations: if only he had some helpers he would be better able to move forward.

Then she said, “Entrust it to letters and write it down. But it seems to me nevertheless that you are too unwell to be able to write it all down. And even if you were completely well, you would need to have a secluded place and solitude from every other concern and a few familiar and capable men with you who would in no way hinder you, but would bring help to your effort.” Then I said, “I have none of those things, neither the solitude, nor the help of other men, nor so secluded a place that would suffice me for such a work. Therefore I do not know what I must do.” Then she said, “Then I do not know anything better than that you pray for yourself. Beseech for yourself to God for healing of soul and body, that through healing you would be able to receive what you desire. And when you have prayed then write down the prayer lest you forget it, in order that you might be the worthier of your effort. And pray deeply for yourself with few words and with full attention.” (3.18-4.9)²³

So as far as Alfred was concerned a few familiar and capable men would have done poor Augustine some good. He needed a group of scholarly helpers, much as Alfred described himself to have for the effort of translating the *Pastoral Care*.²⁴

²² R. - Ergo scribendum est. Sed quid agis, quod valetudo tua scribendi laborem recusat? Nec ista dictari debent; nam solitudinem meram desiderant. A. - Verum dicis. Itaque prorsus nescio quid agam. R. - Ora salutem et auxilium, quo ad concupita pervenias, et hoc ipsum litteris manda, ut prole tua fias animosior. (1.1)

²³ “Ʒa cwæð heo: befæste hit þonne bocstafum and awrit hit; ac me þincð þat þeah, þæt þu si to unhal, þæt ðu ne mage hit æall awritan; and þeah þu æall hal were, þu beþorfrest þæt ðu hæfdest digele stoge and æmanne ælces oðres þinges, and fæawa cuðe men and creftige mid, þe ðe nanwiht ne amyrdan, ac fultmoden to þinum crefte. Ʒa cwæð ic: Ic nebbe nan þara: ne þonne æmenne, ne oðera manna fultum, ne swa dygela stowe þæt me to swilcum weorce onhagie; forði ic nat hwæd ic don sceal. Ʒa cwæð heo: nat ic þonne nanwiht betere þonne þu ðe gebidde. Wilna ðe to gode, hæle modes and lichaman, þæt ðu mage þurh ða hele begitan þæt ðæt þu wilnast; and þonne þu ðe gebeden hæbbe, awrit þonne þæt gebed, þi læs þu hit forgyte, þæt þu si ðe werðer þines creftest, and gebyde þe feawum wordum deoplice mid fulle angitte.” (3.18-4.9)

²⁴ Toward the end of the preface he said, “then I began amidst the varied and manifold tasks of this kingdom to translate into English that book that is called *Pastoralis* in Latin and *Pastorbook* in English, sometimes word for word, and sometimes thought for thought, just as I learned it from Plegmund my Archbishop and from Asser my bishop and from Grimbold my masspriest and from John my masspriest” (7.17-22: “ða ongan ic ongemang oðrum mislicum and manigfealdum bisgum ðisses kynerices ða boc wendan on Englisc ðe is genemned on Læden *Pastoralis*, and on Englisc Hierdeboc, hwilum word be worde, hwilum andgit of andgiete, swæ swæ ic hie geliornode æt Plegmunde minum ærcebiscepe and æt Assere minum biscepe and æt Grimbolde minum mæsseprioste and æt Iohanne minum mæssepreoste.”

Alfred maintained a more consistent verisimilitude with Augustine's persona than he did with the prisoner in the *Boethius*. Even so, he still used Augustine to his own purposes. Augustine wrote this dialogue shortly after his conversion and during his convalescence Cassiciacum (around 388), several years before he became a presbyter or bishop. But Alfred depicted him as being a bishop already (2.13) and used his persona in sustained reflection on lordship. The Latin text uses the word *Dominus* only three times, twice in the opening prayer and once at the very end of Book I. Alfred did not translate the third use of the word directly (54.14). He did, however, use the title *Drihten* 18 times throughout his translation: 14 times in the opening prayer, and four times through the rest of the text. All those instances of *Drihten* refer simply to the Lord God, just as the three instances of *Dominus* do in the Latin text. Alfred, however, also uses the term *hlaford* 24 times throughout the translation. Three of those instances are found in the compound *weoruldhlaford* ("earthly or temporal lord"). Never does Alfred's use of the term *hlaford* in this text refer immediately to the Lord God. It always occurs in the midst of a reflection on the relation of earthly and heavenly lordship. This is an issue that Alfred imposed on the text while still trying to keep with its theme. Toward the end of book 2, by the time he had completely abandoned the Latin text, he devised a proof for the soul's immortality based on Christ's supreme lordship. He had the character of *Gesceadwisnes* work this proof up by comparing Augustine's earthly lord, the Emperor Honorius, with his heavenly lord. Honorius was indeed Emperor during some of Augustine's years as a bishop. But he was not yet Emperor when Augustine wrote the *Soliloquies*. This anachronism may not be deliberate on Alfred's part. All the same, it shows that Alfred sought to make it understood that Bishop Augustine was under royal lordship and readily acknowledged that authority.

Then she said, "I hear now that you trust your lord better than you yourself, and your companions equally with yourself. You indeed do very rightly and very meetly in that you maintain such good faith with them. But I want you to tell me whether Honorius, Theodosius's son, seem wiser or more truthful than Christ, God's son." Then I said, "No, by no means, nowhere close. And it seems to me inappropriate that you compare them together. Honorius is very good, though his father was better. He was very devout and very prudent, and very rightly of the nature of my lord, and so too is he who still lives on. I want to honour them, just as one ought to honour one's earthly lord. And those others whom you spoke of beforehand I want to honour as one ought to honour their lords and as the king who is the king of all kings and the creator and ruler of all creation." (61.10-20)²⁵

Alfred's proof builds to the point where Christ's word in the gospels is presented as the highest authority, and therefore his promise of immortality must be trusted more even than the words of Honorius and his servants: "Now you hear what Christ and his servants said; and I heard before that you had no doubts about the statements of Honorius and his servants. Why do you then have doubts about the statements of God and of Christ, God's son, and of their servants, which they

²⁵ "Ða cwæð heo: Ic gehire nu þæt ðu gelyfst þinum hlaforde bet ðonne þe selfum, and þinum geferum æmnwel and ðe selfum. Þu dest eac swiðe rihte and swiðe gisenlice myd þy þæt þu swa gooda treowa wið hi hefst. Ac ic wolde þæt þu me sedest hweðer þe ðince Honorius, þeodosius sunu, wisra oððe unleasera þonne Crist, godes sunu. Ða cweð ic: nese, la nese; ne nawer neah. Ac me þincð unede þæt ðu hi togeadere metst. Honorius is swiðe god, þeah his feder betere were; he wes swiðe æfest and swiðe rædfast and swiðe rihte mines hlafordes kynnes, and swa is se þe þær gyt lufað. Hi ic wille wyrðian swa swa man worldhlaford sceal, and þe oðre ðe þu er embe sprece, swa swa heora hlafordes and swa man þone kyng sceal, þe byð kyng ealra kynga and ealra gesceafta scypend and wealdend." (61.10-20)

themselves uttered” (62.13-17).²⁶ Our concern here is not with Alfred’s argument as such, but with this example of Alfred making this dialogue a means of working out his own reflections. Alfred’s appeal to the supreme lordship of Christ, far from diminishing the authority of the earthly lord, validated it as a reflection or imitation of the higher. Such thoughts are nowhere to be seen in Augustine’s text.

Alfred did not treat the *Pastoral Care* so loosely as he did the two dialogues. Various theories have been advanced as to why he held closer to Gregory’s text and did not stray into his own reflections. Some think that it was his first effort at translation and so he held more tightly to the structure of what he had in front of him. Simeon Potter goes so far as to say that the translation of the Old English *Pastoral Care* is so markedly different in approach from that of the Old English *Boethius*, *Soliloquies*, and *Orosius* (which he regarded as Alfred’s own as well) that it represents an early phase of Alfred’s learning where he relied heavily on the help of his scholars and lacks the assurance to range out into his own thoughts (1931, 52). But greater precision does not always signal lesser facility. Perhaps Alfred simply had different purposes in translating the *Pastoral Care*. It is a manual for leadership and Alfred may have had no reason to adapt its practical guidance. The *Boethius* and *Soliloquies* with their more complex philosophical reasoning may have needed adjusting to suit Alfred’s cultural setting, his language’s range of expression, his own understanding and his own purposes. But even though the *Pastoral Care* is less adapted and is not a dialogue we still see Alfred bringing a strong sense of his presence to the text. The preface, of course, sets the whole translation under the banner of Alfred’s intention to teach his people. At times Alfred brought a more personal voice than the Latin text uses. Gregory made little reference to himself in this work. He set it in motion with a reference to himself in the opening sentence. After that he stepped aside. Alfred sustained Gregory’s personal tone longer. There is a considerable contrast between formality and familiarity as the Latin and Old English texts declare their purpose.

This book is divided into a four-part disputation, so that it advances toward the soul of the reader through a set of ordered presentations, as if through some steps. (13A)²⁷

Now I want this discourse to climb into the inner thought of the student, just like on a ladder, through steps nearer and nearer, until it stands firm in the upper room of the mind of those who learn it. Therefore I have divided into four parts. (23:16-18)²⁸

As Alfred expanded and developed this imagery we see him assuming Gregory’s voice and speaking his thoughts, not simply to the reader (*lector*) but, more engagingly, to the “learner.” Later in the text where Gregory uses a formal “we” in reference to himself Alfred brings this down to the voice of that more familiar *ic*.

And though we set such things forth, we do not find fault with power, but we guard the weakness of the heart from the desire for power, lest some of those who are

²⁶ “Nu þu geherst hwæt Crist cwæð and hys þegnas; and ic geherde ær þæt þu nawuht ne tweodast ymbe Honorius segene and hys þegna, hwi tweost ðu þonne ymbe godes and ymbe Cristes, godes sunu, and ymbe hera þegna sæcgena þe hy selfe to sprecon?” (62.13-17).

