Alfred's interpolations: a literary-historical study of Alfred and his time based on the original passages in his works

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A Literary-Historical Study of Alfred and his Time
Based on the Original Passages in his Works.

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by

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INTRODUCTORY

In the following study of Alfred's personality and surroundings as we find them revealed in the original passages of his literary works, the writer has taken as a basis the result of earlier comparisons of the English and Latin versions as they are found in the publications of Sweet, Sedgefield, Schilling, Hargrove, Schipper, and Miller. Many general studies of the life or work of Alfred give additional information about the interpolations, but the works just referred to are of such importance that without them this dissertation could never have been presented.

As these works will be referred to continually, a more detailed account of them will not be out of place. In the study of the Pastoral Care, Sweet's edition was indispensible. This gives the two most important manuscripts as well as a translation into modern English. Albert Dewitz's study of the Pastoral Care shows the relation of the Old English to the Latin. Special stress is laid upon Alfred's method in translating and upon the contents of the original passages. As the importance of the works increases, the material also is more abundant. On the translation of the Bede, Schipper and Miller are the best exponents of the
opposing factions; the first arguing for Alfredian authorship, the second for that of some Mercian scholar. When we approach the Orosius, we are on safer ground. Sweet's edition (Early English Text Society) gives the Old English and the Latin parallel, that part of the Latin, which is not accurately translated, being put in italics. Hugo Schilling: König Alfred's Angelsächsische Bearbeitung der Weltgeschichte des Orosius is a necessity to one making a study of Alfred's interpolations. His treatment of the relations to the original is one of the clearest and most effective contributions to Alfredian criticism. In taking up the study of the Boethius, we are equally well helped. Here the admirable edition of Sedgefield stands as a monument of excellency. Taking together with this Sedgefield's translation, in which all interpolations are italicized, we are well equipped for a careful study of Alfred's use of sources. The study of the last of Alfred's works, the translation of St. Augustine's Soliloquies, advanced greatly with the publication of Hargrove's edition and later of his translation. Both works are contained in Yale Studies in English, Albert S. Cook, Editor.

The question of authorship can not be dealt with exhaustively here. It is sufficient to say that the works which are accepted as Alfredian and upon which this study is based are: Cura Pastoralis, Orosius, Boethius, and
St. Augustine's Soliloquies. The Old English version of
the *Bede* will be referred to at times, but as the author­
ship of this is not proved to be Alfred's, arguments based
upon it can be only tentative.

In studying the interpolations, the several pre­
faces of Alfred are most helpful. By careful analysis it
is seen that the same spirit is prevalent in both. The two
sources serve to round out one another and make our picture
of the king more perfect.

In this study, no attempt has been made at any
further collation between the Old English texts and the
Latin originals. Neither has an enumeration of the inter­
polations in any of the works of Alfred been made. When
as broad a field as that of all Alfred's translations is
entered upon, it is impossible to go into the minute detail
that any of these methods would require. An undertaking
of such a kind would far exceed the limits of this paper.

The aim of this study is to show the importance
of the additions made by Alfred in his translations. The
two phases of the subject which will be especially stressed
are: first, in how far these interpolations throw light upon
the consideration of Alfred's life and personality; secondly,
in how far they have a bearing upon our knowledge of the
prevailing conditions in England during the ninth century.
I shall try to bring out both what part of our knowledge of
Alfred and his time is due to the interpolations, and what still remains, in the interpolations, a profitable field for research.

ALFRED'S METHOD IN LITERARY WORK

Before we take up the detailed study of Alfred's work, it is necessary to have a clear idea of the methods followed by him in the process of translating. In the first place, the term translation must be qualified. The usual interpretation of this term would exclude all Alfredian works from being classified as such. The freedom with which Alfred handles his material, paraphrasing, omitting, adding, and substituting, as he pleased, brings a result totally different from the original. His chief motive, as expressed especially in the Preface to the Pastoral Care, is to work toward the enlightenment of his people; he felt free to give what he considered best suited for his purpose. His method is well brought out in his own words in the same preface where he characterizes the translation as being "hwilum word be worde, hwilum ondgit of andgite, swa swa ic his geleornode at Plegmunde minum æcebiscepe & at Asserie minum biscepe & at Grimbald, minum mæsse-preoste & at Johanne minum mæssepreoste." (Sweet's Ed.). (i.e. sometimes word by word and sometimes sense by sense
as I learned it from Plegmund my archbishop and from Asser my bishop and from Grimbold my masspriest and from John my masspriest).

The latter part of the quotation suggests another feature of his work as a translator, namely, the use of learned assistants. This matter I shall discuss later.

The freedom is seen in the Pastoral Care, which by Sweet is termed a paraphrase, but it is a great deal more evident in later works (the chronology of Wulker is accepted as the most satisfactory, see Grundriss p. 397 f.). The Old English Bede shows the closest clinging to the original. The Orosius shows freer treatment than either of the foregoing, many long interpolations, as the famous descriptions of the voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan, being introduced. In the Boethius, which is handled even more freely, we find the deep and clear thinking of a mature mind giving rather an appreciative study than a translation of the original. Here is especially noticeable the new spirit, the spirit of Christianity, which is introduced by Alfred. Probably last among Alfred's productions comes the Soliloquies. The two books of the work of St. Augustine have grown into three. Even in the first book, which on the whole follows the Latin quite closely, many long and important interpolations are found. Book two is very free, and book three is almost wholly an original work composed by Alfred upon the foundation of the Vulgate and St. Aug-
ustine's *De Videndo Dei*, the latter being frequently referred to by Alfred.

