

379
N81
No. 6471

AUTHORSHIP, CONTENT AND INTENTION
IN THE WEST SAXON CONSOLATION
OF PHILOSOPHY

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

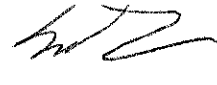
MASTER OF ARTS

By

William Ernest Painter, Jr., B.A.

Denton, Texas

August, 1988



Painter, William Ernest, Jr. Authorship, Content and Intention in the West Saxon Consolation of Philosophy.
Master of Arts (History), August, 1988, 113 pp.,
bibliography, 33 titles.

Boethius, a late Roman philosopher, composed his last work, De Consolatione Philosophiae, while in prison. His final effort crowned a lifetime of philosophical achievement, and the work was influential throughout the Middle Ages. Frequently translated, the Consolation was one of the books which was chosen by Alfred, a ninth century Anglo-Saxon king, for use in the rebuilding of his kingdom after the Danish invasions. Although intended for an audience which was heavily influenced by a lively pagan tradition, the book was re-interpreted during the Carolingian period to conform to a strict Christian standard. Alfred's own interpretation is indicative of this amalgamation of ancient learning in the milieu of an emerging European culture, as well as his own pragmatic personality.

Copyright by
William Ernest Painter, Jr.
1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	BOETHIUS	4
III.	BOETHIUS' <u>CONSOLATION</u>	28
IV.	TRANSMISSION OF THE <u>CONSOLATION</u>	43
V.	ALFRED.	58
VI.	ALFRED'S <u>CONSOLATION</u>	85
	ENDNOTES.	100
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.	107

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A useful quarry sometimes by day, but at night haunted in the imagination of the peasant¹ by the ghosts of the race his ancestors had destroyed.

Trevelyn's description of a Roman ruin seen through the eyes of the medieval European may well stand for that whole period between the fall of Rome and the re-emergence of the West in the age of Charles the Great and Alfred the Great. The path of history is strewn with mileposts of varying importance, but the period marked by the end of the Roman empire and the beginnings of an embryonic medieval Europe is particularly interesting. It is during this time that the learning of the ancient world was passed to the emerging milieu of a medieval, monastic West, and the nature of that learning came to dominate the continent until the re-introduction of such ancient authors as Aristotle in the twelfth century. Those late philosophers, whose encyclopedic writings provided the new West with the only source of the ancient world, have come to be known as Transmitters; they are characterized as having added nothing new, just passing on what had been given to them. The cataclysm of the barbaric invasions, the barbaric hegemony of Rome, and the general decadence of philosophic activity

mark this period as one of stagnation and decline. This was the world of Boethius. Boethius stood at the precipice of the the Middle Ages, looking over his shoulder at the achievements of his Greek and Roman predecessors and into a future where learning, scholarship, and philosophical discipline were to be submerged in the struggles of an emerging new culture. Although his writings heavily influenced medieval teachers and scholars, his contributions have historically been perceived simply as those of a transmittor, compiling everything yet adding nothing. This perception is false, as this paper will demonstrate, and a misinterpretation of Boethius and his work can undermine an accurate analysis of the nature of medieval scholarship.

Boethius' writings were many, and a complete analysis encompassing all of his work would be an Herculean task, a metaphor he would have appreciated. However, of all his works, perhaps the most intriguing is De Consolatione Philosophiae, a small work that had great influence. In this work germinated the seeds of late Roman syncretism and early medieval amalgamation, and it may have influenced more medieval minds than any other available text. Among those minds was Alfred the Great, West Saxon king of Wessex from 872 to 899/900. Boethius, like much of the best of late Roman culture, died at the hands of barbarians, yet in this single work was a repository of wisdom, myth, philosophy, and something akin to early Christian meditation. The

medieval figure of Alfred found in this book a partial answer to his own problem: barbarism of a different sort.

Much as Boethius fell victim to barbarian violence, so Alfred in an early England faced the new invasions of the Northmen or Vikings. The onslaught was so great as to threaten what had become the great center of learning and scholarship in the West, and names such as Bede, Aldhelm, and Alcuin come to mind. Alfred turned to this book, among only a few others, to help him rebuild English scholarship to its pre-Viking eminence, but when he translated the text into Anglo-Saxon, he virtually created an original work which reflected how the syncretic but fertile elements of the late Roman period could be combined and transformed into a work of early medieval scholarship, and great originality.

The Consolatio is a golden thread along which the transmission of learning from the ancient world into the medieval can be traced. Though the thread is slender in places, enough manuscripts survive which can give the modern scholar glimpses into that transmission and transformation; the Dark Ages could be luminous. In this paper, the world of Boethius, the world of Alfred, and the role of the Consolatio in each, will be examined, the golden thread traced with as much accuracy as the surviving manuscripts allow.

CHAPTER II

BOETHIUS

Thou dost deign to ascribe virtues to me, most exemplary of men, whom in the years of youth without the prejudice of age industry hath made old, who by diligence dost fulfill all that may be required, whose sport in the early part of life is constant study [lectionis assiduitas], and whose delight is what would be another's toil, in whose hands the torch with which the ancients glowed shines with doubled fire. For what hardly hath been the share of thy elders at the end of life, abounds in thee at the threshold.¹

Such is the compliment that Ennodius gave to his friend and contemporary, Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, or, as he came to be known, simply Boethius. The original author of The Consolation of Philosophy, among many other works, was a Roman Senator, Magister Officiorum, or Master of the Offices, a translator, a commentator and a philosopher. Any student of medieval history has at least heard his name; Edward Kennard Rand, in his definitive work, Founders of the Middle Ages, devotes an entire chapter to Boethius, "the first of the scholastics."² Calling him "the most thoroughgoing philosopher that Rome ever produced,"³ Rand declares that Boethius was "one of the Founders."⁴ So that his final work might be understood more clearly, I will present Boethius and his writings within the context of the period in which he lived, in a Rome which was no longer

Roman, in a world of mystical philosophies, decadent learning, and encyclopedic writing. Boethius' contemporaries were St. Benedict of Nursia and Cassiodorus; his legacy was one which provided the intellectual foundation for seven-hundred years. Without this one man's work, Aristotle would have been unknown, music, as we know it, unheard, and mathematics rudimentary. Who he was, what he hoped to accomplish and why, and what constituted his world are questions which this chapter will discuss.

Born of a patrician family in 480, Boethius' very name harkens to a tradition of Roman nobility, an important aspect in considering his career. Anicius refers to the family name, the Anicii, an important Roman family dating to the fourth century and earlier; an Anicius was the first Roman senator to be converted to Christianity. The Manlii was a family which became prominent in the earliest days of Rome, while the Severini were related to the Severi, an imperial family. With such a noble heritage, Boethius was imbued with the values of a fine patrician tradition. He was orphaned at an early age and was adopted by his mentor, Quintus Aurelius Memmius Symmachus, later marrying his daughter, Rusticiana. Even the name Symmachus refers back to the fourth century family whose member Quintus Aurelius Symmachus had led the pagan opposition to Christianity, specifically against Ambrose; in a poem by Prudentius against the fourth century Symmachus, it is Anicius who is

praised; Boethius fits well into a tradition of the controversies surrounding the advent of Christianity in the Roman Empire. As is typical of nobility of any age, the Symachii were defenders of orthodoxy, and as Christianity became orthodox, the sixth century Symmachus denounced paganism and Arianism as vociferously as his precursor had attacked the new religion, Christianity.

This linking of the sixth century with the past, exemplified by the naming of the nobility, is an important characteristic in understanding both what motivated Boethius to begin his work, and what eventually got him into trouble. The Rome of the sixth century, particularly the senate, had a very close association with the events of the fourth and fifth centuries; as a scholar, Boethius himself had close intellectual links with the Classical world. Fundamental to the process of the Christianization of the Roman nobility in the fourth and fifth centuries was the coexistence of the Classical and Christian traditions; these two traditions evidence themselves in Boethius, as we shall see, and they can be viewed perhaps more clearly in an example from a slightly earlier period⁵

Turcius Rufius Apronianus Asterius, of a noble family and a consul in 494, offers such an example. Trying his hand at scholarship, he edited a text of Virgil's Eclogues, closing the composition with a poem in which he states that he had spent a great deal of money on the games which he

funded as a part of his office, and, which, though a strain on his resources, would assure that the name of Asterius would live on. Although his family had been converted in the fourth century, the occasion of the wedding of Turcius Rufius Apronianus Secundus and Proiecta was one in which the two traditions of Classicism and Christianity converged: one of the gifts was a perfume casket, the lid of which exhibited Venus floating on a sea-shell surrounded by Tritons and Nereids and containing the inscription, "Secundus and Proiecta, may you live in Christ."⁶ This mixture of the Classical with the Christian world amid the traditions associated with Roman nobility were important elements in the values of Boethius. Boethius also became a consul, and his sons served as joint consuls in 522, a great honor for his family and an important indication of the prestige which he had achieved just prior to his imprisonment.