²⁷ “Quadripartita vero disputatione liber iste distinguitur, ut ad lectoris sui animum ordinatis allegationibus quasi quibusdam passibus gradiatur.” (13A)

²⁸ “Nu ic wilnige ðætte ðeos spræc stigge on ðæt ingeðonc ðæs leorneres, suæ suæ on sume hlædre, stæpmælum near and near, oððæt hio fæstlice gestonde on ðæm solore ðæs modes ðe hi leornige; and forðy ic hi todæle on feower.” (23:16-18)

unaccomplished seize upon the height of ruling, and set foot on a precipice, even though they are unsteady when standing on level ground.(18B)²⁹

Nevertheless, though I am relating this now, I am not finding fault with great work or just power, but I am finding fault with someone who exalts himself in his own mind because of such things. And I want to strengthen the weakness of their hearts and to restrain such desire in the unfit, so that none of them dare grasp so carelessly at ruling or at teaching, lest they set out on so dangerous an ascent, when they cannot stand on level ground without quacking. (41.2-8)³⁰

A great deal is nuanced more finely in the Old English rendering of this cautionary aside, whether in the distinction between valid authority and the corrupt pride that such authority can nurture, or in the more careful attention to the hearts and minds of those imperilled through their careless quest for authority. And just as with the phrase *ic wille* in the previous excerpt, so too with *ic wolde* here Alfred highlights the leader's personal intention to guide his followers well.

The three works bearing Alfred's name offer a sense of Alfred's voice and presence.³¹ There is no similar sense of Alfred's presence in the Old English *Bede* or Old English *Orosius*. The *Orosius* has a reference to Alfred in the geographical reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan (1.13.29-1.18.3). We read there of things reported in Alfred's presence, but not words set down by Alfred himself.³² The removal of these two works from Alfred's own writings has clarified Alfred's voice. When accept the textual attributions to Alfred in these three works, we can better hear the distinctive qualities of what is presented as his own writing.

The Question of Alfred's Authorship of the Prose Psalms

What then about the translation of the Psalms that William of Malmesbury attributed to Alfred? William said that Alfred not only set about translating the Psalms (*Psalterium transference aggressus*) but also that he managed to "explicate" the first part before he died (*prima parte explicata, vivendi finem fecit*) (2.4). A manuscript called the Paris Psalter presents the Psalter in Old English under two different modes of translation.³³ The first fifty are in prose and the remaining hundred in verse. The first fifty are also accompanied in nearly every case by a heading that interprets or "explicates" the psalm that follows. Since the end of the nineteenth century a number of scholars have argued that the Paris Psalter's first fifty Psalms are the very

²⁹ "Haec itaque proferentes, non potestatem reprehendimus, sed ab appetitu illius cordis infirmitatem munimus, ne imperfecti quique culmen arripere regiminis audeant, et qui in planis stantes titubant, in praecipiti pedem ponant." (18B)

³⁰ "Suaðeah, ðeah ic nu ðis recce, næ tæle ic na micel weorc ne ryhtne anwald, ac ic tæle ðæt hine mon forðy upahebbe on his mode; and ða untrymnesse hiera heortan ic wolde getrymman and gestiran ðære wilnunge ðæm unmedemum, ðæt hiera nan ne durre gripan sua orsorglice on ðæt rice and on ðone lareowdom, ðylæs ða gongen on sua frecne stige, ða ðe ne magon uncwaciende gestondan on emnum felda." (41.2-8)

³¹ It would be very worthwhile to study that voice more closely and listen to its tone and take stock of its bearing. Tom Shippey effectively began such a study in his essay "Wealth and Wisdom in the *Preface to the Pastoral Care*" where he listens attentively to the persuasive powers in Alfred's voice so as to understand his thoughts and purposes.

³² The sequence begins by indirectly quoting Ohthere: "Ohthere sæde his hlaforde, Ælfrede cyninge, þæt he ealra Norðmonna norpmest bude" (1.13.29-1.18.3: "Ohthere said to his lord, King Alfred, that of all Norsemen he dwelt the furthest north."). Wulfstan's report follows immediately on Ohthere's and at times shifts from indirect to direct discourse (1.16.23-29).

³³ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fonds latin 8824.

translation that William was referring to.³⁴ With that argument generally comes the parallel assertion that these Prose Psalms are also the work of Alfred. The second assertion is, however, not a necessary consequence of the first. It is possible that William saw what we now call the Paris Psalter or another manuscript of the same translation, but was mistaken in attributing the prose portion of that text to Alfred.

As they stand in the Paris Psalter the Prose Psalms present themselves very differently than the three translations explicitly ascribed to Alfred. Most obviously, of course, they do not ascribe themselves to Alfred. This fact does not, of course, rule out his authorship. The Paris Psalter is missing its first leaf. We do not know if that leaf may have ascribed what follows to Alfred. Perhaps William saw Alfred's name in the copy that he knew (Whitelock 1969, 89). The difficulty, however, is that if the text of these translated psalms offered an opening attribution to Alfred we would expect that it would also announce the end of his work, especially if it is leading into someone else's. But as we have it the text of Prose Psalms breaks off in a fragmentary Psalm 50 and moves directly on to Psalm 51 without notice of this shift. If this work is Alfred's why is there no *explicit* telling us so, such as we see in the *Soliloquies* or the *Boethius*? Perhaps Psalm 50 is fragmentary because the Paris Psalter had been copied from a manuscript, or manuscript tradition, where the last sequence had gone missing (just as the Paris Psalter's own first folio went missing). It may be that both an opening and closing sequence is lost to us. We know of one particular instance where Alfred's name is not attached to something that we believe that he wrote. Cotton Tiberius A.iii, a compilation of many short excerpted texts, composed in Canterbury in the mid 11th century, contains two excerpts from the long opening prayer in Alfred's *Soliloquies* (folios 51r26-52r27). It gives no attribution to Alfred (or Augustine for that matter), but leaves the text anonymous. But that is a short excerpt, and this is a long sustained work. If we believe William, it would seem to be Alfred's entire effort in translating the Psalms. And when we think of how Alfred carefully cultivated his reputation, as we heard in the excerpt from the *Boethius*, we expect that he would have attached his name to the text if it were his. And when we see how that name was preserved in the three other works, its absence here must be taken as a serious deficit of evidence for any argument that this work is Alfred's.

Closely related to the lack of a name is the lack of a preface or proem or introduction. Every other work that we consider to be Alfred's has some sort of message preceding the translation itself. Even though the *Boethius* does not have a preface it does have its *Proem* and lengthy introduction. Even Alfred's Law Code distinguishes itself among other Old English law codes with its lengthy prologue and its thoughtful preface in Alfred's own name. It is characteristic of Alfred's writings that they take a moment at the outset to orient the reader or hearer to what follows (Frantzen 2003). Alfred had a penchant for opening messages. Even the

³⁴ Richard P. Wülker asserted that William's phrasing (i.e. *prima parte*) must refer to the tradition of dividing the Psalter into three groups of fifty, which accords with the shift in the Paris Psalter from prose to verse at Psalm 51 (1885, §§ 500-501). Patrick O'Neill takes this correspondence as a moment of evidence that William is "accurately" describing the "First Fifty" psalms in the Paris Psalter (2001, 73). It may well be true that William is referring to this very text. But the term "accurately" seems to force the issue. The tradition of dividing into fifties was not especially prominent in Anglo-Saxon, much less Anglo-Norman England, nor does the Paris Psalter give any notice of such a division. It does not introduce the first fifty as a "First Fifty," but simply launches straight into Psalm 1. And its Psalm 50 is incomplete and simply breaks off to be followed at once by Psalm 51 without any special division. Likewise there is no division at Psalm 100. William may simply have been vaguely referring to the first portion of the Psalms, not a sharply defined first segment. William's point is that Alfred died and left his translation of the psalms unfinished. The noun *parte* seems to refer to a large fragment rather than a specific section.

Old English translation of the *Dialogues* has a short preface in which Alfred thanks those who translated it for him. Whether or not we think he actually wrote that preface we think that he authorized it (Bately 2003, 114; Frantzen 2003, 122). But these fifty psalms have no such opening message, at least as far as we know. They simply launch straight into the first psalm. It is possible that such a message has gone missing, along with his name. As things stand, however, we have a serious deficit of evidence.

More serious still, however, is the lack of that distinctive voice, that Alfredian *ic*. The Prose Psalms do not possess the personal tone that Alfred conveyed in his other writings. Though frequently meet the pronoun *ic* in the Prose Psalms, the translator never uses that *ic* as something that identified with himself. The headings always instruct the reader to understand the voice of the Psalms as dispersed through many people. David is always the psalmist whose words reach through many other characters: Hezekiah, the Jews in the Babylonian captivity, Christ, the Apostles, St. Paul, the righteous or Christian believers in general. The voice of the psalmist is left for everyone to identify with. In the headings, however, where instructive voice here could make itself known to the reader as a teacher or a leader, no persona is forthcoming. The voice of the headings always remains detached.

Despite the absence of attribution, introduction, and personal voice, there is now a general scholarly consensus that the Prose Psalms are Alfred's work (Keynes 2003, 180). This is largely due to Janet Bately's lexical analysis of the translations associated with King Alfred (including those that we believe were not by Alfred himself, namely, the *Orosius*, *Bede*, and Gregory's *Dialogues*). She examined the range of Old English words used to translate a selection of particular Latin words in these various texts. She concluded that the Prose Psalms have so many lexical similarities with the *Pastoral Care*, the *Boethius*, and the *Soliloquies* that they must have been translated by the same person. Her analysis is very solid and persuasive. She showed that the lexical range of the Prose Psalms has much in common with Alfred's named translations and concluded that they are all by the same author. Her conclusion does not not exactly substantiate William's statement that Alfred left the Psalms unfinished because he died – there might be some other reason for the interruption that William did not know of. But it lends it some force. And what a poignant end to this scholar-king's career. How fitting to imagine Alfred translating the Psalms toward the end of his life, working out his own devotion as his strength weakens and offering the spiritual power of the Psalms to his people.

Two new editions of the Prose Psalms have since been prepared and both in very different ways cast doubt on the weight of Bately's conclusion. Richard Stracke's helpful online edition entirely ignores the question of authorship.³⁵ Its title, *The Paris Prose*, altogether ignores the question as to who translated the text. In Stracke's edition the Old English translation simply remains an anonymous work, just as the manuscript presents it. By leaving her research to the side, Stracke tacitly suggests that Bately's lexical analysis has not convinced him. In stark contrast, Patrick O'Neill's 2001 edition openly and explicitly attributes the Prose Psalms to Alfred. His edition's title proclaims his position: *King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation of the First Fifty Psalms*. From such a title one might expect O'Neill to rely quite heavily on Bately's careful lexical study. But he makes no mention of it at all. In his long and involved

³⁵ Stracke's edition is not only useful because of its availability online, but also for text of the Latin Psalter that accompanies the Old English translation. Although the the Paris Psalter's Latin text is not what the Old English translation was based on, it is in itself a composite of the Roman, Gallican, and earlier Italic readings of the Psalter that might have been available to the Old English translator. Stracke's edition is available at <http://www.aug.edu/augusta/psalms/>.

introductory chapter on Alfred's authorship he leaves Bately's research on this question entirely to the side.³⁶ This is a strange omission. As with Stracke, the effect again is to suggest that Bately's argument carries no weight and that the editor finds it irrelevant.