It must be clear then, after this preliminary notice of the manner in which new material has been added by our royal author, that we have a rich field to labor in, one which indicates that results can be gained if only the subject be approached, for no sympathetic writer could remold an author completely without allowing his own spirit to shine through occasionally. In many passages we feel that Alfred, and none other, is speaking. If the writer allows his originality free play, we get, besides a view of his personality, also a picture of the environment and the time of which he is a typical character. It seems to me that these facts are sufficient to justify the study here undertaken.

But we must advance carefully. It is not always safe to infer as soon as we find some passages in the Old English not in the Latin that this change is due wholly to the mind of Alfred. In the quotation just given from the preface to the *Pastoral Care* (see page 4), Alfred himself mentions that he translates "swx swx ic hie geleornode &t Plegmunde etc." Asser, Grimbold, and John, are also mentioned. We are told by William of Malmesbury that Asser read and interpreted the Boethius to Alfred before the king undertook the translation. Not only did he get help from the men of learning about him, but he made use of the writings
of earlier scholars. Schepss in his article, *Zu König Alfreds "Boethius"*, Archiv 94, 149, has conclusively proved that many of the passage, attributed by earlier editors to Alfred, are suggested by marginal scholia of Latin MSS. or from Latin commentaries on Boethius. In this way the strongly Christian element must be accounted for. Alfred naturally would give a Christian coloring to the work, but many of the specific examples can be traced to Latin commentaries. An example of this is found in the Boethius Ch. V §1 Sedg. Ed. p. 11, l. 17 f. Here the statement "Pu eart an para rihtwisena para ryhtwillendra" is amplified as follows: "Pa beod þære heofencundan Ierusalem burgware." (i.e. "thou art one of the righteous and upright in purpose" amplified as follows: "that are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem," Sedg. Trans.). This addition Schepss has shown to be related to a note found in a Latin manuscript. Here the words "tua civitas" of the original are commented upon as follows: "hoc tam ad Romae civitatem, quam ad ecclesiam seu ad caelestem Hierusalem, referri potest." The relation between this and the Alfredian version is too striking to be accidental, especially as we find several equally related. Schepss refers to Bk. II pr. IV, Pieper's Ed. 32.20 *teneces ancora* (the clinging anchors). A Latin scholium interprets ancora as referring to *socor* (Symmachus), *uxor*, *libri*. Likewise Alfred, Sedg. p. 23, l. 4 ff.: "Nís þe nu git nan unaberenlic broc getenge, forðon þin ancer is giet on eordan fast;
"sint da ealdormen we aer ymb sprxcon." (i.e. No unbearable affliction has yet befallen thee, for thine anchor is still fast in the ground, those noblemen, I mean, that we were speaking of. Sedg. Trans.). From these and many other examples adduced by Schepss, it is clear that we must consider the use of commentaries or the possibility of the aid of other literary men before we state as a certainty that a passage expresses Alfred's original thought.

Not only in the Boethius have traces of the use of commentaries been found. Schilling (p. 56) mentions two examples from the Orosius. The first is the description of the fruit of Sodom, of which Alfred says: "a syndon swy|7e fægere lustsumlice on to seonne, ac þonne hig man on hand nymd, þonne weordad hig to aoxan," (i.e. they are very fair and attractive to look upon, but when one takes them in the hand they turn to ashes). Oros. E.E.T.S. p.32, l. 13. The second (Oros. p. 53, 7-12) states the date of the founding of Rome as 4482 years after the creation and 710 before the birth of Christ (Schilling p.56). These examples indicate that here is a field still open for further research. Many more of the passages now considered Alfredian, both in the Orosius and in other works, may upon closer investigation prove to be derived in a similar manner.

But we must not now throw aside without more attention these interpolations. The fact that Alfred got some ideas from other writers takes away none of his glory.
The fact that he employed the assistance of others shows us his ability though it is different from the creative genius that the passages would give evidence of if they were sprung from his own imagination or reason. Even the most scrupulous and critical search will, however, leave us a great many passages that are sprung from his own mind. Chapter 17 of the Boethius, Book II and III of the Soliloquies, the Germania of the Orosius, to mention only a few of the best known, give us evidence enough of the original genius of Alfred.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE INTERPOLATIONS

A comparative study of the interpolations is very profitable. The conclusions drawn from these can be substantiated and verified by the reports of the chroniclers. To establish the authorship of some of the works usually attributed to Alfred, we have little evidence except that of the texts themselves and popular opinion as received by some of the later chroniclers. Of the internal evidence that contained in the original passages is the strongest. Much can be learned by investigating whether the interpolations are such as would be made by a king, and such a king as the chroniclers describe Alfred to be, or whether they indicate the point of view of the clergy.
The Soliloquies, which Pauli has tried to prove to be from the twelfth century, Wülker has defended as Alfredian principally on the ground of the interpolations. The arguments of Pauli can not stand the test that Wülker applies to them. The close relation between the original matter in the Soliloquies and the Alfredian passages in the Boethius helps greatly in establishing the authorship of the former. Hubbard (M.L.N. 9, 321-342) brings strong proof for the common authorship of the two works. The mannerisms of the translators are the same; the same thoughts are dwelt upon and expanded; the new material in the two corresponds. As the authorship of the Boethius is fairly well established, the importance of this argument is great, for, if accepted, the first corollary would be: Alfred author of the Soliloquies.