Another important element which influenced Boethius was the role of the senate. Toward the end of the fourth century, the conversion of the senate to Christianity was nearly complete, and by the fifth century, the senate members began to assume an increasing role in ecclesiastical affairs.⁷ They built churches, donated wealth and, on one occasion, restricted the property rights of the ecclesiastical order. Boethius' own writings, then, as they pertained to the affairs of the Church, were well within the

traditional limits; his Opuscula Sacra V (Against Eutyches and Nestorius) was dedicated to John the Deacon, probably the same John, Pope John, who was executed two years after Boethius.⁸ To this composition we will later return, for it is this involvement in the affairs of the Church which eventually took Boethius to Calvenzano (ager Calventianus), the prison lying between Pavia and Milan in which he was killed.⁹

The picture of Boethius is thus roughly sketched: he was a noble of a noble family, a Christian, a senator, a consul, a scholar and greatly influenced by the classical, but still lively, past and by Christianity. Yet, this in itself does not make him unique; most, if not all, Roman senators in the sixth century could be described in similar terms. What makes Boethius stand above the others is the nature of his writings, and the motivation which led him to begin his life's work. Early in his life, perhaps as a boy, he wrote some bucolic poetry, none of which survives. Evidence of this early life is scanty at best and clouded over the centuries with tradition and myth. Some facts may be gleaned from his own introduction to the Consolation, others from the Anonymous Valesii. He supposedly studied at Athens or Alexandria, neither an unlikely supposition considering his mastery of Greek and his affinity for the Greek masters.¹⁰ His early adult life begins with a compilation of his Arithmetic, consisting of two treatises

in Mathematics and Geometry, which was based on Nicomachus. From there, he began to render Aristotle from Greek into Latin, beginning with a commentary on Porphyry's Introduction to the Categories, based on a translation by Victorinus, which he discarded later in favor of his own translation and further commentary. He translated Aristotle's De Interpretatione and added a commentary for beginners and one for students of a more advanced status. He completed a translation of the Categories, and added a commentary to that, based in large part on Porphyry's work again. Turning to Cicero, he wrote a commentary on the Topics, wrote a further treatise on that work and on Aristotle's Topics entitled De Differentiis Topicis. His work on music, De Musica, was drawn from Nicomachus, Ptolemy and Euclid, and it was from Euclid that he translated the work on geometry, a work that does not survive intact. The ecclesiastical compositions he wrote were five treatises included in the Opuscula Sacra, or the Tractates. Turning to logical problems, he wrote original treatises entitled De Syllogismo Categorico, De Divisione, and De Syllogismo Hypothetico. Finally, the work which was of considerable interest to Alfred in 896, De Consolatione Philosophiae, he completed while in prison.

With such a voluminous amount of writing, it would appear that Boethius had some kind of plan in mind, and his own words reflect best what that plan was, as well as the

strong influences that a noble lineage had on him:

Although the cares of my consular office prevent me from devoting my entire attention to these studies, yet it seems to me a sort of public service to instruct my fellow-citizens in the products of reasoned investigation. Nor shall I deserve ill of my country in this attempt. In far-distant ages, other cities transferred to our state alone the lordship and sovereignty of the world; I am glad to assume the remaining task of educating our present society in the spirit of Greek philosophy. Wherefore this is verily a part of my consular duty, since it has always been a Roman habit to take whatever was beautiful or praiseworthy throughout the world and to add to its lustre by imitation. So then to my task.¹¹

Much as Cicero before him, Boethius desired to make available in Latin the works of the Greek masters, Plato and Aristotle. In following Cicero's example, Boethius created new terms in Latin more fully to express the nuances in the Greek language, such as particles, which are incomprehensible when translated literally. Thus, the words quality (qualitas) and specific (specificus) are terms which did not exist before Cicero and Boethius began to render Greek concepts and linguistic peculiarities into Latin.¹² In addition, Boethius did more than merely translate these works; De topicis differentiis establishes an ordered system, using Differentiae as a third term, to determine the relationship between two concepts, and it was in this work that he also began to reconcile Plato with Aristotle by comparing the two great authorities.

It is an interesting paradox that while the bulk of Boethius' translations were Aristotelian, he relied heavily

on Neoplatonic commentaries, such as Porphyry's, and his final work is clearly Platonic in nature. This dichotomy of nominalism and realism, whether universals exist in reality or in name only, which expressed itself throughout the Middle Ages, was initiated by Boethius, and, in his commentary on Porphyry's Introduction to the Categories of Aristotle (Isagoge), he begs the question of universals and concludes,

Altissimum enim negotium est et maioris egens
inquisitionis.¹³

'T'is a lofty topic and one that requires further investigation.

In the twelfth century the nominalism-realism debate had intensified considerably, particularly with the introduction of "new" Aristotelian works into the scholastic schools, and Boethius' inconclusiveness was frustrating, as, perhaps, best expressed in this poem of Godfrey of St. Victor:

Sits Boethius quite stunned by this disputation,
Listening to this and that subtle explanation,
But to side with this or that shows no inclination,
Nor presumes to give the case sure adjudication.

(Assidet Boethius stupens de hac lite,
Audiens quid hic et asserat perite,
Et quid cui faveat non discernit rite,
Nec praesumit solvere litem definite.)¹⁴

If Boethius' reluctance to support one or the other was maddening to some medieval scholars, it was not so to Boethius. When considered as a whole, Boethius' plan seems to have been to harmonize Aristotle with Plato, for Boethius himself was not one of those who perceived that the two

great masters were in opposition to one another, and his "ultimate purpose was to show that there is no essential difference between the two schools."¹⁵ He began to establish his vocabulary of philosophy, relied upon heavily by medieval scholars, in his commentary on the Isagoge, a work by Porphyry, a Neoplatonist, and it was in this book that Boethius began to develop a new terminology, which created new Latin words from Greek derivatives. Following those two works, he proceeded to educate his audience with the liberal arts, arithmetic, geometry, music, and "probably one on astronomy."¹⁶ He then compared the two schools of thought of Plato and Aristotle (as noted above). He did not live long enough to compose a reconciliation. It is ironic to consider that the greatest debate of the Middle Ages could have been resolved had this philosopher not met such a tragic death: Theodoric ordered Boethius to be tortured by tying a cord around his forehead and across his eyes, tightening the cord until his eyes bulged from their sockets; Boethius was then beaten about the head with clubs until he died in 524.

What led to his execution, however, was not his philosophical works, which were written between 504 and 523¹⁷, but his theological writings, those five letters comprising the Opuscula Sacra, or Tractates. In sixth century Rome, there was no separating the affairs of the Church and the state; Theodoric the Ostrogoth, of the Arian

heresy, had attempted to reconcile the diverse religious elements of his kingdom by ruling with tolerance and had allowing the Catholic faith to continue to flourish until the very end of his reign, when the failure of his policy resulted in the execution of Boethius, Boethius' father-in-law, Symmachus, and then finally of Pope John. It was more than a coincidence that Boethius' trial and execution for treason marked an end to Theodoric's toleration; the political implications of Tractates I, II, and V had become clear in 524, and thus the theological works of Boethius, and the ecclesiastical and political dialogue during the early sixth century, require a careful analysis.

This early century in the life of Christianity was one of consolidation of the doctrines of the faith, and, as such, was full of "heresies." For the most part, these heresies revolved around the nature and persons of Christ and the Trinity. Beginning in the fifth century, two great heresies had developed: Nestorianism, advocated by the patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, and Monophysitism. Nestorius stated that while Christ had two natures, the orthodox view, he also had two persons, a heresy; Monophysitism (or Eutychianism after its leader, Eutyches, brought the heresy to Byzantium) stated that Christ had one person, but then asserted that he had only one nature. Alexandria was the stronghold of the Monophysites, but the heresy was popular throughout the empire and was violently

opposed to the Nestorians, who, to the Monophysites, consisted of anyone who disagreed; this attitude towards Nestorianism was also directed at the Council of Chalcedon, an ecumenical attempt to achieve a compromise and which was more lenient towards the Nestorians than the Eutychians liked. In 482, the emperor Zeno attempted to reconcile the two ideologies with a compromise, co-sponsored by the patriarch of Constantinople, Acacius, called the Henoticon. What was intended to mend the deepening division within the empire resulted, however, in pleasing no one, and, because it did not openly support the Council of Chalcedon, actually offended the papacy in Rome. Acacius was excommunicated by pope Felix III, which precipitated the Acacian schism (484-519). Any succeeding emperor would have to reconcile these factions before attempting to reunite the Roman Empire, and, in large part due to the effective diplomacy of Justinian, the nephew of Justin I (518-527), this was accomplished in 519. The intrigues involved in this reconciliation were such that Boethius, Albinus, and Symmachus were accused of treason upon the revelation to Theodoric of their participation in the scheme.

On the western shore of the Black Sea was the area of Scythia Minor, and living there were a group of monks who were violent in their defense of their own solution to the problem of the nature and persons of Christ: that "one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh."¹⁸ This concept would

have satisfied the Eutychians, who were adamantly anti-Nestorian, as well as the Nestorians, who could find nothing in the statement with which to quarrel. In 512, a group of bishops from the eastern provinces appealed to an assembly in Rome to resolve the dispute between the Nestorians and Eutychians by accepting the formula of the Scythian monks. Pope Symmachus suggested only that the bishops refuse communion with the Acacians; Boethius himself, however, was intrigued with the formula, and proceeded to examine the problem using his well developed powers of argument. The result was his book, Liber contra Eutychem et Nestorium (Against Eutychians and Nestorians), the fifth tractate (Tr. V), though it was the first he composed. The Scythian opinion was well defended by this philosopher-turned-theologian, and Boethius, perhaps understanding what implications an ecclesiastical unification would mean for the empire, became embroiled in a controversy which would end with his execution.