It is unfortunate for O'Neill that he did not appeal to Bately and build on her thorough work. His case is the weaker for it, especially since his own attempt to prove Alfred's authorship has several weaknesses. He begins his argument by appealing to William of Malmesbury's authority. Noting that William "is not always a reliable guide to Alfredian authorship," O'Neill nevertheless posits that because William seems to describe the very text of the Prose Psalms his attribution in this case "carries some conviction" (2001, 73). But that argument is a clear case of special pleading. William was a very active and dedicated librarian. He may well have seen any or all of the texts that he attributes to Alfred. We are quite clear about his knowledge of the Old English *Orosius* and the Old English *Bede*; for he names them explicitly. But his description of Alfred's supposed translation of the Psalms is not altogether distinct. The "first part" is not necessarily the "first fifty." And what exactly does *explicata* mean? Is it synonymous with his word for "translate" (*transferre*)? Or does it mean something more, like "interpreted"? If William was actually describing the Prose Psalms of the Paris Psalter this word suggests the interpretive headings. O'Neill, however, thinks that the term *explicata* refers to the periphrastic nature of the translation (2001, 73). William also makes no mention as to whether or not the Psalms that Alfred translated are prose or verse. On what basis he attributes a group of translated Psalms to Alfred he does not say. Did he read Alfred's name in a preface, like that of the *Pastoral Care*, or imbedded in the text itself, as we meet in the *Orosius*? Or is he repeating a tradition, like Æthelweard's attribution of the *Boethius* or Ælfric's of the *Bede*? We can surmise, and we can guess, but we do not actually know the basis for any of William's claims about Alfred's authorship. As Whitelock says, William's actual description "contains no indication whatever of authorship" (1969, 89). We do not know what suggested to William that Alfred had authored a portion of the Psalms.

O'Neill's conclusion to his argument for Alfred's authorship involves another moment of special pleading. His summary begins thus:

The agreements between *Ps(P)* and Alfred's works in ideas, in the phrasing of these ideas, and in idiosyncracies of translating are best explained by common authorship. Nor do occasional dissimilarities between the two in translating the same Latin sources prejudice this claim, since they reveal, in fact, a similar underlying method of translation. (2001, 94-95)

To suggest that dissimilarity amounts to similarity seems desperately to force the issue. A loose and flexible style is not an Alfredian singularity. We need look no further than the Old English *Orosius*.

Between the opening and closing of his argument O'Neill presents an impressively wide array of agreements between the Prose Psalms and Alfred's three attributed works. Many of them are very cogent at first sight, but on closer consideration they do not all have the substance that O'Neill claims for them. He notes, for instance, the collocation of two verbs for perceiving, *hawian* and *geseon*, occurring both in the Prose Psalms (13.2) and in the Old English *Soliloquies* (27.12-15). These paired verbs render the Latin pair *prospicio* and *uidere* in the Psalter and *aspicere* and *uidere* in Augustine. O'Neill takes this as a significant moment where two texts

³⁶ O'Neill does, at least, include Bately's lexical study in his bibliography. But in his introductory chapter on "Authorship" he mentions Bately's article only in a couple of footnotes (5 and 39), and then only incidentally and without any interest in her argument.

“agree in thought and phrasing” (2001, 86). Both use the same verbs “for the two stages of perception,” namely looking and then seeing (2001, 87-88). But the same thought and phrasing is used in the Old English *Dialogues*, where the two Old English verbs pair up to render a single Latin verb of perception, *attendere* (“to consider carefully” or “to examine”), knotting together the same process of looking and seeing.

Qui reversus ad sportam caute ac sollicite attendit, sed eam jam, sicut vir Dei praedixerat, serpens tenebat (3.14: PL 248C).³⁷

And þa wæs eft cyrende to þære spyrtan and wærlice hawode and geseah, þæt seo nædre þær in wæs, swa swa se Godes wer him ær sæd. (203.16)³⁸

So this thought and phrase is not special to Alfred. It is used in a translation worked up by others at Alfred’s request. It comes from scholars within his orbit, but not from his own hand.

O’Neill also notes how the translation of Psalm 1.1 has a phrase that is very similar to Alfred’s handling of the same verse in the *Pastoral Care*. The phrase *in cathedra pestilentiae* becomes *on heora wolbarendum setle* (“on their pestilential throne”) in the Prose Psalms, and *on ðam wolberendan setle* (“on the pestilential throne”) in the *Pastoral Care* (435.19). O’Neill calls this rendering “idiosyncratic,” based on a “a personal interpretation or preference” (2001, 91). He fails to note, however, that similar phrasing appears to have arisen independently in the Vitellius Psalter. There the phrase is translated *on heahsetle wolberendra* (“on the throne of the pestilential”).³⁹ More significantly still, O’Neill does not observe that the word *wolberende* has quite a special and rare distribution. Even though its cognate verb, *wolberan**, is nowhere attested in Old English literature, this present participial form occurs 15 times according to the *Old English Microfiche Concordance*. Seven of those occurrences are in translations associated with Alfred and his educational reform: three times in the *Pastoral Care* (415.12, 435.19, 435.22), twice in the Prose Psalms (1.1 and 10.7), once in the Old English *Dialogues* (104.30), and once in the Old English *Bede* (48.16).⁴⁰ Furthermore, the cognate noun *wolbarnes* occurs only once in another related text, the *Orosius* (62.32). So half the occurrences of this little word group come from Alfred’s reform, though not all from Alfred himself. Again, we meet phrasing that Alfred shares with others associated with his scholarly efforts.

O’Neill furthermore states “that the distinctive translation *herestræt* ‘highway,’ which reflects the medieval Latin meaning of *platea*, is found among Old English works only in *Ps(P)*

³⁷ “Having returned to the basket he cautiously and anxiously examined it, but the serpent already occupied it, just as the man of God had foretold.”

³⁸ “And then he was turning back to the basket and carefully he looked and saw that the serpent was in there, just as the man of God told him before.”

³⁹ Other differences of phrasing in rendering this verse show that the Vitellius Psalter was not borrowing from the Prose Psalms. The translation in the Prose Psalms reads:

Eadig byð se wer þe ne gæð on geþeahrt unrihtwisra, ne on þam wege ne stent synfulra, ne on heora wolbarendum setle ne sitt.

About a century and a half later (around 1060) the Vitellius Psalter reads:

Eadig wer se ðe ne on gewat on geþeahhte arleas and on wege synfulra ne gestod and on heahsetle wolberendra ne siteð.

In the *Pastoral Care* Gregory is only handling a fragment of the verse; the rest does not come into view.

⁴⁰ The other eight occurrences tend also to come from translated work: four times it occurs in *Alexander’s Letter to Aristotle* (406, and three times over in one sentence 452, 453, 434) once in the prose life of Guthlac, once in the Vitellius Psalter (1.1), once in *Eadwine’s Canterbury Psalter* (79.14), and once in the *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de quadrupedibus* (25).

and *CP*” (2001, 94).⁴¹ O’Neill’s phrasing at first glance suggests that *herestræt* occurs nowhere else but in these two works. But this word is a little more widely attested in Old English than that. Although it is not nearly as common as its synonym *herepað* its nine other occurrences in charters and poetry indicate that it had a life of its own.⁴² The fact that the one occurrence of *platea* in the Prose Psalms is translated with the same word as a small cluster of occurrences of *platea* in the *Pastoral Care* lends little substance to O’Neill’s claim. For there is, in fact, another cluster of occurrences of *platea* elsewhere in the *Pastoral Care* which Alfred translated not as *herestræte*, but simply as *stræte*.⁴³ Evidently, Alfred did not have a special devotion to the rarer compound. As a counterpoint one might note a case that goes in the opposite direction. The one occurrence of Latin *exprobro* in the Prose Psalms is translated quite differently into Old English than the three occurrences of the *exprobro* in the *Pastoral Care*.⁴⁴ Does such a difference detract from O’Neill’s claim and suggest a different mind at work in the two texts? Not necessarily. But neither does his observation about *herestræte* have any cogency. There is not a broad enough swath of data in either case to show any real trend of distinctive style.

O’Neill identifies many other commonalities between the Prose Psalms and the three named works of Alfred in his effort to establish their common authorship. But by and large these commonalities are not particularly distinctive. To understand “wicked behaviour as both doing evil and taking pleasure in it” (2001, 85) can hardly be peculiar to Alfred; it is a commonplace thought in the early medieval Latin west through its reliance on Augustinian spiritual psychology. Likewise, O’Neill observes moments in both the Old English Prose Psalms and the Old English *Boethius* which express the idea that those without the means to help the poor can still find favour through their goodwill. O’Neill himself adds that “this idea almost certainly derives from Augustine’s *Enchiridion*” (2001, 85). And if Alfred did have access to that text or a text influenced by it, where would that access have arisen? The only likely answer would be among his circle of scholars, where texts and ideas would get shared. So too when we meet both in the *Pastoral Care* and the Prose Psalms “the Gregorian idea ... that evil thoughts are inevitable but only sinful when carried out” (2001, 87) does that show something exceedingly rare? If Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* was so prized by Alfred that he sent copies of it to his bishops for lending and copying, we should expect that its thoughts and expressions could gain some currency. Similarly, “the theme of reward and punishment proportionate to one’s merits” does indeed occur frequently in the Prose Psalms and the *Boethius* and the *Soliloquies*, as O’Neill notes (2001, 87). But that is hardly surprising since it is a very widespread thought in the theology of the times.

Among the various commonalities that O’Neill observes one deserves special mention, since Janet Bately singles it out in her review of O’Neill’s edition as having significant weight (2003, 128). He sees a parallel to the *Soliloquies* in the translator’s handling of Psalm 48:6-8 (7-11):

⁴¹ Ps. 17.43 and *Pastoral Care* 373.13-20.