Not only the spirit, but also the linguistic form, of the interpolations is an important factor in the consideration of authorship. Thus J. M. Hart (Furnival Miscellany) referring to Emerson's article on Bilingualism (M.L.N. Nov. 1893), tries to demolish the theory of Alfred's authorship of the Bede on account of the rhetoric. The translator uses two Old English terms in translating one Latin word, a phenomenon not found by Professor Hart in other Alfredian works. This addition or interpolation of a second term must be carefully considered in a study of authorship of the Old English Bede. Unfortunately for Hart's argument,
Dewitz, in his study of the *Pastoral Care* (1889), had already shown that exactly the same peculiarity occurs there. The frequent use of alliteration in this double translation leads Dewitz to class it as a general Germanic tendency. The examples given strongly support this theory. (References to Sweet's Ed. E.E.T.S.). Lat. "non optantis animo" = OE. "forbye he ----- Æxs wysote Æxe wilnode" (p. 28, l. 11). Lat. "pensarent" = OE. "gehiran & geornlice gedencean" (p. 30, l. 16). Lat. "per dolorem" = OE. "durh sar & durh sorge" (p. 34, l. 4). Upon examining these quotations, it seems clear that Hart's argument entirely loses its force, for the peculiar doubling of terms found in the *Bede* and referred to in Emerson's article on Earle's Doctrine of Bilingualism is shown by Dewitz to exist also in the *Pastoral Care* of which almost all scholars accept the Alfredian authorship.

The study of the spirit of the interpolations seems to leave no doubt of the authorship either of the *Boethius* or the *Soliloquies*. Of the *Boethius* Sedgefield says: "The whole version bears strong personal impress of the author, and in views of life expressed, especially a king's life, we can hardly fail to recognize the great king's voice." The same idea is expressed even more strongly by Fehlauer: *Die Englischen Übersetzungen von Boethius' "De Consolatione Philosophiae,"* pp. 9-11. He says:
"Der Boethiusübersetzung ist mehr als allen andern Übertragungen der Stempel von Alfreds eigenster Persönlichkeit aufgedrückt." And even stronger: "Es ist keine Frage, dass König Alfred der Verfasser der altenglischen Prosautersetzung ist. Das Werk trägt zu sehr den Stempel seiner Persönlichkeit, auch finden wir darin so viel Angaben über sein Leben, dass ein Zweifel über die Autorschaft nicht aufkommen kann."

The comparative study of the interpolations gives us one of the few sources from which to establish the chronology of the Alfredian works. As scholars always have and still do disagree on this subject, no final statement will be attempted here. As already stated (p.5), the writer accepts the chronology of Wülker which differs from Plummer's only in placing the Bede (if it is Alfred's) before the Grosius.

The relative freedom with which the author handles his material seems to indicate relative time of production. The closeness with which the writer follows the original in the Pastoral Care shows the work of a beginner. The work is practical and has fewer metaphysical terms than the other works, and for this reason Alfred succeeds well. The very object of the work demanded a close rendition and in so far removes some strength from the former argument. But the internal evidence taken together with the preface indicates that this was the first task undertaken. The close and
clumsy translation of the *Bede*, with few additions and many omissions, seems to come before the *Orosius*. In the *Orosius*, the great number of additions and the skill with which these are written indicate that it follows the *Bede*. When the *Boethius* is taken up, we feel that the author has reached maturity. The mass of original material and the wide knowledge of history and geography seem to indicate that Alfred already had made the minute study of the *Orosius* that he would get as a translator. Likewise in the *Soliloquies*, we find a mind that is ripened by years of labor and thought. That it follows the *Boethius* is indicated by the number of original passages in the *Soliloquies* adapted from the *Boethius* (Hubbard, M.L.N. 9, 321 ff.). The relative time of production of the several works can in this way be established quite definitely, and, as this method is almost the only one by which any result can be obtained, the comparative study of the interpolations becomes of the utmost importance.

**DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE**

English prose, which first in the time of Alfred rose to anything that might be called literary style, can be studied to best advantage in the interpolations. Different critics hold different opinions on the subject. Brooke, in *King Alfred as Educator of his People and Man of*
Letters, p. 30, says: "----- in literature he (Alfred) is either a plodder or a child. He never rises into any original powers not even ----- in De Consolatione Philosophiae. Aspiring personality animates the poverty of the work with a humanity which pleases us more than good writing. ---- The king, in literature, is but a learner." To one who has read much of Alfred's works, this statement must appear unjust. True, Alfred was but a learner; true, he made many blunders; true, he at times shows himself a mere plodder; but who can, after reading the voyages of Ohthere (Oros. p. 17, l. 1 ff.) or the long interpolation of the progress of nature (Soliloquies, Harg. Ed. p. 9 ff.) or the simile of the virtues as the anchors that hold us to God (Harg. Ed. p. 22), any longer say that Alfred never rises above the pace of the plodder? Usually the prose of Alfred, though the work of a beginner, is strong and clear. We must, of course, judge Alfred according to the time and environment in which he lived. With practically no prose before him, except a few laws and charters and fragmentary chronicles, he developed a prose that is far superior to that of Chaucer or of Caxton. It is not a style of first merit when compared with that of our most famous writers, but, time of composition considered, Alfred's work is not only good, it is wonderful.

Throughout, we find the freest and strongest prose in the original sections of his works, and as the writer's
experience increases the style improves. There is, especially in his early works, a meagerness of expression that forces Alfred to use the same Old English words for a great number of Latin expressions. Dewitz (p. 57) in his study of the *Pastoral Care* has called attention to many examples. Thus "oderra monna" and "oderrum monnum" is used for "populi", "alienis", "proximorum", "aliis", "malos", "ceterorum". "Cweðan" also serves to translate a half dozen Latin expressions. Though faults of this kind are common, we find Alfred rising to a very high level in the *Soliloquies*. In the recasting of the *Boethius*, our author also shows a remarkable ability in handling the English language. Few realize the difficulties Alfred was forced to contend with here. Before his time, no philosophical work had been written in the English language. No bilingual dictionaries existed at that time. New terms must be invented and new interpretations of old words. Many difficulties Alfred avoided by omission of passages or by a complete change in construction and even in meaning. The great bulk of his material, however, had to be used, and we find, as a result, that the English language was developed to a degree where philosophical and metaphysical discussions could be undertaken. Therefore, on his prose in general and the interpolations in particular rests the great reputation of Alfred that has gained for him the well merited title of "The Father of English Prose."
ALFRED'S PERSONALITY