In 519, a delegation of papal emissaries, led by Justinian, entered Constantinople to settle the dispute. Justinian's presence is important because it demonstrated that without the unification of the Church, the empire would never be politically united. The Scythian monks were led by John Maxentius, and their compromise consisted of the statement, "unus ex trinitate passus carne," or "one of the Trinity suffers in the body." Justinian was reluctant

entirely to support the monks' assertions due to their contentiousness, but relented later and himself urged pope Hormisdas to accept their formula as the compromise. For Rome, the recognition of Chalcedon was fundamental to a reconciliation, and for the Eutychians, a stand against Nestorianism was paramount; the Scythian proposal satisfied both requirements, although the pope was reluctant to give his whole-hearted support. With the monks and the papal delegates in Constantinople and an intransigent pope at the helm in Rome, the monks took their message to the lay people of Rome in 520. Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman and adherent to the Scythian solution, translated several works of Cyril of Alexandria into Latin; Cyril had had a long, pleasant relationship with the pope and his writings reflected a clear position on anti-Nestorianism. An anonymous Scythian added to this body of literature the Palatine Collection (Collectio Palatina), a pro-Cyrrillan and anti-Nestorian collection. The purpose of the Collection was to win support among the Roman people for the Scythian solution; close associations noted in the Collection of the compiler with a John of Tomi, bishop of Tomi, which is in Scythia Minor, indicated that this "John" was the same person as John Maxentius. If they were the same man, then the reference to the instructio in the Collection, which defines Eutychianism and Nestorianism, suggests that "Maxentius relied on the arguments of Boethius as presented in Tr.V.,¹⁹

Even the language used in the two documents is similar, although the Maxentius instructio was written for a lay audience. Consider the following passages; the first is from the beginning of the sixth book of Tractate V:

Sed si diuinitas in humanitatem translata est, factum est, quod credi nefas est, ut humanitate inmutabili substantia permanente diuinitas uerteretur et quod passibile atque mutabile naturaliter existeret, id inmutabile permaneret, quod uero inmutabile atque impassibile naturaliter creditur, id in rem mutabilem uerteretur. Hoc igitur fieri nulla ratione contingit.²⁰

In the instructio, Maxentius uses similar yet simpler language to express the identical concept:

dum enim timet ne si duas in xpo confitetur naturas quartam introducat in trinitate personam, in pia confusione ipsum dei filium a deitatis suae natura pronuniat demutatam ita ut inconcertibilem dicat & passionibus subdat immortalemque morti subiciat & eum qui non cecidit (nec enim fas erat deum in sua diuinitate posse occidi) resurrexisse condendat.²¹

It would seem apparent that Maxentius had based the instructio on the work of Boethius in 512; the monks in 519 rephrased the Boethian argument that Christ was one of the Trinity and suffered in the flesh into unus et trinitate passus carne, and Maxentius' work appeared a year later in Rome to sway the flock of Peter's See, using much the same language as Boethius.

In 523, Boethius wrote two more tractates, Tractates I and II, in response to the Theopaschite controversy (the name coming from the Scythian opinion that Christ suffered as a man). Tractate I, Quomodo Trinitas unus Deus ac non

tres dii (How that the Trinity is one God and not three Gods), is dedicated to Symmachus, and II is entitled Utrum Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus de divinitate substantialiter praedicentur (Whether Father, Son, and Holy Ghost may be substantially predicated of Divinity) and dedicated to John the Deacon.²¹ Since it is believed that Boethius composed De topicis differentiis just prior to 523²², it seems likely that he was applying his well-constructed system of argument development to the issues of the nature and person of Christ; the Theopaschite question offered an ideal opportunity for Boethius to utilize his philosophical mind for theological purposes. However, in none of these writings does Boethius hint at any support of political unification between the East and West, nor did he assume a prominent role in the negotiations that occurred between the senate and the East, though such efforts had received Theodoric's approval.²³ It is his relative obscurity in this matter which held great importance to men such as himself that is suspect; Boethius was the Master of the Offices, had an outstanding reputation as a thinker and a senator, and yet seems not to have involved himself directly in the process until he defended Albinus when that senator was accused of treason.

Bark suggests that this is too suspicious, and asserts convincingly that had Justinian and Boethius truly desired a reunification, they would have indeed exerted their efforts

in an inconspicuous manner, wanting to attract as little of Theodoric's attention as possible.²⁴ Albinus was implicated in the plot in a letter written by Hormisdas to Dioscorus, the leader of the papal delegation in Constantinople in 519 and a vitriolic opponent of the Scythian monks.²⁵ The pope asked Dioscorus' his opinion regarding a question which had been put to him by Albinus: should those who rejected the Council of Chalcedon in speeches be treated in the same manner as those who denounced it in writing. Evidently, the "those" referred to were the monks who were then in Rome speaking before the senate. This letter was not sent; instead a similar letter went to Dioscorus in Constantinople which made no mention of Albinus' name and the reference to Chalcedon, thus concealing both Albinus' identity and the apparent importance of the matter to prominent senators. Albinus apparently was attempting to intercede with the pope for the monks, and, though he failed to convince Hormisdas over Dioscorus' own advice, his keen interest in this ecclesiastical affair is clear.

The third member of the conspiracy, Symmachus, is implicated in two documents, one of which is a pamphlet written by Maxentius, Responsio adversus Hormisdas Epistulam (Rebuttal against the Letter of Hormisdas).²⁶ Claiming a letter from the pope, which condemned the monks, to be a forgery, Maxentius made two assertions: that had the pope really disagreed with the Scythian position, he would not

have given them communion as he had done over a period exceeding a year; and, secondly, that Maxentius had heard the pope state in the presence of important men that he had asked the Byzantine master of the military, Romanus, to throw Dioscorus into the sea should he continue to confront the Scythians. Although Dioscorus evidently changed Hormisdas' mind about the monks, such an allegation by Maxentius, had it been false, would have been ridiculous; to assert that such a statement was made in front of witnesses regarding an important person in the Byzantine court would have been foolish and would not have benefited his cause with either the people of the senate of Rome. Hormisdas did, in fact, in correspondence with the delegates in Constantinople, state that Romanus and Symmachus had promised their safe return immediately.²⁷ Other documents indicate that this was the same Symmachus as Boethius' father-in-law, and he may have been Master of the Offices in 520, the same position which Boethius was to hold in 522.²⁸ It seems therefore that Hormisdas was communicating directly with the Byzantine court and that Symmachus had ties with the court and was intimately familiar with the dialogue occurring in Constantinople, an interest which would not have escaped Boethius' attention. For such a prominent noble to be so involved in what appeared on the surface to be simply an ecclesiastical question certainly indicates that such a question had considerable implications for the

status of the political relationship between Rome and Byzantium.

The picture of Boethius' complicity in the conspiracy is clearer. Upon hearing the bishops from the eastern provinces present the Theopaschite case, he wrote *Tr. V*, dedicated it to John the Deacon (who, as Pope John, was executed by Theodoric in 526) and stated that he had written it after hearing the eastern bishops' plea before an assembly (512); Boethius had kept silent because he could not see Symmachus' face for his reaction, but had later decided to write the book and submit it to John for his comments, and preparatory to sending it to Symmachus for his opinion.²⁹ This tractate was subsequently used by the monks and Maxentius to assert their position in 519 and 520. That same year, Albinus intervened on behalf of the monks with Hormisdas, and Symmachus guaranteed to the same pope that he and Romanus, a Byzantine official, would ensure the prompt and safe return of the papal delegates home. In 523, Boethius composed two more tractates concerned with the Scythian controversy, expanding the arguments of *Tr. V* in apparent support for their cause. It therefore appears unlikely that it was a mere coincidence that a year later Boethius used his position of Master of the Offices to suppress information regarding Albinus' treason, becoming his most outspoken defender. Albinus, Boethius, Symmachus and Pope John all were implicated in the charge of treason,

and, much like a detective on a case which is fourteen-hundred years old, we may deduce from the evidence that such a charge of treason was well-founded, at least from Theodoric's standpoint. Certainly, when the roles of the participants were made clear to him, his response must have been outrage: in attempting to win the support of these two prominent patrician families, Theodoric had given Boethius great honors for himself and his sons, and a position of trust; Symmachus was no less prominent, and may have also been Master of the Offices at the outset of the conspiracy. Yet, by men of such noble birth, of such social and political prominence and whose heritage was fully imbued with the senatorial-patrician tradition loyalty to the senate, such acts would have been perceived as being patriotic, rather than treasonous.

To illustrate this sense of patriotism in Boethius, a comparison between Cassiodorus and Boethius is helpful. That both men responded to their heritage is clear:

No pagan-minded scholar whose manhood saw the year five hundred could be other than a transmitter of the greater past. Not only would his thoughts have come to him from the past, his character also would be molded by his mighty heritage. So it was with Boethius. The contents of his mind came from the past, which also largely made his personality. He himself, the man Boethius, was mostly the product of antecedent pagan thought.³⁰

Much the same could be said about Cassiodorus, but his heritage was significantly different from that of Boethius. Cassiodorus' family had served the imperial court since the

last years of imperial Rome.³¹ His grandfather had been offered a high court office under Valentinian III, his father had served both Odoacer's and Theodoric's courts, and Cassiodorus himself succeeded as Master of the Offices after Boethius' fall. While Cassiodorus was no mere puppet of the Ostrogothic court, he clearly did not feel that such an arrangement was contrary to his ideals; his cousin served the Byzantine court for eighteen years and, so, for Cassiodorus, "through the political services of members of the family, east and west [were] united, each senate shining out, as it were, with the radiance of two eyes."³² That Cassiodorus perceived no conflict is further revealed by his later work, made at the request of Theodoric, The History of the Goths, wherein he appears to attempt an amalgamation of Roman and the barbarian cultures. Patriotism for Cassiodorus meant faithful service to the emperor or king, and his allegiance was divided between Ravenna (the site of the imperial court since Odoacer), Rome, and his home in the south of Italy. Boethius, however, had very different allegiances.