⁴² The *Old English Microfiche Concordance* shows six instances of this word in charters and three in poetry (*Andreas* 198, 231; *Exodus* 283).

⁴³ This is in chapter 18. The occurrence of *stræte* translating *platea* are found at 133.12, 133.17, 135.2, 135.4, 135.13, and 135.17.

⁴⁴ In Psalm 41:11 *exprobaverant* is translated as *hyspað*. But in the *Pastoral Care* the form *exprobrans* (1.5 col.19b) is translated *tæle* (45.6), *exprobrando* (3.32 col.58b) is translated *forsioð* (209.6), and *exprobrat* (3.37 col.71a) is translated *oðwat* (267.14).

[its] theme of the evil man's unwillingness and inability to save his brother's soul from Hell's torments does not derive from psalter commentary; it can only be fully understood by reference to the *Soliloquies* passage, part of a long elaboration of the parable of Lazarus and Dives....The inability of one's friends to help is the commonplace patristic interpretation of the Lazarus and Dives parable, but the idea of unwillingness to help is apparently original to the *Soliloquies*. Both the Prose Psalms and the *Soliloquies* combine the two ideas with the same phrasing, "nele/nellað...ne mæg/magon." (2001, 86).

O'Neill, unfortunately, has misunderstood the text. And while the thought therein does indeed share in that of the *Soliloquies*, that thought is not unique. It is available in an important contemporary source. The Old English as presented in O'Neill's edition reads like this:

6. Ongitan nu, þa þe truwiað heora agenum mægene, and þære mycelnesse hiora speda gylpað and wuldrað:

7. Þæt nan broðor oþres sawle nele alysan of helle, ne ne mæg (þeah he wylle), gif he sylf nanwuht nyle, ne ne deð to goode þa hwile þe he her byð. Gylde for þy him sylf and alyse his sawle þa hwyle ðe he her sy, for þam se broðor oþpe nyle oððe ne mæg, gif he sylf na ne onginð to tilianne þæt he þæt weorð agife to alysnesse his sawle. Ac þæt ys wyrse þæt full neah ælc mann þæs tiolað fram þæm anginne his lifes oþ þæne ende, hu he on ecnesse swincan mæge,

8. and næfð nænne forðanc be his deaðe, þonne he gesyhð þa welegan and þa weoruldwisan sweltan.⁴⁵

The flow of thought here does not read altogether smoothly. But careful reading shows that it is not about an evil man's unwillingness or inability to save someone from hell. It is about the unregenerate man's inability to be saved, even by a brother. The two sentences that have the word *broðor* are in symmetry. The *broðor* who cannot or will not *alysan* is not the one depicted as evil or in the helplessness of hell. The three occurrences of the word *sylf* in these two sentences do not refer to the *broðor* but to the *sawle* that wants release from hell. The logic of the message is simple: just as wealth and power do not avail for redemption, neither does brotherhood; you cannot be helped out of hell, even through your own brother's merits, if you lack a prior effort towards goodness of your own. Although O'Neill sees an evil man's unwillingness to help the damned as a peculiar feature here (2001, 86), that is not what is at issue. The logic of the message becomes a little clearer through comparison with the corresponding passage in the *Soliloquies*. The damned are helpless for two reasons: because their

⁴⁵ "Let them now understand, those who trust in their own strength and boast and glory in the magnitude of their wealth, that no brother will want to redeem the soul of another from hell, nor can he even if he should want to, if he himself does not want to do anything for good during the time that he is here. Let him compensate therefore for himself and redeem his soul during the time that he is here, for his brother either will not or cannot, if he himself does not begin to work it out that he render the ransom for the redemption of his soul. But it is worse that very nearly every man works out from the beginning of his life until the end, how he will struggle for eternity, and does not take forethought regarding his death, when he will see the wealthy and the worldly wise perish."

wicked friends do not have the power to help them and because their good friends do not want to not help them.⁴⁶

The thought that these two texts share is not unique. Just as Alfred's handling of the story of *Dives* and *Lazarus* in the *Soliloquies* bears similarities to John Scotus Eriugena's comments on this parable in Book 5 of the *Periphyseon* (Treschow 1993), the same is true here. John explains that those who fail to enact any good in this life have no basis to receive any help or mercy from the saints in the next.⁴⁷ John also explains that the condemnation and imprisonment of the wicked is not at all irksome or troublesome to the good.⁴⁸ In fact it helps form their joy and praise. The good fully and gladly assent to God's judgement. In fact they share in that judgement. Eriugena quotes St. Paul to this very effect: "the spiritual man judges all things."⁴⁹ That is to say, the good assent to the judgement of the wicked and do not want to release them. If Alfred indeed did somehow fall under the influence of Eriugena's *Periphyseon*, where else

⁴⁶ "Ac þa goodan nellað heora yflum freondum arian, forðam hy nellað heora yfeles geswican, ðe ma þe Habraham wolde þam welegan arian, þeh he hys ægnes kinnes were, forðam he ongæt þat he goode næs swa eadmod swa swa he myd rihte sceolde. Ða yfelan þanne ne magon nawðer ne heora freondum, ne heom selfum nane goode ne beon; forðam hy ær on nanre helpe neron naðer ne heom sylfum ne heora freondum þam þe ær heom forðgewitone weron, ða hy on þisse weorulde weron. Ac hym byð þonne swa swa þam mannum þe her beoð on sumes kincges carcerne gebrohte, and magon geseon ælce dæge heora freond, and geahsian be heom þæt þæt hy willað, and ne magon heom þeah na nane gode ne beon. Ne hi hym þe ma oððe nellað, oððe ne magon." (Solil 69.1-14: "But the good will not help their wicked friends, since they do not want to desist from their wickedness, any more than Abraham wanted to help the rich man, even though he was of his own kin. For he understood that he was not so humble to God as he should rightfully have been. The evil then can do no good either for themselves or their friends who passed away before them while they were in this world. But they will then be like those men who are brought into some king's prison, and every day they can see their friends and request through them what they want, and they cannot be any good to them. For either they will not be any good to them, or they cannot.").

⁴⁷ "Ex hoc enim loco datur intelligi non solum adhuc uiuentes in carne, uerum etiam spoliatas carne animas auxilium sanctorum petere posse, siue ut penitus liberentur a poenis siue ut mitius crucientur in eis; incassum tamen petere, si in hac uita in profundum malitiae cecidere, hoc est si nullum bonum in hac uita peregerunt, quo mereantur misericordiam in futura." (5.5318-24: "From this passage we are given to understand that not only those still living in the flesh but also those deprived of their flesh can seek the help of the saints, whether to be utterly freed from their pains or to be more gently tormented in them, and moreover that they seek help in vain if in this life they fell into the depths of wickedness, that is if they performed no good in this life with which they could earn mercy in the next.").

⁴⁸ "Infernus itaque, qui a graecis ΑΔΗ (hoc est tristitia uel deliciarum priuatio) dicitur, dum per se ipsum consideratur, malum malis cognoscitur, dum uero in inuersitatis pulcherrima ordinatione constituitur, bonum bonis efficitur, quoniam non solum iustissimi iudicis seueritas aeternaeque sententia in eo manifestatur, uerum etiam beatorum hominum et angelorum laus felicitatis adquiritur et pulchritudo cumulatur." (5.4255-64: "And so Hell, which is called Hades by the Greeks, that is sadness or the loss of delights, is known as an evil for the evil when considered in itself, but in so far as it is framed in the beautiful order of the universe, it brings about good for the good, because not only is the severity and eternal sentence of the most just judge manifest in it, but praise also for the happiness of men and angels is gained and beauty abounds.").

"Est alia ratio quae tristiam et dolorem impiorum mala non esse perhibet. Sunt enim ueluti quaedam materia copiosissimae laudis aeterni gaudii aeternaeque salutis, quibus qui in deum transeunt fruuntur." (5.4304-08: "There is another reason that shows that the sadness and woe of the wicked is not evil. For they are like something that furnishes an occasion for the most fulsome praise of eternal joy and eternal salvation, which those who pass into God delight in.").

⁴⁹ "...sicut ait apostolus: 'Spiritualis homo iudicat omnia, ipse autem a nemine iudicatur.'" (5.5005-06: "...just as the Apostle says, 'the spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one'.").

would he have met such influence except through his scholarly helpers. The shared thought and expression between the *Soliloquies* and the Prose Psalms need not, therefore, be explained only through identical authorship. It could have arisen with a different translator within the same sphere of scholarly influence.

It is important to note that Gregory's *Pastoral Care* quotes a part of these same verses from the Psalm (48:8-9). Alfred's Old English translation of the *Pastoral Care* handles the text very differently than what we see in the Prose Psalms. Gregory's quotation of the Psalm comes with a brief explanatory addition, which we preserve only for the sake of context:

enim Psalmista ait: *Non dabit Deo propitiationem suam, nec pretium redemptionis animae suae. Pretium namque redemptionis dare, est opus bonum praevenienti nos gratiae reddere.*⁵⁰ (88A)

Alfred's translation reads quite closely:

Be ðæm cwæð se psalm scop: He ne sealde Gode nanne metsceat for his saule ne nænne geðingsceat wið his miltse. Ðæt is ðonne se medsceat wið his saule ðæt he him gielde god weorc for ðære giefe ðe he him ær sealde.⁵¹ (339.10-12)

But as we just saw the Prose Psalms translate this excerpt very differently:

...gif he sylf nanwuht nyle, ne ne deð to goode þa hwile þe he her byð. Gylde for þy him sylf and alyse his sawle þa hwyle ðe he her sy. (8-9)⁵²

The legal terms which Alfred uses in the *Pastoral Care*, *metsceat* and *geðingsceat*, are emphatic in their synonymous parallelism. But they are not used in the Prose Psalms. Indeed the syntactical structure of Prose Psalms develops very differently. The parallelism of the Latin text is reworked. The second phrase (*nec pretium animae suae*) breaks out into a new clause with its own expansive parallelism and an imposed hortatory injunction. The only words that these two translations share are *god* (good) and *sawl*. O'Neill recognizes that the two renderings "present such fundamentally different interpretations as to preclude meaningful comparison" but still urges us to feel that they share a common way of thinking, in that "both find the same meaning in *placationem suam* [*sic*], the necessity of good works to save a man" (83). But that shared thought signifies nothing special. As already noted, the importance of good works was a prevalent idea in Alfred's time and easily inferred in this psalm.