The personality of Alfred as pictured in the original passages offers a study both profitable and interesting. Through all his literary work we find passages that, as it were, allow us to look deeply into the soul of the translator. Few writers have worked under greater difficulties, and if the struggles had not left their impress on his writings we should be surprised. When Alfred became king, the Danes were in control of large parts of the country and kept up a continual warfare against the West Saxons. Taken up with the defence and the reconstruction of his country, Alfred could not devote all his time to literary work. The situation is best expressed in his own words found in the preface to the Pastoral Care: "I began, among other various and manifold troubles of this kingdom, to translate into English the book which is called in Latin Pastoralis, and in English Shepherd's book, Sweet p. 6, l., 17). In many passages it seems that Alfred is thinking of his own hardships. The expansions of the originals at least show that the subject appealed to him. In chapter XII of the Boethius Alfred adds many new ideas, which, though partly suggested by a Latin commentary, still reveal his
personality. Alfred's belief that eternal happiness can be gained only through humility and his trust that God would give him strength and joy of the soul, though affliction and adversity assailed on all side, carried him bravely on through the years of struggle.

Besides the hardships of the outward occupations of the kingship, Alfred was handicapped by lack of helpers. This is also referred to in the preface to the Pastoral Care. His appreciation of true helpers is often seen. To quote one passage for illustration, in the Soliloquies Gesceadwisnes (Reason) asks: "ac ic ahsige e nu gyt, for hwig pu sa freond lufige swicde, óxde hwæt pu on hyn lufige, óxde hwæder pu hi for heomselfum lufige, _e for sumum ðorum_ þingum," to which Augustine is made to answer: "Ic hi lufige for freondscape and for gærdenne ond _a_ þëah ofer xalle ðre me _mæstne_ fultum do _to_ ongytanne and to witanne gesceadwisnesse and wisdom, _ælra mæst_ be Gode and be urum saulum; forðam ic wot _þæt_ ic mæg ð myd heora fultume _æfter_ spurian _ponne_ ic buton måge." (Harg. Ed. p. 39, 1. 9 ff.). (i.e. G. "I never ask about any man, what he doth; but yet I ask thee now why thou lovtest thy friends so much, or what thou lovtest in them, or whether thou lovtest them for their own sake or for some other thing. A. I love them for friendship and for companionship, and above all others I love those who most help me to understand
and to know reason and wisdom, most of all about God and about our soul; for I know that I can more easily seek after Him with their help than without." Harg. Trans. pp. 24-25).

Warfare and lack of literary helpers would have been sufficient hardship for Alfred, but he had another trial which augmented both. The incurable disease which it seems certain that Alfred was afflicted with was always a cause of pain and suffering. The details of the much disputed problem of this disease can be found in Stevenson's valuable notes in his edition of Asser's Life of Alfred. Passages in Alfred's writings indicate that he thought about this matter. In the Soliloquies, Reason asks, "How then if they (his friends) disturb thee, and if the infirmities of the body hinders thee?" (Harg. Trans. p. 25). The last clause is added by Alfred. Nevertheless, we find Alfred bearing up against all hardships and accomplishing the work which his sense of duty and his personal desires led him to undertake.

Alfred the writer is shown to us in some of the original passages. In the preface to the Pastoral Care, he tells of the difficulties in gaining an education and of his motives in taking up literary work. The same ideas are found more or less openly in all his translations. The enlightenment of his people was his main motive, but we also see the desire to gain through study the peace
for his own mind. A knowledge of God and his own soul is a matter of vital importance to Alfred. Discussions of such subjects are given in the Boethius and even more in Soliloquies. In the latter he expresses his desire as follows: "Ac ic wolde witan swa be Gode on minre gesceadwisenesse and on minum ingemple, he me nan gemyrran ne meahete, ne on nanum tweeongungs gebringan," Harg. Ed. p. 18, l. 3. (i.e. But I would have such knowledge about God, in my reason and understanding, that nothing could disturb men nor bring me into any doubt," Harg. Trans. p. 12).

To get a good idea of Alfred the ruler of his people, the 17th chapter of the Boethius, which is almost wholly an interpolation, is the best source we have. Here we see his noble purpose, his unselfish spirit, and his love for the welfare of his people. It is significant to see what he mentions as necessities for a king. "He must have men of prayer, men of war, and men of work."

The ideas expressed here, we find Alfred carrying out in actual life. The division of his people into two, one half to go to war, the other half to take care of the homes, is the materialization of his ideals. His work for education and establishment of schools is intended to supply the "men of prayer." In chapter 41, he expresses himself (also in an original passage) strongly against the oppression of subjects. A nation where the people are the slaves of the king is very unfortunate. Thirst for glory
and worldly power did not govern Alfred in his work as a ruler. These, he definitely states (Boeth.Ch. 17), have no charm for him; the fulfilling of his duty is uppermost in his mind. That these passages contain not only empty theorizing, but the ideals for the carrying out of which he would give all his energy is made evident by his careful organization of every thing in the kingdom for the good of the people.

Though we find Alfred a firm and vigorous ruler, there is a spirit of leniency which at times shows itself in his literary work. Harsh theological judgements of Gregory in the Pastoral Care are modified and smoothed over (see: Sweet E.E.T.S. 251, 18). The same leniency is seen in his practical work. Wars of conquest or plunder were not carried on by Alfred. Firm justice and leniency is claimed by the chroniclers to be traits of Alfred as a judge.

His ideas are well shown by the fact that his favorite law was the following: "And that which ye wish that other men do not unto you, do not that to other men. From this doom a man may remember to judge every one righteously; he needs no other doom," quoted by Dale: National Life in Early English Literature, p. 138.