The Anicii and the Symmachii families were allied in the fifth century, and they formed a politically active and powerful coalition.³³ The loyalties of these families were with the Roman senate, and because of that they were suspicious of any close relationship with a ruling court, barbarian or not. Boethius expresses this in the Consolatio

when he states that the historical foundation of liberty was rooted in the consular power³⁴. The appointment of his two sons as joint-Consuls had happened only once before; in 395, when the brothers Petronius and Probus served as joint-consuls, the death of Theodosius I that same year, and the succession of his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, had divided the Roman empire into east and west. The significance of Boethius' sons as consuls may have seemed symbolic to Boethius if he indeed desired to see a singular Rome again, though he did not live to witness the reunification. It was this failure of Theodoric to win over Boethius and Symmachus by promoting them and their families to prestigious positions, which allowed Justinian to complete the plan begun in 519. Boethius' image of freedom required a strong senate which was independent of the king, and thus he protected Albinus and defended him by stating,

If Albinus had done this, then so have I and the entire senate,³⁵ of one accord; the charge is false, my lord king.

This opposition to a tyrannical king is evident in his final book, a medieval "bestseller,"³⁶ De Consolatione Philosophiae or The Consolation of Philosophy. In it, Boethius tells us that he has been cast into prison without his library, and so it is safe to assume that the book could not have been checked or well-edited before his death. The text itself is divided into five books of prose and meter in the style of a Menippean satire, and consists of a dialogue

between Boethius, Fortuna, and Lady Philosophy. The Consolatio falls into the broad category commonly known as "prison literature," and, as in many such works, the author wrestles with the problem of theodicy. Boethius laments his fall as being unjust and wonders how it can be that a man such as himself, a good man who has striven his whole life in the service of others, can come to an abysmal end. Indeed, this question ultimately raises the issue of how it is that a God who is good and has knowledge of all things can allow a good man to fall. A chapter by chapter examination of Boethius final work follows in another section of this thesis; for the purpose here, it is sufficient to realize that Boethius expresses his disdain for a tyrannical king by comparing himself to others who had suffered as he had. Canius, accused by Caligula of conspiracy, offered his accuser a response almost as enigmatic and rebellious as Boethius': "If I had known of it, you would not."³⁷ Seneca and Soranus were two advisors to kings who cast them out to their deaths unjustly, and Boethius, by comparing himself to these men, offers us an important insight into how he perceived himself in relation to Rome and the Ostrogothic monarchy:

But if you have not heard of the exile of Anaxagoras, nor of the poison given to Socrates, nor of the tortures suffered by Zeno--for these things, after all, did not happen in Rome--yet you may know of Canius, Seneca, and Soranus, whose memory is still fresh and famous. For nothing else brought all these men to ruin but that, being

instructed in my ways, they appeared at variance with the desires of unscrupulous men. Therefore, you need not wonder if in this sea of life we are tossed about by storms from all sides, for we fulfill³⁸ our calling best when we displease the worst.

It therefore seems likely that the medieval perception of Boethius as a martyr was ill-founded; his support of the Scythian compromise was synonymous with his support for the east and west being reunited politically, and such a sentiment was treason to Theodoric, though not to the senate of Rome. After embroiling himself in the theological debate which was his ultimate undoing, it is not surprising that Boethius sought consolation in philosophy, and not in the ecclesiastical dogma which is absent from his final book. The medieval world, however, did not concern itself with the political battle which raged about Boethius; for medieval men Boethius' importance and reputation derived from the fact that it was primarily from his works that the their world knew and approached Plato and Aristotle, until the reintroduction of the latter's works in the twelfth century totally changed the picture. The actual transmission of his works, specifically the Consolatio, is discussed in the following chapter, but the impact of Boethius on the scholars and teachers of medieval Europe right into the age of the Renaissance in Italy in the fifteenth century is unmistakable:

It is perhaps evading the question to say that the medieval mind had a natural affinity for Aristotle, since this mind had been early formed

on the Aristotelian logic of Boethius; but it is true that the later centuries turned with avidity to Aristotle's dialectic and stretched themselves on the frame of his thought."³⁹

For all this, the Consolatio was perhaps the most influential single Boethian work:

Deep must have been the effect of that book so widely read and pondered on and loved ... with its intimate consolings, its ways of reasoning and looking upon life, its setting of the intellectual above the physical, its insistence that mind rather than body makes the man. Imagine it brought home to a vigorous struggling personality--imagine Alfred reading and translating it, and adding to it from the teachings of his own experience. The study of such a book might form the turning of a medieval life; at least could not fail to temper the convulsions of a soul storm-driven amid unreconcilable spiritual conflicts.⁴⁰

How the Consolatio came into Alfred's hands, in what form, and what exactly it was that he translated are the concerns of the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

BOETHIUS' CONSOLATION

In the De consolazione of Boethius, the antique pagan thought, softened with human sympathy, and in need of such comfort and assurance as was offered by the Faith, is found occupied with questions (like that of free will) prominent in Christianity. The book presented meditations which were so consonant with Christian views that its Christian readers from Alfred to Dante mistook them for Christian sentiments, and added further meanings naturally occurring to the Christian soul.¹

The Consolation of Philosophy was one of the most widely read books of medieval Europe; it was copied extensively, borrowed from considerably, and alluded to in many of the writings from Alcuin to Dante. The modern reader is immediately struck by the fact that although Boethius was considered a Christian, the book itself is without overt Christian terminology. The issues which Boethius raises are fundamental to all Christians: free will, predestination, evil, the nature of the goodness, the path of truth are all questions which Christians at one time or another ask. What consists of five books of prose with alternating meters, a style known as Mennippean satire, became dear to the hearts and minds of medieval scholars and teachers. It is a searching book which, though coming to no substantial conclusion on the issue of free will and

predestination, offered the medieval reader lessons in philosophy, grammar, allegory, poetry, and was one of only two sources by which the medieval scholar knew Plato's Timaeus, the other being Chalcidius. It was a book written with little or no other resources at hand, and was probably unedited since Boethius composed the work while in prison and denied access to his library. What Boethius was trying to accomplish in this book, how it was written, and what is its message are the topics of this section.

Boethius, a catholic Christian, fallen in disgrace with the East Gothic king Theodoric, lies there in prison, bereft of all his earthly goods--his family, his friends, his home, his library and whatever comfort a well-to-do and cultivated man may be used to have at his disposal. When he is a deeply believing Christian, there is Christ and God-, nearer to him now by that very state of bereavement in which he finds himself. So the reader who takes up the Consolatio, might expect to find there a man who, outwardly speaking bereft of everything, turns to Christ and in Him feels himself near to God, nearer than ever, and thus at the bottom of his heart more and more quiet and at last, through the Light of the divine Presence, unutterably blessed.

Nothing of that in Boethius. Nor is there with him that perfect serenity and indifference towards earthly things which we find with Socrates on his last day, in prison and waiting for execution. ²Boethius is depressed, deeply depressed.

Such is the tone of the Consolation. The grief-stricken Boethius tries to ease his pain by writing poetry with the help of the Muses. The opening, a meter, is full of self pity, and this seems to be the only relief that the Muses can offer to Boethius:

Thus my maimed Muses guide my pen, and gloomy

songs make no feigned tears bedew my face. Them alone could no fear deter from accompanying me upon my way. They were the pride of my earlier happy days; in my later gloomy days they are the comfort of my fate.³

This first meter establishes the illness which Boethius suffers; having placed his faith in Fortune, Boethius realizes that he had been deceived and states that, "he that is fallen low did never firmly stand."⁴ After this admission, or diagnosis, a majestic woman appears to him "whose gleaming eyes surpassed in power of insight those of ordinary mortals" (I,pr.1). A towering figure whose garment is made of the finest thread, though its color is "dimmed by the dullness of long neglect," dispatches the Muses from Boethius' cell, admonishing them that they had never given real solace, merely accustomed men to their predicament. On the robe of this figure are the first letters of the Greek words Practical and Theoretical and between those an ascending ladder from the former to the latter; the garment itself had been torn by the "hands of rough men who had snatched such pieces as they could." Although Boethius does not then identify this personage, it is clear later that this is Lady Philosophy, her robe lack-lustered and torn from the neglect and misuse of men who had abused philosophy for their own ends. Boethius is here clearly commenting on the decline of philosophical activity in his day, and he implies the ultimate motivation for his own task of commentary and translation, begun in 505. Yet, as Lady

Philosophy indicates, Boethius had turned away from her in his grief:

He has forgotten himself for the moment but will quickly remember as soon as he recognizes me. That he may do so, let me brush away from his eyes the darkening cloud of things perishable.
(I,pr.2)⁵