We meet a similar case in another verse from the Psalms quoted in the *Pastoral Care*. O'Neill works hard to find commonalities in the two Old English renderings of Psalm 39:10-11. In Gregory's Latin text we read this:

Ecce labia mea non prohibebo. Domine, tu cognovisti; justitiam tuam non abscondi in corde meo, veritatem tuam et salutare tuum dixi. (97B)⁵³

⁵⁰ "So says the Psalmist, 'He will not offer appeasement for himself to God, nor the price of the redemption of his soul.' The price of redemption consists of offering good work in return for the grace that prepares our way."

⁵¹ "About this the Psalmist says, 'He would not give God any compensation for his soul, nor any recompense for his mercy.' That is compensation for his soul that he give good work for the grace which was already given to him."

⁵² "... if he himself does not want to do anything for good during the time that he is here. Let him compensate therefore for himself and redeem his soul during the time that he is here."

In the *Pastoral Care* Alfred's translation reads like this:

Dryhten, ðu wast ðæt ic ne wyrne minra welera, and ðine ryhtwisnesse ic ne diegle on minre heortan; Ðine hælo and ðine ryhtwisnesse ic secgge. (381.12-13)⁵⁴.

But in the Prose Psalms we read a rather different handling of this verse:⁵⁵

...and minum weolorum ic ne forbeode, ac bebeode þæt hy þæt sprecon symle. Drihten, þu wast þæt ic ne ahydde on minum mode þine rihtwisnesse, ac þine soðfæstnesse and þine hælo ic sæde.⁵⁶

The additional clause in the Prose Psalms version (*ac bebeode þæt hy þæt sprecon symle*) is a periphrastic and interpretive gloss that arises on account of this translation's purpose to teach the text of the Psalms in presenting it. That is not a pertinent difference here. What is pertinent though is that the two translations use different word order, along with several different verbs and nouns. The two translations also understand the syntax around *tu cognovisti* differently. In the *Pastoral Care* Alfred understands this clause to refer back to the preceding clause about the lips. But in the Prose Psalms it is understood to refer to the succeeding clause about the heart. All in all these two translations of this verse do not exhibit much by way of stylistic or interpretive similarity. O'Neill argues that such difference arises "from different physical layout of their respective sources" and "different contexts" in the two translations (83). But then he turns around and urges nevertheless that both translations

share unusual similarities: omitting a translation of *ecce*; rendering perfect *cognovisti* with the present of a verb, *þu wast*, which normally translates *scire*; and (CP only) translating *ueritatem* with *ryhtwisnesse*, a treatment well attested elsewhere in *Ps(P)*. (83)

Again O'Neill finds similarity in difference. He tries to pass off one rather curious divergence in the two Old English handlings of this particular verse as a similarity: namely that *veritas* is translated as *rihtwisnes* in the *Pastoral Care* but as *soðfæstnes* in the Prose Psalms.

Wider investigation of this lexical divergence reveals a surprising anomaly. *Veritas* is a fairly frequent noun in both Latin texts. It occurs in the *Cura Pastoralis* 62 times. Gregory uses it 34 times as a title for Jesus Christ, which Alfred always translates as *Soðfæstnes*. The 28 remaining occurrences Alfred generally translates with *soðfæstnes*, except in four places, where he translates with *rihtwisnes*.⁵⁷ In the Gallican Psalter the first fifty Psalms use *veritas* 16

⁵³ "Behold, I will not restrain my lips. Lord, you have known: your justice I have not hidden in your heart, your truth and your salvation I have spoken."

⁵⁴ "Lord, you know that I do not hinder my lips, and your righteousness I do not hide in my heart; your salvation and your righteousness I declare."

⁵⁵ Richard Stracke's parallel Latin text reads with the same words as we find in Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis*. Jerome's Hebraic version of this verse reads with some slight differences from the Gallican: *ecce labia mea non prohibebo Domine tu nosti iustitiam tuam non abscondi in medio cordis mei fidem tuam et salutare tuum dixi.*

⁵⁶ And I do not forbid my lips, but I command that they speak that always. Lord, you know that I did not hide in my mind your righteousness, and your truth and your salvation I declared."

⁵⁷ Two of those other occurrences are in immediate proximity with one another in 19.145.11-15 (for PL43B) The third occurs at 11.69.14 (PL24A). The fourth is in his handling of Psalm 39:11, as just shown.

times.⁵⁸ In the Latin text of the Paris Psalter there is a seventeenth occurrence.⁵⁹ In the Old English Prose Psalms *veritas* is translated as *rihtwisnes* ten times, but as *soðfæstnes* only six times.⁶⁰ This is a remarkable difference in ratio. *Rihtwisnes* translates *veritas* in the *Pastoral Care* at a rate of about 1 to 15, if we include the use of *Veritas/Soðfæstnes* as a title for Christ, or 1 to 7 if we exclude that particular designation. In the Prose Psalms the rate is 5 to 8. Such incongruity suggests a different habit of mind in the process of translating, if not a different mind altogether. The numbers in the *Soliloquies* and *Boethius* fall into line with the *Pastoral Care*. *Veritas* occurs 19 times in the portions of the *Soliloquies* that Alfred translated. There Alfred translated *veritas* with *rihtwisnes* only once.⁶¹ The other occurrences of *veritas* he translated either as *soðfæstnes*, or paraphrased around it.⁶² In the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* Boethius spoke much about truth, though he preferred *verum* to *veritas*. The abstract noun *veritas* occurs 16 times in the Latin text.⁶³ Many of these occurrences are in spaces of the text that Alfred did not directly translate, especially in Book 5. In the seven cases where Alfred did translate *veritas* he never used *rihtwisnes*. Once, however, he used *hæt riht* for *veritas*.⁶⁴ He used *soðfæstnes* twice,⁶⁵ the adjective *soð* three times,⁶⁶ and the adjective *god* as a substantive once.⁶⁷ Boethius, however used forms of the adjective *verus* adjectivally and substantivally 55 times (excluding the adverbial forms of *vero* and *verum*). Alfred directly translated *verus* 38 times, using *soð* 26 times,⁶⁸ *hehste* four times,⁶⁹ *riht* twice,⁷⁰ *rihtwisnes* twice,⁷¹ *selest* twice,⁷² *ece* once,⁷³ and *full* once.⁷⁴ So as a paired word group *riht* and *rihtwisnesse* occur for *verus* at a rate of about 1 to 9, and *rihtwisnes* itself at 1 to 19. Roughly speaking then the *Pastoral Care*, the *Soliloquies*, and the *Boethius* generally use *riht* or *rihtwisnes* for *verus* and *veritas* at a fairly low rate, varying

⁵⁸ 5:10, 11:2, 14:3, 24:5, 24:10, 25:3, 29:9, 30:6, 30:24, 35:6, 39:10, 39:11, 39:12, 42:3, 44:5, 50:8. In Jerome's Hebraic Psalter *veritas* occurs five fewer times than in the Gallican: at 5:10 we instead read *rectum*, at 11:2 *fideles*, at 30:24 *fideles*, at 35:6 *fides*, and at 39:11 *fides*.

⁵⁹ At 36:37, where the Gallican reads *innocentiam* (and the Hebraic *simplicitatem*) the Paris Psalter has *veritatem*.

⁶⁰ Those ten times are found at 14:3, 24:10, 25:3, 29:9, 30:6, 30:24, 35:6, 36:37, 39:11, 50:8. The six times where *veritas* becomes *soðfæstnes* are 11:2, 24:5, 39:10, 39:12, 42:3 and 44:5. At 5:10 *veritas* is translated negatively with *leasung*.

⁶¹ Alfred renders *Deus qui nos in omnem veritatem inducis* (1.3) as “þu þe us lerst ealle rihtwysnesse” (8.5).

⁶² *Soðfæstnes* occurs 14 times in the translated portions of the Old English text, always in close relation to Latin *veritas* or *verum* (5.13, 5.19, 51.8, 51.9, 51.10, 51.12, 51.14, 51.19, 52.1, 52.2, 52.8 [*sic* in Endter], 52.12, 53.9, 53.15). Where *veritas* is not directly translated it is paraphrased (as at 41.7). *Soðfæstnes* occurs only one other time in the remainder of the text (65.12).

⁶³ 1p4.24, 1p4.25, 1p6.5, 3p.6.3, 3p10.2, 3p11.40, 3p12.25, 4p4.27, 5p2.10, 5p3.11, 5p3.13, 5p3.18, 5p4.23, 5p6.14, 5p6.25 (x2).

⁶⁴ 94.19 (for 3p11.40).

⁶⁵ 99.24-25 (for 3p12.25) and 121.14 (for 4p4.27).

⁶⁶ 12.20 (for 1p12.20), 68.19 (for 3p6.3), and 82.26 (for 3p10.2).

⁶⁷ 141.6 (for 5p2.10).

⁶⁸ 14.8 (for 1p6.21), 14.18 (corresponding to 1m7.23), 21.12 (for 2p4.1), 31.20 (for 2p5.22), 48.2 (for 2p7.5), 47.16 (for 2p8.3), 48.4 (for 2p8.5), 51.12 (for 3p1.5), 51.14 (for 3p1.6), 51.17 (for 3p1.6), 51.22 (for 3p1.7), 51.23 (for 3p1.7), 58.9 (for 3p3.1), 58.12 (for 3p3.1), 63.12 (for 3p4.11), 74.14 (for 3m8.22), 74.19 (for 3p9.1), 78.6 (for 3p9.24), 78.10, (for 3p9.27), 118.3 (for 4p4.4), 78.26 (for 3p9.30), 78.29 (for 3p9.31), 95.20-21 (for 3m11.15), 103.25 (for 4p1.2), 104.29 (for 4p1.8), 110.30 (for 4p2.45).

⁶⁹ 52.22 (for 3p2.4), 74.31 (for 3p9.4), 90.7 (for 3p11.5).

⁷⁰ 11.30 (for 1p6.7), 94.28 (for 3m11.1).

⁷¹ 95.17 (for 3m11.11).

⁷² 84.4 (for 3p10.10), 84.5 (for 3p10.11).

⁷³ 78.25 (for 3p9.30).