The interest of Alfred centered not only about his work as a ruler or as a writer. His interests were broad. The spirit of investigation is seen in his geographical sketches in the first book of the Orosius. Other fields
of investigation are suggested when reading his works. History, theology, mythology and many other things are entered upon in the original passages. In the _Orosius_ he describes battles as a man of experience. The spirit of his books is born out by his life as described in the chronicles. We think of him as a ruler, a writer, an athlete interested in the hunt, a warrior, and in every way a man of character and integrity.

For worldly wealth Alfred had little respect. On this subject, we find long and clear original passages that bring home to us Alfred's idea of the worthlessness of wealth. In chapter 7 of the _Boethius_, he throws the blame on man for the misuse of wealth, and in chapter 27, he speaks of the uselessness of wealth. Wealth or birth are not in Alfred's opinion the true sources of nobility. In chapter 30, he states in an original passage: "----- for-dæmæ aelces monnes god / his þþlo bió ma on þa mode / on þæm fleascæ," Sedg. Ed. p. 69,, 1. 10. (i.e. for a man's goodness and high heritage are rather of the mind than of the flesh). True nobility, to Alfred, was that of the mind and of the soul. Nor much more gently does Alfred treat worldly glory. Glory, he implies, should not be sought. It is on the whole a disappointing thing as fickle and treacherous as wealth. In chapter 19 of the _Boethius_, where Alfred discusses death and what follows, he takes occasion to add concrete examples of the worth-
lessness of fame. He asks where the bones of Weland are. No one knows and no one cares. Thus many another man of fame is forgotten. His tomb is forgotten and at times even his name and his deeds are forgotten. Still it is clear that Alfred was not indifferent to fame. The famous passage closing chapter 17 of the Boethius is sufficient to show this. "To be brief, I may say that it has ever been my desire to live honorably while I was alive, and after my death to leave to them that come after me my memory in good works," (i.e. "To be brief, I may say that it has ever been my desire to live honorably while I was alive, and after my death to leave to them that come after me my memory in good works," Sedg. Trans. p. 42).

Another way in which Alfred shows his respect and love for his fellow men is in his attitude toward friendship. The mention of true friendship, in chapter 24 of the Boethius, leads Alfred to introduce a long original passage explaining the importance and beauty of friendship. His argument is summed up in his statement that love should be for love's sake and not for gain.

Equal to his love for his fellowmen is his love for his race and of his country. The pride that he feels in his Germanic origin leads him to make changes in the account of Orosius. When the Germanic tribes suffer defeat at the hands of the Romans, Alfred prefers to omit or at least to pass over lightly the report of the disaster
(Schilling p. 20). Patriotism is also shown in the story of Scipio (Sweet's Ed. p. 190, 17). Schilling (p. 4) calls attention to the fact that Alfred here puts words in the mouth of Scipio that must be taken as coming from his own mind and heart. Alfred amplifies as follows:

"— mid þæt he his sweorde gebræd, swor ðæt him leofre wære þæt he hiene selfne acwealde þonne he forlete his fæder oegel etc." (i.e. "—then he drew his sword and swor that he would rather kill himself than leave his father's inheritance). Then he forces the senate to swear that they will "on heora earde lioggean, on heora earde libban." (i.e. "either lie (dead) on their land or live on their land"). The sentiment suggests that Alfred has interpolated such speeches as he would have used on departing to contend with the invading Danes.

A discussion of the deep vein of religious feeling that we find in Alfred's works and deeds both as a writer and as a ruler can not be better introduced than by a short passage from Augustine's prayer in the opening of Book I of the Soliloquies. Here Alfred adds: "Ac ic nat hu ic sceal nu cuman to be butan du me lere." Harg. Ed. 12, 16. (i.e. I do not know how I now shall come to thee unless thou teachest me). This is the spirit with which Alfred seems to enter upon all his work. The very choice of books for translation indicates the king's respect and love for religion. The change in spirit in the Boethius is very
striking. The work concerning which scholars have quibbled for years in order to decide whether or not it is Christian is, after Alfred has handled it, entirely saturated with Christian thought, Christian spirit, and Christian doctrine. As has been mentioned earlier (p. 6 f.) this change cannot be attributed wholly to Alfred, but is partly due to marginalia and commentaries accompanying the Latin MSS. Though Alfred received ideas from such sources, it is nevertheless, perfectly clear that in the main this spirit can be attributed to Alfred. The very fact that he assimilated the marginal notes shows that he approved the points, for the freedom with which Alfred handled his material allowed him to exclude as much as he pleased. These Christian additions are among the most important illustrations in his works. That doctrine was not an indifferent matter is also brought out in the Boethius. The mention of Theodoric as a heretic because of his Arianism shows Alfred's loyalty to the Catholic church. The bitter hatred to which Theodoric is subject in Alfred's version is partly due to this religious prejudice. In chapter 41, Alfred takes up the question of Predestination and rejects it. Better to understand this trait of Alfred, it is well to compare his laws where the incorporation of the ten commandments together with many other passages from the Bible makes even more evident his strong religious fervor.

In Alfred we find besides this mildness of temper-
ament and religious fervor, the rough and rugged nature of the Teuton. All his literary work is imbued with a certain vigor and strength, to a great extent brought about by this trait in Alfred's make-up, which led him to make the matter less abstract than the original often presented it. Innumerable examples of additions and changes adding vigor and concreteness could be adduced, but a very few will suffice. We have such changes as "Veritate" "Christ; Past. Care p. 26. In the Boethius, p. 103, Mind speaks. Here Alfred adds "at this she smiled", which gives quite a different shade from the bare "she said." Larger changes are often seen, as in St. Augustine's prayer, Soliloquies Bk. I, where to the statement: "I pray to thee, 0 Lord, who wieldest all the world; whom we can not know bodily," Alfred adds: "næðer ne mid eagum, ne mid swece, ne mid earum, ne mid smeoce, ne mid hrine." (i.e. "neither with the eyes, nor by smell, nor by the ears, nor by taste, nor by touch." Many passages, both long and short, could be quoted to show how Alfred made everything as concrete and as vivid as possible. These touches were added, partly because they suited the nature of the readers, partly because they were the direct outcome of one of the most prominent traits of his complex personality; like so many other characteristics, this also found means of self revelation in the unrestrained portions of his works.
ATTITUDE TOWARD LEARNING