Boethius' eyes are cleared, and the symbolism implicit in this act is also clear: philosophy is the only enduring truth, it is the "physician's art" which can truly relieve his suffering and restore him to his former virtue. She is not there to rescue him physically, but to give him companionship and true peace of mind; he was one of her "warriors" and she had "never allowed herself to let the innocent go upon their journey unbefriended" (I,pr.3). Philosophy then asks Boethius to "lay bare your wound" which he does so that she might determine the nature of his "disease." After listening to Boethius' "pratings," Philosophy, unmoved, tells him that he has not been exiled, by force, for one cannot be exiled who dwells within the walls of philosophy, but has instead voluntarily wandered "far from your native land" (I,pr.5). The diagnosis continues into the next prose, and it is here that Philosophy offers her analysis of Boethius' condition:

I know....the cause of your sickness: you have forgotten what you are. Therefore I have found out to the full both the manner of your sickness and the means for restoring your health. Inasmuch as you have been confounded by forgetting what you are, you have been sorrowing that you are both exiled and robbed of your possessions. And inasmuch as you are ignorant of the end of all

things, you imagine that worthless and wicked men are powerful and happy. Further, inasmuch as you have forgotten by what means the world is governed, you suppose that the turns of Fortune fluctuate with no guiding hand. These are causes enough not for disease alone but for death as well. (I,pr.6)⁶

The next two books (II and III) provide Boethius with the cure to his disease, and in them some interesting concepts are developed which have important implications both for Boethius, as he perceives himself, and for the role of philosophy in the Roman culture. If anything can be said to describe the nature of this work, it is syncretism: the incorporation of unlike ideas into a cohesive product. Books II and III offer outstanding examples of syncretism or the amalgamation of Christianity with classical pagan thought. In book II, the gifts of Fortune are examined and shown to be, for the most part, fleeting and of little real value to the person of reason. Boethius feels betrayed by Fortune and perceives that his change in circumstance is the result of her fickleness. Lady Philosophy, however, begins in a negative sense to show that this is the real nature of Fortune:

You think Fortune has changed towards you. You are wrong. These are ever her ways; this is her very nature. She has in your case maintained her proper constancy in the very act of changing. Such was she when she smiled upon you, mocking you with the blandishments of false happiness. You have discovered the ambiguous looks of this blind deity. To others she is partially veiled; to you she is wholly known. (II,pr.1)⁷

Lady Philosophy then begins to argue with Boethius,

taking the part of Fortuna. In this prose (II,pr.2), Lady Philosophy, playing the role of Fortune, emphasizes her mutability and demands that if Boethius was to accept her when she favored him, then he must also accept her when she turns from him:

When Nature brought you forth from your mother's womb I received you naked and bare of all things, I cherished you with my resources and (that which now makes you impatient with me) I brought you up over-indulgently with favoring care and surrounded you with splendor and all the abundance that was mine to give. Now it pleases me to withdraw my hand; be thankful, as one that has lived upon another's property.... Boldly will I say that, if these things, the loss of which you lament, had ever been yours, you would never have lost them at all. (II,pr.2)

Boethius, however, finds little solace in this argument and Lady Philosophy proceeds to examine the meaning of true happiness. Fortune, by virtue of the fact that her gifts are transitory, can never lead to true happiness. If a man is unaware of this transitory nature, then he cannot be truly happy in ignorance; if he is aware, then he must live in fear of his own fall, and thus cannot be happy. Indeed, she continues, if death terminates the gifts of fortune, and if these gifts constitute true happiness, then mankind exists in a wretched condition when confronted by death. But this is not so:

But if we know that many men have sought the fruits of happiness by means not only of death but also of sorrowful suffering, how then can momentary happiness make men happy when its end does not make them unhappy? (II, pr.4)

Lady Philosophy then begins to show Boethius that the

only real valuable goods in life are thus things which one cannot lose, and an analysis of the intrinsic nature of Man is begun. If the Creator created man to be above earthly things, then how can the possession of those things improve man? To value such possessions is to denigrate the Creator and the man:

For since the value of any thing is greater than the value of him to whom that thing constitutes his worth, then you who judge the vilest of things to give worth to you, assuredly place yourself lower than them in your own valuation; and this is indeed a just result. For such is the condition of human nature that it surpasses other classes only when it knows itself, but is reduced to a rank lower than the beasts when it ceases to know itself. For in other animals ignorance of self is natural; in men it is a moral defect. (II, pr.5)¹⁰

Lady Philosophy expands this notion in prose 6 by drawing comparisons between those qualities which are intrinsic and those which are acquired and thus of less value. While music makes musicians and rhetoric makes rhetoricians, money does not diminish greed nor does power free a man whose passions chain him. Prose 7 begins with Boethius' answer to Philosophy that he had chosen a field which would cause his name to live on, a sentiment which would not have been uncommon for a patrician of his status. Philosophy responds that even great fame is limited to this small pinpoint of a planet, and, though limited in space, fame cannot be universal.¹¹

The final prose of Book II returns to the subject of

Fortune and clarifies the earlier argument, that good fortune is deceitful. Boethius, having seen the other face of Fortune, now understands her true nature and is no longer deceived:

It's a strange thing that I'm trying to say, and for that reason I can scarcely explain my thoughts in words. I think that ill fortune is of greater advantage to men than good fortune. The latter is ever deceitful when, by specious happiness, it seems to show favor; the former is ever true when, by its changes, it show herself inconstant. The one deceives; the other edifies. The one, with a pretense of apparent goods, enchains the minds of those who enjoy them; the other, with a conception of happiness' brittleness, frees those minds. You see, then, that the one is blown about by winds, ever moving and ignorant of self, while the other is sober, ever prepared and prudent through the sustaining adversity of itself. Lastly, good fortune draws men from the path of true goodness with her blandishments; ill fortune in most cases draws men back to that path by force. (II, pr.8)¹²

Book III consists of two primary arguments; the first is a continued examination of the false goods or false values which were introduced in the preceding book, and the second is a different approach to the analysis of the true goods, that is, as they form a part of the greatest good or summa bonum. In the first part, Boethius exhibits his own orientation as a Roman by references to Seneca, Nero, Papinianus and Antoninus, and the tenor of this section, proses 1-9, is Aristotelian.¹³ The latter section, proses 10-12, is indicative of a Platonic or Neoplatonic mind; Philosophy focuses her discussion on the issue of the various goods forming the parts of the greatest good or God. Yet this God is not the personal God of the Christian, but

only clear reference to the existence of Boethian prose in England:

Grave Cassiodorus and John Chrysostom
Next Master Bede and learned Aldhelm come.
While Victorinus and Boethius stand
With Pliny and Pompeius close at hand.⁵

It is impossible to determine from this single reference what it was of Boethius that stood in York next to Pliny and Pompeius; however, Alcuin's familiarity with Boethius is crucial in establishing the only link in the transmission of the Consolation. R. Peiper has speculated that Alcuin, in one of his visits to the libraries in Italy, returned to France with an exemplar of Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy from which others were to be copied and taught, sometime between 782 and 796.⁶ The only actual references specifically to the Consolation of Philosophy, however, first occurred in the literature of Carolingian Francia, and it appears that it was Alcuin's initiative. It was Alcuin who first makes use of the Consolation, not as a whole, but as borrowings and paraphrases which he used in letters that he wrote in the last years of the eighth and the first years of the ninth century.⁷ Though not referring directly to Boethius at all, it seems that Alcuin was the first Latin scholar to read and use the Consolation, adapting Boethius' phrases and using quotations from him. Consider the following example: the first quotation is from Book II, meter 5 of Boethius' Consolation,

O happy was that long lost age

Content with nature's faithful fruits
 Which knew not slothful luxury.
 They would not eat before due time
 Their meal of acorns quickly found,
 And did not know the subtlety
 Of making honey sweeten wine,...⁸

Compare the wording of Boethius' meter with the opening of this letter of Alcuin to Charlemagne dated in 796:

I, your Flaccus, according to your exhortations and encouragement, am occupied in supplying to some under the roof of St. Martin the honey of the sacred Scriptures; am eager to inebriate others with the old wine of ancient learning; begin to nourish others on the fruits of grammatical subtlety; long to illuminate some with the order of the stars, like the painted ceiling of a great man's house; becoming many things to many men, that I may instruct many to the profit of the Holy Church of God and to the adornment of your imperial kingdom, that the grace of the Almighty be not void in me, nor the bestowal of your bounty in vain.

Several of the words bear a striking resemblance in both the order and their use. Alcuin's tone also reflects a rather different attitude toward the seven liberal arts to that Boethius had, and Alcuin's use of "honey" of the Scriptures to sweeten the "old wine" of the ancients seems to reinforce that tone. Alcuin typically used quotations from books written by pagan authors, and from the recognized Christian authorities, the Scriptures being predominate among them: the remainder of the letter above to Charlemagne uses two citations from Corinthians and two from Song of Songs. Further evidence that Alcuin was familiar with, and accepted, Boethius' Consolation is to be found in the preface to De Grammatica. There he describes an ascending

ladder whose rungs represent the seven liberal arts in much the same way as Boethius' Lady Philosophy's own robe displayed an ascending ladder between pi and theta. Again, when Boethius explains through Philosophy how men stray from the path of true happiness:

So you have before you the general pattern of human happiness--wealth, position, power, fame, pleasure....In spite of a clouded memory, the mind seeks its own good, though like a drunkard it cannot find the path home. (III, pr.2)¹⁰

Alcuin's passage in De Grammatica clearly echoes him:

It is easy to show you the way of Wisdom if you love her solely for the sake of God, for knowledge, for purity of soul, in order to understand the truth: in short, for herself and not for the praise of men or worldly honors or the deceiving pleasures. The more you love all these, the further they make you stray from the true light of knowledge in seeking them, just as a drunkard does not know the way home.¹¹

Once again, although the tone is different, many of the words and their meanings remain the same.