⁷⁴ 88.29 (for 3p10.43).

between 5 and 15 percent, whereas the Prose Psalms do so at a rate of over 60 percent. The Prose Psalms also differentiate themselves in another way in their usage of the *soð* word group. The adjective *soðfæst* never occurs in the Prose Psalms, but it does in each of Alfred's three named translations.⁷⁵ And one last minor note: the adverb *vero* occurs often in all these Latin texts, but it is translated with the Old English adverb *soðlice* only once, and that in Psalm 19:9.⁷⁶

These texts show a comparable lexical difference in their approaches to naming God under the title of Lord. The Latin *Dominus* occurs as a title for God at very different frequencies in the Latin texts. As a title for God *Dominus* occurs twice in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, three times in the *Soliloquies*, and 106 times in the *Pastoral Care*.⁷⁷ In the first fifty Psalms *Dominus* occurs at very high frequency: in the Gallican Psalter it occurs 310 times, in Jerome's Hebraic Psalter it 302 times, in the Paris Psalter's Latin text 326 times. The pattern of occurrences of *Drihten* (the corresponding title for God in Old English) is quite varied from text to text. The *Boethius* uses *Drihten* seven times, the *Soliloquies* 17 times, the *Pastoral Care* 86 times. *Drihten* occurs in the *Prose Psalms* 281 times in the Psalms themselves, and 22 more times in the headings. The reason for such variety in the relative rates of occurrence lies in the nature of the different texts. Like the Prose Psalms, the *Boethius* and *Soliloquies* generally use *Drihten* in moments of prayer. Alfred developed such moments in both these texts so as to address God as *Drihten* more frequently and intensively, especially in the long opening prayer of *Soliloquies* where there are 14 occurrences of *Drihten* (against two occurrences of *Domine* in the Latin). *Drihten* occurs less in the *Pastoral Car*, because it lacks direct prayer; there Alfred often simply translated *Dominus* with *God*. The Prose Psalms also have a reduced incidence of *Drihten* to *Dominus*, for there too the title *God* sometimes displaces the title *Drihten*. In the Prose Psalms *God* has increased against *Deus* by a considerable degree. Such an increase runs counter to what we observe in the *Soliloquies* and the *Boethius*, where Alfred in prayer tends to address God more intensively as *Drihten* than simply as *God*.⁷⁸ A more telling difference still is that in none of Alfred's three texts does he ever translate *Dominus* as *Hlaford*. But in the Prose Psalms *Dominus* is translated as *Hlaford* three times.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ In the *Boethius* at 82.13, in the *Pastoral Care* at 213.19, and in the *Soliloquies* at 53.10, 53.13, 70.3, 70.13.

⁷⁶ The adverb *soðlice* occurs one other time in all these texts, but not as a translation of *vero* (*Solil.* 6.16).

⁷⁷ In the *Consolation* we find *Dominus* referring to God only in two metres in the fourth book (4m1.19, 4m6.39). In the *Soliloquies* it occurs twice in the opening prayer (1.1.4; 1.1.5), and once toward the end of Book One (1.15.30). The 106 occurrences of *Dominus* as a title for God in the *Pastoral Care* are too many to list here. Most of them occur in quotations of Scripture and discussions around those quotations.

⁷⁸ Alfred in fact used the title *God* in the *Pastoral Care* more than twice as much as the Latin text used *Deus*. It is his most common way of referring to the divine in his expansive and periphrastic approach. The ratio of *God* to *Deus* in the *Pastoral Care* is 284 to 109. The *Boethius* is similar, though not quite so dramatic; the ratio of *God* to *Deus* is 174 to 91. The *Soliloquies* falls out of line here. The ratio of *God* to *Deus* in the whole of the Old English text to the whole of the Latin text goes down instead of up: 84 to 137. Alfred, of course, did not translate large swaths of the Latin text. If we take into account only the portions of the Old English text that he actually translated against their counterparts Latin the ratio falls even further: 72 to 125. In the Prose Psalms the incidence of *God* against *Deus* is once again higher, though not so high as in the *Pastoral Care* or the *Boethius*. The Gallican has 137 instances of *Deus*, the Hebraic 127, and the Paris Psalter 145 instances. The Prose Psalms have 206 occurrences of *God*. So *God* to *Deus* occurs at a ratio of 260 percent in the *Pastoral Care*, 191 percent in the *Boethius*, 58 percent in the *Soliloquies*, and 150 percent in the Prose Psalms (based on the Gallican).

⁷⁹ 2.2, 11.5, and 23.8. There are a few instances where Alfred does refer to God as *Hlaford*, but only in rendering oblique, tropological terms, never as a direct translation of *Dominus*. In the *Pastoral Care* Alfred refers to God as *Hlaford* twice, once in translating *Pastorem* (19A) with the doublet *ðone Hlaford and ðone hean Hierde* (43.5) and once in translating *Potestatem* (123C) to indicate the idea of personal authority (*ðinne Hlaford*; 457.24). In the

The Inconclusiveness of Lexical Analysis

We could continue to consider other such lexical differences. We could, for instance, show how the word *wisdom*, so politically and intellectually important to Alfred, plays out very similarly in Alfred's three named texts, but quite differently in the Prose Psalms.⁸⁰ We could show the same with *ece*, a thematically important word in Alfred's translations.⁸¹ But what

Boethius Alfred likewise refers to God as *Hlaford* twice, once in translating *rectori* (3p12.17; 98.7), and once in translating *causae* (4m6.48; 136.28). In the *Soliloquies* God is never referred to under the title *Hlaford*. Wherever that term occurs there it refers very strictly to earthly lords, just as it mostly tends to do in the *Boethius* and the *Pastoral Care*.

⁸⁰ In a rough and quick showing we can point out that the noun *sapientia* occurs 19 times in the *Cura Pastoralis*, and *wisdom* 46 times in the *Pastoral Care*. If we include Alfred's *Preface* to the *Pastoral Care* that number goes by six to 52 times. The ratio of *wisdom* to *sapientia* is well over 2 to 1 for this word that Alfred signals in the *Preface* as central to his educational program. The *Boethius* shows much the same. Alfred brought wisdom strongly into the foreground, of course, by renaming the character of *Philosophia* with the name *Wisdom*. But even if we exclude all references to the personified character of *Wisdom* (which amount to 84 occurrences), there are 27 occurrences of the abstract noun *wisdom* against 9 occurrences of *sapientia* in the *Consolation*. This is at a ratio of 3 to 1. In the *Soliloquies* things get a little more complex. Alfred really only translated Book 1 of the Latin text, and that only partially, with large excerpts left out. He translated a very small portion of Book 2, but mostly ventured out on his own, as he does entirely in his Book 3. Against the 21 occurrences of *Sapientia* in the Latin text there are 35 occurrences of *wisdom* in the Old English. But if we look more carefully and take into account only the portions of the *Soliloquies* that Alfred translated we meet only 11 occurrences of *sapientia*. And if we juxtapose only the translated portions of the Old English text corresponding directly with the Latin we find 24 occurrences of *wisdom*. So the ratio here is something over 2 to 1, much like in the text proper of the *Pastoral Care* (i.e. 46 to 19). In the first fifty Prose Psalms, however, there are only 4 occurrences of *sapientia* against an equal 4 occurrences of *wisdom*. There are two further occurrences of *wisdom* in the headings (Ps. 11 and 13). So the ratio is 1 to 1 in the translation proper, or 1 to 1.5 in the text as whole. If this really were Alfred's work there was plenty of opportunity for him to highlight this overarching concern from his other translations. For one thing, the headings to the Psalms would have afforded plenty of opportunity to elaborate as he saw fit (we should note here that there were 11 occurrences of *wisdom* in the sections of the *Soliloquies* where Alfred was not translating but writing independently). What is more, the Prose Psalms themselves are translated quite interpretively. As we saw in the handling of Psalm 39:10-11, the translator of the Psalms is comfortable adding parenthetical glosses (cf. Ps. 1:6, 2:4, 2:9, 3:4, 3:7, 4:2, 4:3, 4:5, *et passim*). The translator took the opportunity to develop and unfold the text according to his own lights but showed little interest in expanding on the idea of wisdom.

⁸¹ Even though the *Soliloquies* is the most directly concerned with the theme of eternity, as an attempt to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, nevertheless all three of Alfred's attributed translations exhibit a similar interest in the eternal. The abstract noun *ecnes* occurs 6 times in the *Pastoral Care*, 9 times in the *Boethius*, and 5 times in the *Soliloquies*. The adjective *ece* occurs 46 times in the *Pastoral Care*, 42 times in the *Soliloquies* (along with 6 more occurrences in the preface), and 36 times in the *Boethius*. The Prose Psalms present an opposing pattern. The abstract noun *ecnes* occurs 21 times and the adjective *ece* occurs 4 times. Scarcely any of these occurrences in the Prose Psalms come from the translator expanding upon the text. Every instance of *ecnes* in the Prose Psalms occurs in the phrase *on ecnesse* which always and only arises as a direct translation of a mirroring Latin phrase, whether *in eternum*, *in seculum*, or *in finem* (which occurs only once at Ps. 15:11). Nowhere is *ecnes* added by the translator. The adjective *ece* likewise arises directly from the Latin in two of its occurrences in Psalm 23:7-9, where it translates the twice used phrase *portae aeternales*. *Ece* is added to the text of the Psalms only once at Psalm 24:13, where *on ece yrfewardnes gesit eorðan* translates *hereditabit terram* (as in the Gallican and Hebraic readings) or perhaps *hereditate possidebit terram* (as the Latin text of the Paris Psalter reads). And in the Headings it occurs once, when the phrase *ece reste* is used in the Heading to Psalm 14. The Old English Prose Psalms do not show the same interest in and curiosity around eternity that Alfred's attributed translations exhibit. Certainly it is not for lack of opportunity. The Psalms are full of potential to think about and reflect upon *ecnes*. But as with *wisdom* the opportunity is not taken. We do not seem to be meeting here the same sort of mind that broke into the translation of the *Boethius* with a dramatic question like this: *ða cwæð ic: Hwæt is ecnes?* ("then I said, What is eternity?" 147.22). We do not sense the concern to convey the same message as the *Soliloquies* "*ymbe sawla æccnesse and imbe heora undealdlicnesse*" (62.19: "about the eternity of souls and their immortality"). We sense no urge to bring

would it avail to continue pitting such differences against O'Neill's observed similarities, except to leave us in doubt? For the lexical approach that seeks to show identity of authorship of different texts through similarities in vocabulary leaves an underlying uncertainty that it cannot overcome. Bately's article is very straightforward and clear in its analysis. What she claims to see we have no argument with. But is the commonality that Bately observes amidst these four texts enough to prove authorship? Bately herself seems no longer assured that her lexical analysis proves one man's authorship of Alfred's translations (2003, 111). Common vocabulary in different texts need not entail one and the same author, especially in the deliberate and intentional usage required of translators. Common vocabulary might come from a shared effort, a shared glossary, or some other shared influence, like a teacher or a classroom. It might come from imitation. Earlier studies of Alfred's authorship underline this problem. Wichmann (1889) and Bromwich (1950) sought to show Alfred's authorship of the Psalms through comparing usage and themes in his other known works, which at the time included the *Orosius*, and for Wichmann also the *Bede*. Some of the similarities that they describe as coming from one author are for us now shared between Alfred and a different author.