In his struggle for the advancement of learning, Alfred was greatly handicapped by lack of knowledge of the Latin language. It seems probable that he did not begin a systematic study of it until after reaching maturity. Continually we find passages that indicate the insufficiency of his linguistic knowledge. Schilling (pp. 58-60) calls attention to the frequent misunderstanding of cases. Likewise where several names follow upon each other, confusion frequently arises. Plummer (Life and Times p. 165) translates as follows from Schilling: "We see Alfred here (in trans. the Oros.) weak in historical and linguistic knowledge; but we see him also simple, high-hearted, and earnest; full of warm appreciation of all that is good and a scorn for all that is evil, putting himself to school that he may educate his people." The translation of the Boethius confirms this point. The whole translation seems to have been written upon recent recollection of what Asser or some other helper has explained. The striving for knowledge of language and for the accumulation of facts seems clear in all the works of Alfred. The best example is the familiar section in the Orosius giving the geography of northern Europe,—Germania, and the famous report of the voyages of the explorers beginning: "Onthere unde his hlaforde, Alfred cyninge etc."
One of the most striking qualities of Alfred's works is the clear and constantly recurring evidence of his desire to impart knowledge. In all his prefaces we have this more or less directly stated, and in the works themselves the interpolations and changes bear out the fact that the real motive of all Alfredian literary work is the raising of the moral and intellectual plane of his people. We read and hear much of Alfred the ruler and Alfred the writer, and that is as it should be, but of equal, if not of greater, importance is Alfred the teacher of his people; for the latter trait really dominates and moulds the others.

Of no trait can we find more numerous or more lucid examples than of his desire to teach, and no investigation can be more interesting than that of examining all the different kinds of information that Alfred adds for the benefit of his meagerly educated people. Explanations of every kind are added, which would be entirely superfluous to the readers of Orosius and Boethius who had generations of literary activity preceding their own, but which are very much needed by the readers of Alfred, whose education oftentimes was very insufficient. The patience with which Alfred carried out his purpose is really wonderful. We find added small explanatory notes, long expansions and interpretations of classical stories, mythological or historical, referred to by the Latin writers, historical and geographical facts added whenever Alfred could gain new
knowledge on these points, references to Old English stories or mythology, and finally many references and amplifications from the Bible. Examples could be quoted by the hundreds to show this tendency in Alfredian literature, and the importance of the point warrants the quotation of a number of examples here.

One of the most striking instances of the expansion of classical stories is seen in the close of the 35th chapter of the Boethius. Here the story of Orpheus has been greatly changed (Sedg. Trans. pp. 116-118). Not only is it longer than in the original, but new features are added. In Alfred’s version, Charon is mentioned as having three heads, a mistake which probably is caused by confusion with the story of Cerberus. A change perfectly characteristic of Alfred is the introduction of a moral, on which Jusserand comments: "Alfred always has a moral."

In the 39th chapter (Sedg. Trans. p. 146), Alfred expands the story of Hercules and the Hydra. Here also occurs a rather interesting mistake. Alfred calls Hercules the son of Job, confusing the biblical name with the Latin Jove.

Of historical additions two in the Orosius are especially important: first, the description of a Roman triumph (E.E.T. S. Ed. 70, 22); second, the Temple of Janus (p. 106. 1. 11 ff.). Both matters are such as the English people were not likely to be acquainted with. The accurated work of Alfred in both these additions is such as to suggest the idea of some other Latin source. Here,
therefore, we see again the necessity of investigating further
the sources of the original parts of Alfred's works.

Much longer and much more important are the geo-
graphical additions. The often quoted passages concerning
Othere and Wulfstan are very prominent. In fact the de-
scription of northern Europe shows that Alfred had a great
deal more information concerning its geography than is usu-
ally expected from a ninth-century writer. Schilling
calls attention to the exact knowledge the author shows
concerning the Rhine and the Danube (pp. 12-13). Minor
notes are also brought in. Thus at the mention of the cross-
ing of the Thames by the soldiers of Caesar, Alfred states
that the ford is called Wallingford. Not all the inter-
polations exemplify so well the true historian and the
exact writer. Schilling (p. 47) shows how Alfred's admira-
tion for the Roman soldiery leads him to invent excuses
for their defeat when he feels it necessary.

Alfred's knowledge is often wider than we suspect.
Not only Latin writers but also Old English authors must
have been familiar to him. Cook (M.L.N. XVII, 219) tries
to prove that Alfred was acquainted with Cynewulf's Christ,
a theory that seems very natural. In the Boethius, Alfred
shows that OE. myths were familiar to him. Here we find
(Sedg. Ed. p. 46) that he mentions the famous smith Weland
in trying to make a point clear to his Anglo-Saxon readers.
Many original passages bear evidence of Alfred's knowledge of the Bible. In the Pastoral Care (E.E.T.S. p. 116 1.6) Alfred fills out the Latin dicens with the following: "Et he cydde pa he cwæd on his epistolan to Galatum." The attempt at locating the passage in the Bible is unsuccessful, the correct reference being I Cor. 4. 21, but the sentence shows us that Alfred was familiar with holy writ (Dewitz pp. 22-23). Other evidences are the stories that Alfred has completed or written more in full. Among others, Jacob's dream and the story of David and Saul are both given in more complete form by Alfred than by Gregory (Dewitz pp. 14-15, 20). The number of the references to biblical stories or explanations of them gives a strong argument in favor of the theory that Alfred had a first-hand acquaintance with the Scriptures.