Alcuin's affinity for a philosopher such as Boethius is not unreasonable: Alcuin had had exposure to classical and pagan authors while at York, Boethius probably among them, and he may have known Boethius to have been a Christian from his other writings even though the Consolation was not written in overtly Christian terminology. Unlike Boethius, who had been trained in pagan schools, Alcuin's education was a function of his religion, a means by which a fuller understanding of God and Christ and the Scriptures could be attained and salvation hastened. While Boethius sought

intellectually to understand the nature of evil, and in doing so separated faith from reason, Alcuin's education had taught him that spiritual salvation depended in part on teaching and learning. What was for Boethius an intellectual exercise, was for Alcuin a prayer. The issues raised by Boethius--free will, predestination, the greatest good--were questions which were important to Christians, and thus, according to Beaumont, his work may have seemed less secular than other texts studied in the Carolingian schools, though she does not specify what those may have been. Whatever difficulties Boethius may have posed, Alcuin's acceptance of the manuscript as proper matter for study established a tradition of the Consolation which the Carolingian schools would continue after his death, applying the same Christian values as Alcuin to a work which ostensibly stands independently of them.

To illustrate this tradition, it is necessary to examine some of the ninth century scholarship of the Consolation. The earliest surviving glossed copy of the Consolation is from St. Martins, Tours, in the Loire Valley, where Alcuin spent the last years of his life devoted to the school.¹² It has been determined that this manuscript was written shortly after Alcuin's death, in the early years of the ninth century, and the glosses may well reflect Alcuin's own teaching of the work.^{Beaumont} There survive only three other complete glossed texts from the ninth century, two of

which have not been fully examined by scholars, and the third, to which I will return later, is not yet published.¹³ It seems that the text of The Consolation of Philosophy was transmitted to the Carolingian Palace Schools where it was copied, read, and glossed, particularly at Alcuin's own school at Tours.

If the evidence connecting the Carolingian schools with the Boethian text seems thin, it is because so little survives that can be studied. Borrowed phrases, portions of meter, and allegorical expressions which seem come from the Consolation appear throughout the first decades of the ninth century in the writings of the monks and scholars of the Palace Schools. The closing decades of that century reveal, however, a firmer tradition. A commentary on the Consolation appears to have been composed at this time by an unknown continental author, and the title "Anonymous of St. Gall" is generally accepted to identify this work. There are four manuscripts of this work, one written in the ninth century and three in the tenth. The ninth century manuscript came originally from St. Gall, a Columbanian foundation and a monastery and school with a collection of Boethian manuscripts, and it is now in Naples. Two of the three tenth century copies are from St. Gall and Einsiedeln, still in their respective places of origin. The third is of unknown origin: it is now in Paris. The recent work on these texts, done in large part by Courcelle, has not been

conclusive beyond demonstrating the probability that the earlier ninth century St. Gall manuscript formed the basis for the later tenth century commentaries and their revisions. The ninth century St. Gall commentary seeks only to explain, and does not wholly or satisfactorily fulfill this limited purpose: Boethius' reference to Cato in IV pr. 6 is, for example, taken to refer to Plato, and the only explanation of the Roman general Regulus (II pr.6) is that Regulus was the proper name of a Roman. Courcelle pointed out that the anonymous commentary refers to Boethius as a Catholic, and its later revisions preferred orthodoxy to scholarship.¹⁴ Beaumont asserts that the commentary is so poor as to have been virtually unused, thus explaining why there are so few copies surviving today. It may, however, have been little used since, after the turn of the tenth century, Remigius of Auxerre (b.841) produced a fuller and more informative commentary.

The Remigian commentary is the work of a scholar who taught the Consolation and other classical writers. He was responsible for the first school in Paris, one connected with the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Pres, and which was the first school in Paris. He taught Donatus, Priscian, Phocas, Cato, Juvenal, Persius, as well as Boethius, Sedulius, and Martianus Capella, and used the latter in the commentaries on the former. He clearly regarded Boethius as a martyr and Christian. His commentary survives in an

eleventh century manuscript from Treves. In folio 115 is the title Incipit Expositio In Libro Boetii De Consolatione Philosophiae Remigii Autisiodoriensis Magistri, followed by two Lives of Boethius, and then the text of the Consolation with a full commentary in the margins and between the lines (marginal and interlinear). H. F. Stewart extracted the commentary from the text and collated it with another manuscript of the eleventh century in the Ottingen-Wallerstein collection.¹⁵ It is Stewart's opinion that Remigius based his work on commentaries of John the Scot and Heiric, and used his own lecture notes as well. Remigius, in the tradition of Alcuin, perceives philosophy as a means to wisdom, the "intellectual understanding of eternity" and through the study of philosophy, man can better guard against the evil which is inherent in his nature. The purpose of the commentator was to guide the student in the various aspects of the study of the liberal arts, and to turn his mind to the search for true wisdom. In doing this, Remigius freely uses pagan mythology but with a Christian moral emphasis, thus reconciling philosophy and pagan literature with Christian thought. The tendency to Christianize in Remigius is obvious from the nature of his commentary, and in doing this, he does not depart from either his own education or that of others of his time.

The final manuscript, noted earlier, is now MS Vatican, Bibl. Apost., lat. 3363, or simply MS 3363, and is one of

the oldest surviving copies of the Consolation, dating from the mid-ninth century. The meters are in uncial script while the proses are in minuscule, and the manuscript itself was produced in the Loire valley in France, also the site of St. Martins, Tours, although the layout of some meters where two verses are written on each line indicates that its exemplar for the text itself was Italian.¹⁶ The glosses are interlinear and marginal and, though there are changes in the color of the ink and in punctuation styles, they appear to be in the same hand writing at different times within the latter part of the ninth century. Other hands mark the text as well, including that of St. Dunstan, indicating that the manuscript had been in southern England in the tenth century, and reflecting an industry of Boethian scholarship. Information about the manuscript is extremely sparse. M. B. Parkes has examined the work and suggested that it is possible that the handwriting of the commentary is of the late ninth century and contemporary with Asser, though further enlightenment is not possible with the current level of knowledge. It is not inconceivable that this is the manuscript which Asser used to explain the meaning to Alfred.¹⁷ The actual commentary was unavailable to me, since it remains unpublished. This is also the case in the manuscripts mentioned above: none to my knowledge are translated entirely into English.

It seems therefore that the text of the Consolation

found its way to the Frankish court schools in the late eighth century, and possibly as a direct result of Alcuin's interest and activity. It appears to have been Alcuin, with his Christian education and exposure to pagan literature, who both accepted and Christianized the text. Evidence for this "Alcuinian" tradition in the diffusion of the Consolation is to be found in the family of commentaries associated with St. Gall, as well as in the much fuller commentary of Remigius. Before the end of the ninth century, the text of the Consolation (MS 3363) had even made its way into England, where it was glossed in the late ninth century and which may be associated with, at least, the world of Asser, and again on a variety of occasions in the tenth century. In this form it would seem to have exercised a reciprocal influence on the Eisedeln manuscript, itself derived from the ninth century St. Gall manuscript. The role of Anglo-Saxon, or insular, scholars in the preservation, dissemination, and development of the Consolation is thus strongly evident, and it may be that Alcuin, perhaps in association with Aethelberht, is the single key figure in all of this process, which may go some way towards underpinning the view that when Alcuin placed Boethius in the Library at York, it was to the Consolation that he was referring. It must, however, be emphasized that this is pure conjecture, and lacks any proof. What is clear, in addition, is that whatever the

role of English or Irish scholars in the diffusion of the Consolation, it was a role played out on a continental stage. Insular scholars and commentators are prominent, but in continental schools and houses, and it is not, it would seem, until the mid-tenth century that English glosses can be seen to be affecting continental productions, as at Eisiedeln. Finally, though the evidence is of the slightest, there would seem to have been some Italian activity underlying the Frankish, and it may be that what is now seen as an Alcuinian tradition will ultimately turn out to be Italian in derivation. It remains now to consider the derivative of the Alfredian version directly. What then did Alfred have to base his own version on?

Alfred was heir, in general, to a century of commentary on Boethius which had cloaked the late Roman philosopher in Christian clothing. The direct manuscript link with Alfredian England, however, was a Frankish text without commentary, to which glosses were added in what may have been a Welsh hand.¹⁸ The implied connection with Asser is obvious, but difficulties arise when Alfred's text and surviving manuscripts of the ninth century commentaries are compared: no precise match is to be found. As W. F. Bolton states, the Alfredian version "will serve as no pony to its Latin source."¹⁹ And indeed, it need not. What is clear is that whatever Alfred had, it represented almost a century of Carolingian scholarship, of which the Remigius and St. Gall

an abstract God, a Platonic God which is the essence of all the goods which reflect it. These lesser goods point the way to true happiness, but such happiness can only come from ascending upwards to God or the greatest good. Philosophy prays to God, and the prayer "is a kind of summary of the Timaeus." ^{Rand 14} The language of the third book is much more precise and logical, whereas the first two books seem to function on an emotional level.