Stylometric Analysis

There is, however, another way of approaching the question of Alfred's authorship. Stylometric analysis provides statistical methods of assessing authorship. Simply put, stylometric analysis involves the use of statistical models to compare the relative frequencies of function words in different texts. Function words are different from the sort of words that Bately considered in her lexical analysis. A writer uses function words, or non-contextual words, regardless of context. They include prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and common verbs. Bately considered contextual words, which occur at a lower frequency than function words. She counted and compared her collection of words manually and individually. Stylometric analysis is based on the assumption that different authors use function words at different rates. These differences may not be noticeable at close range, that is, at the level of the sentence or even the paragraph. But through computational analysis of large bodies of text significant differences emerge. When two texts exhibit similar relative frequencies in groups of function words they are

to the forefront of our attention that we have eternal issues before us, as we often meet in Alfred's attributed translations. Alfred at times adds the adjective *ece* added into phrases so as to emphasize the eternal stakes that we are dealing with, such as *se uplica Dema and se eca* (PC 447. 34) for *superna sententia* (119C), or *se eca and se diegla dema* (27.20) for *internus iudex* (14c), or *undeadlica 7 ece* (Bo. 26.11) for *nullo modo mortales* (2p4.28), or *sio soðe and sio fulfremede gesælð ðe mæg ælcum hire folgera sellan ðurhwunigendne welan and ecne anwald and singalne weorðscipe and ece mærdða and fulle geniht* (Bo. 78.11-12) for *uera est et perfecta felicitas quae sufficientem, potentem, reuerendum, celebrem laetumque perficiat* (3p.9.26). Sometimes we meet *ece* added into a phrase to draw out its latent sense of eternity, such as *ðæt we mot libban on ecnesse* (PC 255.9) for *vivemus!* (99B), or *elðiodignesne ðæs ecean lifes* (PC 389.50) for *exsilio* (99C). Sometimes we meet such phrases created by Alfred beyond the Latin text as he develops his thought in relation to the text, such as *lifa libbendu and ecu* (Solil. 2.23), or *be godes æcnesse and be hys ælmihtihnesse* (Solil. 59.18-19), or *foretacn ecra gooda* (Bo. 137.26). When Alfred in the *Pastoral Care* expands upon Gregory's *quod utile est* (68C) with *nytwyrdlicu ðing to underfonne, ðæt is ðæt we geearnigen ðæt ece* (PC 255.12), we hear a close echo to the concluding sentiment in the preface to the *Soliloquies*: *Swa gedo se weliga gidfola, se ðe egðer wilt ge þissa lænena stoclife ge þara ecena hama. Se ðe ægþer gescop and ægðeres wilt, forgife me þæt me to ægðrum onhagige: ge her nytwyrdle to beonne, ge huru þider to cumane.* (2.8-12). These uses of *ece* and many others like them in these three texts stand in contrast with the negligible use of *ece* the Prose Psalms.

taken to exhibit the same stylistic “voice print” or “fingerprint.” But if the frequencies differ considerably this suggests different authorship.

Methods of stylometric analysis have been developed along with the increased power that computers have given us to analyze verbal quantitatively (McMenamin 2001, Smith 2002, Argemon et. al. 2003, Hoover 2001, Hoover 2003). With computers we can carry out multivariate analyses of high frequency function words. Multivariate analysis involves the simultaneous comparison of multiple groups of data rather than the analysis of single variable data. Various methods of multivariate analysis have been applied in the field of stylometrics. For example, Principal Component Analysis seeks to simplify multidimensional data through exposing structural relations among the variables within the data. Cluster Analysis, on the other hand, seeks to sort different objects (e.g. Alfredian writings) into clusters such that objects within a cluster have greater similarity than objects in different clusters. The purpose of these methods is to distinguish stylistic characteristics. Johnson (1998) provides a good introduction to standard multivariate techniques such as Principal Component Analysis and Cluster Analysis. To put it quite simply, a computer based statistical analysis of function words allows us to supersede the impressionistic analysis of contextual vocabulary. We can move beyond Bromwich’s advice regarding the authorship of the Prose Psalms, that “to be convinced or to remain unconvinced of the underlying similarity of vocabulary between any pair of works, the reader must really construct his own list” (1950, 296 n.2).

Stylometrics Applied to Alfredian Writings

We came to apply these methods to the body of works associated with King Alfred in order to assess Bately’s conclusions in her 1982 article. We wanted to see whether a stylometric analysis would agree or disagree with her lexical analysis. When Patrick O’Neill’s new edition came to light it did not affect our purpose or approach, since his arguments worked along similar lines as Bately’s and reached the same conclusion. We had several questions in mind when we undertook this study. We wanted more certainty as to whether Alfred had indeed translated the Prose Psalms. We also wanted to see what results would arise from the other translations associated with Alfred’s name. Would they actually group together? Would we get any further confirmation that they were indeed by the same author? We were uncertain whether we would get strong results. How well would distinguishing markers carry across translated texts? These translations were not all approached in the same way. The *Pastoral Care* and the *Prose Psalms* adhere to the structure of their Latin originals fairly closely, even though they at times paraphrase and add interpretive glosses. But the *Boethius* and the *Soliloquies* make wide departures from their Latin originals, and the latter a good deal more widely than the former. If all of these texts were by a single author would the rates of function words be stable across those different approaches? We had some confidence that even though these texts were translated they nevertheless could reveal authorial markers. For none of them were simply translated word for word. All of them use a great deal of periphrasis. But what of the fact that Alfred himself said that he had help, at least in the case of the *Pastoral Care*? No one knows the extent of collaborative support that Alfred might have received. If that help was extensive and varied, would distinguishing stylistic markers even arise in the analysis? Would these translations reveal themselves as from a distinct author?

We omitted from our analysis the poetic version of the metres of *Boethius* and worked only from the entirely prose version of the text. The poetic version of the metres is in a different

genre and its relation to Alfred himself is unclear (Bately 2003, 112-113). We also omitted the Prologue to Alfred's Law Code, since it is substantially shorter than these other translations and therefore provides less of a basis for comparison. We did, however, consider the other three Old English translations not attributed to Alfred but associated with his educational reform. The translation of Gregory's *Dialogues* is clearly not Alfred's because of the preface in which he thanked his friends for translating it for him. The Old English *Bede* and the Old English *Orosius* were once attributed to Alfred but no longer. The *Dialogues* and the *Orosius* have a surer association with Alfred's reform, the one because of Alfred's preface and the other because of the internal references to Alfred. The *Bede* has no explicit ties with Alfred apart from Aelfric's and William of Malmesbury's later attributions. A good case can be made that it naturally falls within Alfred's interests and fits well within the range "of books most needful for all to know" in ninth century England, but we have no evidence that it formed part of his reform. Whatever the case, we found it of value to include in our analysis. We needed contemporary works not by Alfred to give our analysis range and depth. We also thought it would be interesting to see whether stylometric analysis revealed any unlooked for authorial associations. Would any of these three non-Alfredian works line up with one another? Would any of them line up with the Prose Psalms?

We subjected, therefore, a group of seven texts to stylometric analysis: the *Pastoral Care*, the prose text of the *Boethius*, the *Soliloquies*, the Prose Psalms, the *Bede*, the *Orosius*, and the *Dialogues*. By means of the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form* (Healey 2000) we were readily able to subject each of these texts to digital analysis. We copied the seven documents in ordinary text along with various tags (such as line numbers). We divided the documents into blocks of about 50 lines, each accounting for about 1200 words. This led to 284 blocks in total. These blocks were the objects used in our statistical analysis. In Table 1, we provide some characteristics of the seven Alfredian documents under consideration.

Table 1. Abbreviations and sizes of the seven Alfredian documents.

Text	Total Size (in words)	Number of Blocks	Mean Block Size (in words)
BE: Bede	77,500	58	1340
BO: Boethius	46,200	39	1180
CP: Pastoral Care	67,650	51	1330
GD: Gregory's Dialogues	91,000	63	1450
OR: Orosius	48,900	40	1220
SO: Soliloquies	15,400	16	960
PP: Prose Psalms	19,400	17	1140

To begin our analysis we obtained a list of the 100 most frequent words common to all seven texts. We made sure to account for multiple spellings of words such as *peah*, which also reads as *ðeah*, *peh*, *þeah*, *ðeah*, *ðeh*, and *ðæah*. We refined and reduced the list by omitting all contextual words. We further omitted all words that might have depended directly on the preceding Latin text rather than the translator's own writing style. Through this process of elimination we arrived at 17 function words for our stylometric analysis: *ac* (but), *and* (and), *bið* (is), *eac* (also), *hit* (it), *is* (is), *mid* (with), *of* (of), *swa* (so), *to* (to), *ða* (those, then), *ðæs* (of the), *ðæt* (that), *wæs* (was), *wið* (against), *ðonne* (then), *ðeah* (although). We used WordSmith Tools (Scott 1998) to count the function words occurring in the text blocks. The counts were converted to frequencies per 100 words. Our dataset then consisted of frequency data with 284 rows corresponding to text blocks and 17 columns corresponding to function words.

Table 2. Frequencies and Standard Errors (in parentheses) of the Function Words per 100 Words.