"THE MOST PERFECT CHARACTER IN HISTORY"

All interpolations mentioned up to this point bear out the statement of Freeman (Norm. Conq. I, 51): "Aelfred ------ is the most perfect character in history. He is a singular instance of a prince, who has become a hero of romance --------- but to whose character romance has done no more than justice, and who appears in exactly the same light in history and in fable. No other man on
record has ever so thoroughly united all the virtues both of the ruler and of the private man. In no other man on record were so many virtues disfigured by so little alloy." Throughout, the subjective method of Alfred shows us his character. Simple as a child, generous of heart, of great earnestness, he was a man trusted and honored by all his subjects. Asser states that Alfred was the only man in the kingdom to whom the poor could look for help. The freedom from personal ambition and the desire to work solely for the benefit of his subjects, show the moral strength which forms a most important part of Alfred's character. Of Alfred's personality, Jusserand says: "Belonging to the Germanic race by blood, and to the Latin realm by his culture, keeping as much as he could the Roman ideal before his eyes, Alfred evinced during all his life that composite genius, at once practical and passionate, which was to be, after the Norman conquest, the genius of the English people. He was then an exceptional man, and showed himself a real Englishman before his time."

TIME AND ENVIRONMENT OF ALFRED

Information concerning the conditions prevalent in England at this time and of the state of development of the people in intellectual matters can be gained by a
close study of Alfred's translations. In following his interpolations, we can see what points Alfred felt called upon to explain. The half educated people of England could of course not understand all the arguments and references of the Latin authors. Alfred also typifies the age, although he is in many ways far in advance of it, and we can judge the time from his person.

That the state of learning was not very high can be seen from the numerous explanations, or even more plainly from the many blunders of Alfred. Among the laity Alfred was undoubtedly the best educated man. His understanding of the Latin, however, is often faulty though the fact that he had learned helpers must make us wary of attributing too much to misunderstanding. All authorities agree in attributing to ignorance a number of mistakes (Dewitz pp. 9-12; Schilling p. 32 ff.; Plummer p. 155).

It is clear that the knowledge of the English people concerning Latin history, geography, and mythology was rather scant. Matters are referred to in passing by the Latin writers that must be explained before the full force comes home to Alfred's readers. In the Pastoral Care (Dewitz p. 19) the Latin purpura permiscetur is expanded "was ongemong purpura, dat is kynelic hrægl, for- ham hit taçnad kyneligne onwald." The purple as sign of royalty was not yet commonly known among the English. Where Orosius refers to the cause of the Trojan war as
"raptus Helenae", Alfred says (Schilling p. 52): "gewearð ðætte Alexander, Priamises sunu s cyninges, of Trojana ðære byrig, genom ðæs cyninges wif Menelaus, of Lacedemonia, Creca byrig, Elena," E.E.T.S. p. 50, l. 6 ff. (i.e. "It happened that Alexander, the son of Priam the king of Troy, carried off Helen, the wife of Menelaus the king of Lacedemonia, a city of the Greeks). In chapter 16 §1 of Boethius Mount Etna is mentioned. Alfred adds: "se is on Sicilia ðæm ealonde." i.e. "it is in Sicily the island"). The passages in the Orosius dealing with the Roman triumph and the Temple of Janus also serve as good illustrations. The "triumph" was a custom entirely unknown to the readers of Alfred, and he grasps the opportunity to explain. (E.E. T.S. p. 70, l. 22 ff.).

In exactly the same way Alfred explains biblical references. Dewitz (p. 24) calls attention to the Alfredian explanation in the Pastoral Care where the Latin speaks of the Arc of the Covenant "in qua cum tabulis virga simul et manna est." The OE. is (E.E.T.S. 124, 17): "On ðære wæron þa stœnnenan bredu ðe sio ðæs wæs on awritan mid tien bebodum, & eac sio gierd mid ðæm bredum, & eac se sweta mete ðe hie heton monna, se him com of hefonum." (i.e. "In it were the stone tablets on which the law was written with ten commandments, and also the staff with the tablets, and also the seet meat which they call manna, which came to them from heaven). Another place in the Pastoral Care where
the Latin has only *Jacobus*, Alfred says *Jacobus se apostol* (E.E.T.S. p. 32). Very many of these explanations Alfred emphasizes by introducing them with *dat is* and other similar expressions.

That England had long since risen far above barbarism is seen from the nature of Alfred's work. We find him discussing God, the immortality of the soul, and other questions interesting only to those who have advanced far in civilization. One of the longest interpolations in the *Soliloquies* (Harg. Ed. p. 9 f.) gives a clear and well written sketch of the changes in nature,—the decay and growth of plants and trees. This is used to illustrate the state of man. Man grows and decays, but the soul lives on forever. In both *Boethius* and the *Soliloquies*, a distinctly Christian and theological element supplants the philosophical discussions of the original writers. In chapter 41 of the *Boethius*, Alfred shows his disapproval of the doctrine of Predestination. His refutation advances the Catholic doctrine of rewards for good works (Sedg. Trans. pp. 167 f.). Other distinctly Catholic doctrines are mentioned by Alfred. Among them a passage seems to refer to the doctrine of purgatory. In speaking of the wicked, Alfred says that some are condemned to eternal punishment, but others shall "be cleansed and refined in the heavenly fire, as silver is here" Sedg. Trans. p. 139. That interpolations of this nature are found in his works
indicates that the people had reached a standard intellectually where they could be instructed in these matters.

Alfred's age was an age of prose. Poetry was not written to any noticeable extent. This does not mean that the old poetry and old traditions were lost. On the contrary, passages in Alfred's works indicate that they were still remembered. Florence of Worcester definitely states of Alfred's youth that he "listened with intelligence, day and night, to the Saxon poems which were frequently recited to him by others and committed them with facility to his docile memory," Forester's Ed. p. 64. If this was true of Alfred, it seems likely that it would be true also of others. In Boethius, we find a change that would bear out this. In chapter 19, the name of Weland is introduced instead of Fabricius. No reason for this seems so probable as that the change made the point more intelligible to the English readers. In other words, the people were acquainted with the old mythological character of Weland, even though the Latin Fabricius was unknown to them. When, therefore, we find Alfred acquainted with OE. traditions and see him using this material in explaining his originals, it is safe to conclude that the people of England in general had preserved their liking for the old myths and poetry.

A little can be learned about the social conditions of the country if we examine the interpolations.
In §2 of chapter 16, we have a rather unpleasant interpolation, but it may indicate, to a certain extent, matters that the people really were forced to contend with. When enumerating ways in which the human body is tormented by seemingly small things, Alfred adds: "And even little worms torment man within and without — yea and even the little flea may kill him," Sedg. Trans. p. 36.

The translations give us some help in determining rank of different men. In the Orosius the Latin titles are not translated, but in the Boethius we find a number of good examples. Thus the Latin consul is translated by the OE. heretoga. But far more important as a source for information concerning social and political organization is the famous 17th chapter of the Boethius. Alfred says that a king must have: 1. men of prayer, 2. men of war, and 3. men of work. That his ideas concerning this were carried out is indicated in Asser's story of how Alfred arranged his rule. That the old conceptions of the duties of the king had not left the Anglo-Saxons is indicated by the following statement: "Further, for his material he (i.e. the king) must have means of support for the three classes above spoken of, which are his instruments; and these means are land to dwell in, gifts, weapons, meat, ale, clothing, and what else soever the three classes need."

Sedg. Trans. p. 41). The king is still the gold-friend, ring-giver, the dispenser of old treasures.
That pillage and rapine were to pass away and peaceful ventures take their place is indicated by interpolations like those of the expeditions of Ohthere and Wulfstan. People were becoming interested in scientific investigation and were becoming desirous of knowing something more about what was around them. "The voyages of Ohthere is the first arctic expedition undertaken for the sake of discovery and exploration," Essays, Ed. by Bowker, p. 163). Of the information gained by the English people from the interpolations of Alfred, this of the desire for investigation is one of the most interesting and most important. It was this spirit, new to England of the Middle Ages, which was destined to advance the greatness of the English people.

SUMMARY

In the foregoing pages, the writer has tried to show that, in a study of Alfred's literary work, the interpolations are of very great importance. The following points have been brought out and passages quoted or referred to to bear out each statement.

First, it was shown by a comparative study of the original elements in the Alfredian writings that the internal relations of the separate works could be established.
By far the strongest evidence, when an attempt to establish the chronology of the works is made, is found in the relative freeness and ease with which the writer introduces new material. At times, also, interpolations in one book indicates the previous translation of another. Thus the Soliloquies contains original passages that seem to have been taken from the Boethius. The Boethius at times indicates a knowledge of history that would presuppose the earlier translation of the Orosius. The importance of the interpolations in establishing of authorship has also been indicated. The spirit is the spirit infused by the royal teacher and writer, not that of a cleric. The authorship of the Boethius and the Soliloquies has been shown to be, in all probability, the same.

Secondly, the interpolations give us the best opportunity for the study of the development of English prose.

Thirdly, and most important in this study, the personality and character of Alfred can be clearly followed through the original parts of his writings. Numerous references have been adduced showing the impress that his life of hardship and suffering has left upon all his writings. Likewise the spirit in which the literary work was undertaken and carried out is shown to be idealistic and altruistic. Similar motives are seen to actuate Alfred the ruler.
Alfred is seen as a man of broad interests, idealistic character, true friendship and patriotism, warm religious fervor yet strong and vigorous manhood, true warrior and true scholar, an ideal leader of his people,—the most perfect character of recorded history.

Fourthly, the interpolations have been shown to contain valuable information concerning the prevailing conditions in England. The social conditions and organizations with the retention of the old Teutonic idea of the kingship; the rather low, though advancing, state of learning that required the innumerable explanations added by Alfred; and last, the most pleasing, the evidence of the rise of a new spirit, the spirit of scientific search for information, that leads to voyages, not of rapine as of old, but for exploration.

Besides the ascertaining of what facts concerning Alfred and his time can be adduced from the original passages, the writer has also tried to show what phases of Alfredian scholarship still remain to be investigated. Numerous studies of the dialects of Alfredian works have been written, but for some time studies of the relation of the Old English and Latin versions have not been made. The studies of dialects are of importance but can not serve the purpose in every way. It is probable that a more close collation between the Latin and Old English version of the Bede would help to untangle the vexed question of authorship
which scholars heretofore have tried to solve by the arguments of dialect alone. A comparative study of the interpolations with those of some work known to be by Alfred might bring some results. The analysis of the personal element could also be carried further. Another important question which has not been fully worked out in regard to any of Alfred's works is that of the use of commentaries. Schepss, in his article on the Boethius, has given the most valuable contribution to this study, suggests that some English philologist take up the question and work it out more fully. Schilling has found traces of the use of commentaries also in the Orosius. Though the little work that has been undertaken has shown that results can be obtained, no thorough study has been made of the sources of any of the Alfredian translations.

The time of Alfred is one of the most critical periods that the English nation has ever passed through. The study of it has attracted many of the most prominent scholars. But that about which everything else centres is the life and work of King Alfred. The personality of Alfred and his relation to his time can nowhere be followed with such accuracy as in his own works where occur in great number passages of clear self-revelation. The fact that we meet in these passages one of the noblest characters the world has ever produced has made the present task one
of unusual interest, and it is hoped that the treatment may add a mite toward the true conception of Alfred the Great.