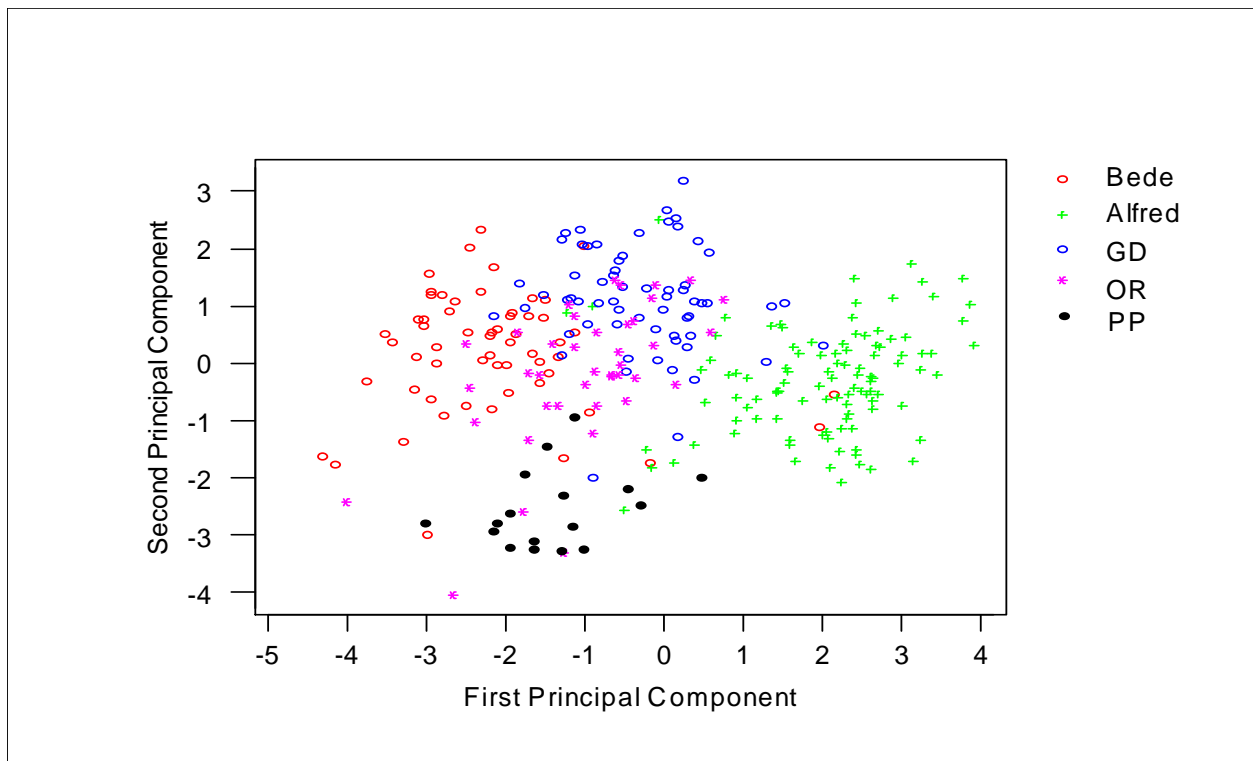
	BE	BO	CP	GD	OR	SO	PP
AC	0.30(0.03)	0.85(0.05)	0.70(0.04)	0.54(0.02)	0.40(0.03)	0.79(0.07)	0.50(0.10)
AND	6.50(0.16)	3.97(0.16)	3.80(0.11)	5.01(0.09)	5.91(0.19)	3.89(0.40)	7.03(0.21)
BIÐ	0.10(0.04)	0.74(0.08)	0.77(0.05)	0.22(0.03)	0.06(0.03)	0.25(0.06)	0.44(0.08)
EAC	0.51(0.03)	0.35(0.03)	0.48(0.04)	0.58(0.04)	0.33(0.03)	0.42(0.07)	0.40(0.17)
HIT	0.17(0.02)	1.06(0.07)	0.87(0.09)	0.72(0.04)	0.52(0.04)	0.96(0.21)	0.24(0.04)
IS	0.52(0.05)	1.07(0.08)	0.81(0.05)	0.45(0.04)	0.38(0.12)	0.77(0.11)	0.83(0.13)
MID	1.40(0.06)	0.63(0.06)	1.17(0.06)	1.13(0.05)	1.19(0.09)	0.44(0.08)	0.76(0.08)
OF	0.48(0.03)	0.21(0.03)	0.24(0.03)	0.54(0.03)	0.41(0.05)	0.20(0.05)	0.41(0.06)
SWA	0.94(0.06)	1.45(0.10)	1.31(0.08)	1.30(0.05)	0.86(0.06)	1.77(0.18)	1.16(0.15)
TO	1.68(0.08)	1.10(0.07)	1.91(0.08)	1.54(0.05)	1.37(0.09)	1.11(0.14)	1.55(0.13)
ÐA	3.68(0.13)	2.76(0.16)	2.75(0.14)	4.13(0.11)	3.11(0.13)	2.62(0.22)	1.73(0.17)
ÐÆS	0.97(0.04)	0.67(0.05)	0.73(0.05)	1.16(0.05)	0.57(0.03)	0.56(0.08)	0.29(0.05)
ÐÆT	2.48(0.08)	4.23(0.16)	3.82(0.12)	3.61(0.08)	3.17(0.12)	4.45(0.25)	1.96(0.26)
ÐEAH	0.09(0.02)	0.72(0.06)	0.50(0.04)	0.18(0.02)	0.29(0.03)	0.64(0.10)	0.36(0.07)
ÐONNE	0.27(0.03)	1.44(0.11)	2.02(0.09)	0.41(0.04)	0.49(0.06)	1.15(0.11)	0.62(0.10)
WÆS	2.17(0.10)	0.26(0.04)	0.38(0.04)	1.49(0.07)	1.59(0.10)	0.18(0.05)	0.25(0.05)
WIÐ	0.10(0.02)	0.22(0.04)	0.19(0.02)	0.05(0.01)	0.53(0.06)	0.05(0.01)	0.34(0.08)

As we see in Table 2, we found a wide variation in the frequencies of the function words over the seven documents. Along with the frequencies in Table 2, we provide standard errors giving an indication of the variation associated with each of the frequencies. The standard errors provide additional evidence of the wide variation in the frequencies of the function words over the seven documents.

Principal Component Analysis

In subjecting these frequencies to a Principal Component Analysis we found that first two principal components (PC's) explain 64% of the variability and that ten words make up the most prominent function words in these PC's: *and, hit, is, mid, swa, to, ða, ðæt, wæs, ðonne*. In Figure 1, we provide a plot of the first two principal components where each point corresponds to a block of text. The proximity of points suggests stylistometric similarities in the corresponding blocks. Therefore, the plot clearly shows the separation of Alfred's named works (BO, CP, SO) from the *Bede*, the *Dialogues*, and the *Orosius* which are understood to be non-Alfredian. However, the most interesting and persuasive revelation from Figure 1 is that the Prose Psalms (PP) do not group with Alfred's named works. This finding casts doubt on Bately's conclusion that the Prose Psalms are Alfred's translation.

Figure 1. The First two Principal Components



Traditional Cluster Analysis

To assess the closeness of the frequency of function words in various texts, we ran a K-Means Cluster Analysis on our data. The algorithm requires the user to specify the number of resultant clusters and we experimented with different numbers of clusters. In the case of three resultant clusters, the 284 text blocks were divided as shown in Table 3. We see that most of the text blocks from *Boethius*, *Pastoral Care*, and *Soliloquies* cluster together (Cluster 3) and the majority of the blocks of *Bede*, *Gregory's Dialogues* and *Orosius* cluster together (Cluster 2). We also observe that all 17 blocks of the Prose Psalms reside in Cluster 1. These results are consistent with our findings from the Principal Components Analysis. In particular, there is again the strong indication that the Prose Psalms were not translated by Alfred. Finally, we note that there is some indication that some of the segments of *Bede* and especially *Orosius* may share the same translator as the Prose Psalms.

Table 3. Cluster Membership using K-Means Clustering

Text	Number of blocks in		
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Bede	13	43	2
Boethius	1	1	37
Pastoral Care	1	2	48
Soliloquies	2	0	14
Gregory's Dialogues	2	57	5
Orosius	11	29	0
Prose Psalms	17	0	0

Bayesian Cluster Analysis

A weakness of the above traditional Cluster Analysis is that it does not take into account the special features inherent in our stylometric analysis. Gill, Swartz, and Treschow (2007) developed methodology specially designed for the investigation of authorship of the Prose Psalms. Specifically, a Bayesian approach was considered where probabilities were assigned to the resultant clusters. Also, the approach did not require the specification of the resultant number of clusters but rather imposed a stopping rule for clustering based on the prior understanding that *Bede*, *Gregory's Dialogues* and *Orosius* are non-Alfredian. Furthermore, the methodology took into account the multinomial nature of the frequency data. Gill, Swartz, and Treschow (2007) concluded with probability 0.99 that the Prose Psalms do not group together with the named Alfredian texts *Boethius*, *Pastoral Care*, and *Soliloquies*. This finding is consistent with the two previous multivariate analyses and again runs counter to Bately's and O'Neill's claim that the Prose Psalms are Alfred's work.

Conclusion

This stylometric analysis confirms much of what we have come to think about Alfred's authorship. It confirms that Alfred did not translate the Old English *Orosius*, even though William of Malmesbury said that he did. It confirms that Alfred did not translate the Old English

Bede, even though William of Malmesbury and Ælfric said that he did. It also, however, indicates that Alfred did not translate the Prose Psalms of the Paris Psalter, in contradiction of recent critical analysis of that text.

It is now evident that we do not have strong grounds for attributing the Prose Psalms to Alfred. The translation in the Paris Psalter lacks any attribution to Alfred. It lacks the personal tone that Alfred's three named works cultivated. And while the Prose Psalms share some lexical similarities with those three named works, it also presents some significant lexical differences. The similarities in word choice that Bately and O'Neill observed are not sufficient to entail identity in authorship. Our stylometric analysis shows that at the level of function words the style of the Prose Psalms stands away from the group of Alfred's three named works and shows authorial style closer to the *Orosius*.⁸² It is possible, perhaps even arguable, that the translator of the Prose Psalms had associations with Alfred's circle of scholars and developed a vocabulary influenced by that milieu. What is clearer to us now, however, is the range of Alfred's scholarly efforts. Even though he attaches his name more forthrightly and personally to the *Pastoral Care*, we have a surer sense that his ascribed name belongs just as positively with the *Boethius* and the *Soliloquies*. And even though the latter two works come forward with a much looser approach to translating than that of the *Pastoral Care*, all three show themselves as the work of the same hand. We lose something, of course, in coming to understand that the Prose Psalms are not Alfred's. The scope of his scholarly work has further diminished. But we have gained something valuable as well: a clearer assurance that the three named works share equally Alfred's magisterial authority and represent his thinking to us. They portray what he set his mind to reflect upon and what he endeavoured to communicate to English speaking people.

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⁸² We are not in a position, however, to make a case that the translator of the Prose Psalms and the *Orosius* were the same person. Bately, at any rate, suggests that there was more than one translator behind the *Orosius*.

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