The syncretic elements become apparent in books II and III; Aristotelian and Platonic allusions and borrowings are scattered throughout, though Boethius goes beyond these philosophers and comes close to enunciating a personal theism:

As, therefore, sufficiency, power, fame, etc., are sought for the sake of the Good itself, it, rather than they, is desired by everyone. But we have agreed that these things are desired for the sake of happiness; happiness then is, just like the Good, that for the sake of which everything else is sought. Wherefore it is clear that the substance of the Good and of happiness is one and the same....And we have shown that God and true happiness are one and the same....Therefore we may safely conclude further that God is ¹⁵ none other than the Good itself. (III, pr.10)

In a prayer that Boethius and Philosophy pray, this theism is even more pronounced: note the use of the word "for" preceding Thou, uncommon in Neoplatonic hymns but common in Christian literature; and the echo of Scripture in the last line:

Grant, Father, that our minds Thy august seat may
scan,

Grant us the sight of true good's source, and
 grant us light
 That we may fix on Thee our mind's unblinded eye.
 Disperse the clouds of earthly matter's cloying
 weight;
 Shine out in all Thy glory; for Thou art rest and
 peace
 To those who worship Thee; to see Thee is our end,
 Who art our source and maker, lord and path and
 goal. (III,9)¹⁶

Although patterned after Plato's Timaeus, Boethius prays to the Being, and, in doing so, seems to affirm that the logical proof offered of this Being's existence is founded on Faith. In a much earlier writing, Tractate I composed in 512, Boethius states this idea clearly by saying that the philosopher only proves something "that stands by itself on the firm foundation of Faith," (Quod si sententiae fidei fundamentis sponte firmissimae opitulante gratia divina idonea argumentorum adiumenta praestitimus...)¹⁷ Rand asserts that Boethius' God reflects a personal theism that is evidenced in his prayer:

The idea of Good is identified with God, though the converse proposition, that God is nothing more than the idea of Goodness, does not follow.¹⁸

Rather than an ordered proof of the existence of God which functions on a spiritual as well as intellectual level, Boethius attempts intellectually to understand the problem of theology, and applies the rules of clear thinking to the parameters of theology.¹⁹

The third book ends by broaching the subject of the relationship of evil and God, and the fourth book picks up this topic immediately. The existence of evil in a world

which is governed by God, which is the ultimate Good, is the fundamental problem that Boethius is attempting to understand. He perceives that evil has been perpetrated on him, a good man, and the entire work revolves around this central question:

But the main cause of my grief is the fact that, though there exists a good Governor of the world, evil can exist at all and even go unpunished. I would have you consider how strange this fact is in itself. But there is an even stranger fact attached hereto: While ill-doing reigns and flourishes, virtue not only lacks its reward but is even trampled underfoot by the wicked, and it, not villainy, is punished. No one could wonder and complain enough that such things should happen under the rule of a God who, while all-knowing and all-powerful, wills good alone. (IV, pr.1)²⁰

Lady Philosophy begins, through question and answer, to lead Boethius to a solution for his dilemma. First, she defines what the nature of man is, and that, Boethius agrees, is to achieve happiness. Since true happiness is striving to be godlike, that is good, then evil men, by going against their nature, are inherently weak and unhappy. Evil men do not exist in the same sense that good men exist, since by being evil they are less than they could be, much like a corpse is a dead man but not a man. When wicked men go unpunished, they are even more unhappy, since by just punishment, they move to the good. Avoidance of the good necessarily leads to unhappiness, since just punishment is justice, which is a good, and by adding a good to an evil man, his happiness is increased more than the evil man who escapes punishment.

Equally bad is the wicked man who receives an unjust punishment, since more evil is heaped upon an already evil figure. Boethius, though, is still not convinced why evil men go unpunished, while good men are overwhelmed by the same:

I wonder greatly why punishments for crimes overwhelm the good while the bad receive rewards for virtues. I long to learn from you what is the reason for such unjust confusion. I should wonder less if I could believe that the general confusion resulted from accident and chance. But now the fact of God's guidance increases my amazement. He often distributes pleasant things to the good and harsh things to the bad and, on the other hand, sends hardships to the good and grants the wishes of the bad. Unless a reason for this is discovered, how would it seem to differ from accident and chance? (IV, pr.5)²¹

Thus Boethius moves to the next question, the nature of Providence and Fate. Lady Philosophy accurately states that this question involves five issues, Fate, Providence, precognition, predestination, and free will. These are certainly central questions which any Christian faces and for which there are no clear answers, and it is to this problem that Boethius applies his logical mind and which the remainder of this book and the next are devoted. For Boethius, as expressed through Lady Philosophy, Fate and Providence are two facets of a single problem: "Providence conceives, fate executes."²² There is a distinction between Providence and Fate, since Providence is simple and eternal, while Fate shifts according to time and is composed of many different acts and agencies. Yet the distinction is not

Neoplatonic for Boethius' paradigm lacks the hierarchy from the abstract God to the evil material of matter, nor does his system include the many different kinds of Fate which the Neoplatonists contrived. The Boethian paradigm is simple: Fate is under the control of a Providence which is "of the very heart of divinity itself,"²³ and this Providence is not relegated to a mere principle among others which fall along the hierarchy from the base to the divine. Indeed, Boethius' analysis consists of a wholesale denial of the fundamental Neoplatonic principles: The hierarchy is leveled and Fate is intimately associated with Divine Providence. Boethius' God, or Deity, is assumed to be personal, as evidenced in his prayer noted earlier, and not merely an abstract Being which occupies the highest rung of a transcendental ladder. Therefore, while Boethius' fate may appear to him to be evil, in fact it may have been the best outcome for him:

For thus are things best governed if the simplicity resident in the divine mind puts forth an order of causes which may not change. This order restrains, by its own unchangeableness, changeable things which might otherwise be in random flux. Wherefore, although to you, who are not strong enough to comprehend this order, all things may appear confused and upset, nevertheless all things are disposed by their own proper measure directing them to the Good. (IV, pr.6)²⁴

Book five, the final book, takes up the issues of predestination, chance, and freedom. It is essentially a discussion which focuses on theodicy, and in it Boethius receives his full consolation. The language of this last

book is complicated and the arguments complex: Philosophy defines foreknowledge as being able to see the future and past as the present, thus when some event in the future is foreseen, it necessarily must occur. Free will, in the simplest terms, is the choice of a variety of actions, and each choice is determined by the individual's free will. Providence, however, already knows which choice will be made, regardless of how man may try to alter the future. Boethius does not entirely solve the issue of free will and predestination.

What is of particular interest is how he ends the entire work:

Wherefore fly vices, embrace virtues, possess your minds with worthy hopes, offer up humble prayers to your highest Prince. There is, if you will not dissemble, a great necessity of doing well imposed upon you, since you live in the sight²⁵ of a Judge who beholdeth all things. (V, pr.6)

This passage reflects a definite Christian orientation: it is not Neoplatonic, nor is it pagan. The Neoplatonic Deity, the highest Good, is no Judge; Boethius' image here is of a highly personal God who sits in judgment on the actions of mortals. Although he uses pagan symbols and Neoplatonic terminology, as well as Platonic and Aristotelian, the essential tone is Christian. Boethius, it seems, was trying to prove faith, Christian faith, with the tools of classical reason, and without specifically relying on the liturgical language of the Church. Christianity, as a

mystery religion resting in large part on revealed Truth, can be anti-intellectual; Boethius was a teacher of philosophy, and his great challenge (it seems to me) was to seek a Christian's consolation which could be defined and expressed in a philosopher's terms. It appears that much of the confusion regarding Boethius' Christianity has resulted from a misunderstanding of what he was trying to accomplish and who he was. It would have been a simple matter for Boethius to seek his consolation in the salvation offered by the Redeemer, but that was not how he was trained, and it was far too simple a solution for a mind such as his. A far greater challenge was to grapple with the problem of chance, free will, evil, and the ultimate Good in philosophical terms which were congruent with Christianity, yet at the same time avoided the language of Christian dogma. Much as he had desired to reconcile Plato and Aristotle, in the Consolation he attempts to reconcile a faith in God with a training in reason. To fail to see the Christianity of Boethius is to fail to comprehend the nature of his task. Boethius assumed his Christianity, assumed his Faith, and set about in what he must have known would have been his last effort, to prove that faith in philosophical terms.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSMISSION OF THE CONSOLATION

The Boethian text of the Consolation was apparently unknown for over two centuries after his death in 524, and it is uncertain exactly what happened to the original. Boethius' wife, the daughter of his adopted father, Symmachus, may have saved the text after Boethius' execution, though even that is speculation. There is virtually no firm evidence that the Consolation was known or read from the time of his death in 524 until Alcuin in the late eighth century. Some works by Boethius did survive and somehow made their way to York in England, though it is unclear exactly what specific works these were. There are, however, no clear records which can prove conclusively when and how Boethius made his way through his writings to England, but a likely supposition is that the founder and first abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow, Benedict Biscop, played some part in the process. He brought manuscripts from Rome during a series of visits in the seventh century to communicate with the pope as well as to acquire books for Wearmouth-Jarrow. Entrusted to Benedict Biscop's care as a child was Bede (d.732), who grew to old age essentially within the walls of Wearmouth-Jarrow, and whose many

ecclesiastical works must have been drawn from a large selection of manuscripts either brought to him or which already existed at Wearmouth-Jarrow.¹ Bede is the embodiment of the remarkable efflorescence of learning in the so-called Northumbrian golden age, and his influence and his pupils played a large part in the school at York. There were other figures besides Bede, and other centers besides Jarrow and York, yet it is to York and its great library that the Boethian trail leads:

[T]he Heads of York provided for the continuance of the school, and for an organization of it which we might call corporate. The system of teaching seems to have been subdivided, specialized, and handed down intact for at least two generations. York became the storehouse and distributor for civilized Europe. Scholars flocked to it from all parts of Germany, Gaul, Italy, and Ireland. The new European schools, desiring a teacher, either sent one of their own men to take, as it were, a degree at York, or fetched to rule over them an Englishman who had to York certificate. If we add to these things the Cathedral, the great library, the collegiate buildings where the teachers and the pupils lived together, something of the image of a University is presented to our eyes.²

Under the direction of Ecgberht (732-766), Bede's pupil, and Aethelberht (766-782), the School at York continued to acquire both books and students. Perhaps following the example of Benedict Biscop almost a century earlier, Aethelberht, the "chief collector and administrator of the famous library"³ set about his own travels to collect books from Gaul and Rome; in fact, the library at York under Aethelberht's direction garnered a

reputation second only to Rome for its library. With such a reputation, it is reasonable that Boethius was included among the many collections. The greatest scholar that York produced was Alcuin (d. 802) who headed the school there and traveled with Aethelberht in his acquisition of books.

The year 782 was a major turning point in the development of English scholarship and learning, for in that year Aethelberht died and Alcuin, who had met Charles the Great in Pavia a year before, left for the Carolingian court to head the new school being established in Gaul. The environment that Alcuin found in Francia was quite different from the one he had left at York. In 796, from Tours, Alcuin wrote to Charlemagne:

But I, your servant, miss to some extent the rarer books of scholastic learning which I had in my own country through the excellent and devoted zeal of my master [Aethelberht] and also through some toil of my own. I tell these things to your Excellency, in case it may perchance be agreeable to your counsel,....that I send some of our pupils to choose there what we need, and to bring into Francia the flowers of Britain; that not in York only there may be a "garden enclosed", but in Tours the "plants of paradise with the fruit of the orchard", that the south wind may come and blow through the gardens by the River Loire⁴ and the aromatical spices thereof may flow....

Clearly Alcuin was not satisfied with the quality of the libraries which he found in Francia and from which he would have to direct his students. In a lengthy poem which enumerates the holdings of the library at York, and which is much too long to reprint here, Alcuin makes the first and

commentaries are examples. This scholarship was predicated on a very different kind of education from that which Boethius had, an education which was firmly rooted in Christian theology. Through the eyes of the ninth century scholar faced with Boethius in the Consolation, it is unlikely that, having been accepted by Alcuin, he would have perceived Boethius as anything but Christian, and any discrepancies could be explained through the use of a commentary. What Alfred had at his hands was a tradition of Christian thought which sought to reconcile the pagan authors.

Much modern scholarship has concerned itself with attempting to determine the relationship between the various surviving continental commentaries and the Alfredian version. The work of Courcelle and Schepss opened the dialogue by comparing the surviving commentaries with each other, then finding the closest companion to Alfred's work. Bolton, Donaghey, Beaumont, and others²⁰ have sought new perspectives on the work of Courcelle and Schepss, and all such efforts have failed to arrive at an acceptable consensus. There is no satisfactory match to be found in the surviving manuscripts as yet examined which can account for all of Alfred's additions: some explanations of terms and myths have their counterparts in Remigius and St. Gall, while others go unaccounted for, but the fundamental fact is that Alfred's treatment is radically different, as I shall

demonstrate later. I would suggest that the wrong questions are being asked. In wrestling with the nature of the Alfredian Consolation, Alfred's own nature must be considered. What was he trying to write and why? If he had been a monk or a scholar at a school or monastery, then the work he produced would have been designed to instruct young minds in the ways of God, much as the Remigius and St. Gall manuscripts do. If, on the other hand, he wanted a text from which he could teach the practical matters of, for example, the administration of justice, then the tone of the finished product would be entirely different. The Alfredian Consolation is a complex production reflecting a complex personality and motivation built upon, but transforming, a ninth century tradition of commentary and explanation. In this context, the question of which commentaries he may or may not have used is an interesting but secondary concern. As I take up this issue and portray the kingdom of Alfred, the nature of his culture and the problems he dealt with, I shall leave behind the paleographers, linguists, philologists, and antiquarians still debating, and needing to debate, about important issues which, when resolved, will illuminate the darkness which at present surrounds not only the history of the Consolation, but of Boethius and his reputation as well, but which can only contribute peripherally to the discussion of the highly individual work which is Alfred's Consolation of Philosophy.

CHAPTER V

ALFRED

The world of Alfred can be characterized as a world in stark contrast with the late Roman milieu of Boethius. The island that the Romans knew as Britain, and its Romano-British inhabitants, had been overrun, much like Rome itself, by the migrations of Teutonic tribes from the continent. Anglo-Saxons supplanted both the Britons and Romans and by Alfred's time, both Anglo-Saxon settlers and Anglo-Saxon culture predominated. This was a culture shaped by the process of conversion to Christianity at the hands of the Irish and Roman missionaries, and achieving a strikingly early maturity. When the rest of the new European West was almost barren of scholarship, the Anglo-Saxon lands were the repository of learning, and the spring-board for the Carolingian Renaissance of the ninth century. The particular heritage of the emerging Anglo-Saxon people coupled with the advent of a king possessing the most extraordinary qualities, and amid the tumult of ninth century England, produced not only the foundations for the management of a kingdom which was to flourish until its feudal metamorphosis in 1066, but also the conditions from which the Alfredian literary initiatives were to derive. The nature of this

early England which Alfred came to rule, who Alfred was, what his perception of his role as king of Wessex was, the character of the man himself and the influences upon him are the focal points of the present discussion. The picture which develops here is one which is at one and the same time both unique and traditional: a new vision displayed on a familiar canvas. What is most clearly evident in analyzing Alfred in his England is that Alfred, shaped and molded by the traditions of the eighth and ninth centuries, used familiar tools in a novel and unique manner. A functional understanding of what those traditions were and how Alfred interpreted and built upon them is integral in composing a portrait of Alfred the man and King, and for that same brief account the history of the the conversion of England is necessary. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons was a complex process by which two distinct cultures and traditions touched and ultimately came into conflict and amalgamation at the Synod of Whitby in 663/4. Much as Boethius was attempting to preserve the works of the Greek Masters for a Greekless culture, Ireland was experiencing what modern scholars have come to call the Irish Golden Age. Since its conversion to Christianity in the fifth century as a result of the efforts of a Briton named Succat, later renamed St. Patrick, the Irish had established a vital and lively monastic milieu which grew independently of Rome. Influenced by the more ascetic nature of eastern

monasticism, in contrast to the moderate Benedictine Rule which developed much later in Monte Cassino in the sixth century, the Irish monasteries of Clonard, Clonmacnois, Bangor, Kells, Clonfert, Armagh, and St. Bridget's at Kildare became centers of learning where Greek as well as Latin was read and taught.¹ Irish society was without the institution of an effective monarchy, being organized along clan or family lines, and thus the organization of the Irish monasticism assumed a very different character. The Irish abbot held a position which was considered more important than a bishop's, and this only makes sense when one considers that the essential organization of the church in Ireland was centered in the monastery, whereas the Roman church's organization was predicated upon the existence of urban dioceses. Much as the organization of the Roman church was patterned after the political organization of the Roman state, so the Irish church assumed a character which closely reflected the character of the Irish society.

There were other insular peculiarities, too. An Irish monk was expected to participate in peregrinatio, that is to go away from familiar surroundings to convert pagans, establish churches and monasteries, or simply to seek God. It is to this ideal that the earliest of the continental monasteries owe their inception, for the work of St. Columban and his followers set the stage upon which the Roman church was to play its role. These Irish hermits,

seeking tranquillity and inflamed by an evangelical zeal, founded colonies on all the northern islands, discovered Iceland, and traveled to Scotland, Britain and the continent. The monastery of Iona, founded in 563 by St. Columba and twelve compatriots, was the home of the missionaries who later built Lindisfarne, the cradle of Northumbrian Christianity, and profoundly influential in moulding the character of northern Christianity to Celtic forms.

Wholly independently, in 597, Gregory the Great sent his emissary, the Benedictine monk Augustine, to the king of Kent to begin the conversion of the fair-haired Anglo-Saxons. With Augustine came not only Christianity, but a Roman, Benedictine Christianity. This was strengthened at Whitby in 663/4 and finally consolidated by Theodore of Tarsus, who, possessing a brilliant mind for organization, firmly established the Roman/Benedictine tradition not only in Kent and Wessex, but throughout the English Church. Yet, although the later seventh century English church adopted Roman ways, it was the admixture of two distinct traditions in the Northumbrian kingdom which produced the "Northumbrian Golden Age," in all its rich diversity and in men like Biscop and Bede, as well as in great works of art.²

It is in this period of the late seventh and early eight centuries that the amalgamation of the Celtic and Roman cultures produced several men whose influence must be

considered. The Celtic church placed great emphasis on ascetic example and peregrinatio. To vigorous individualistic evangelism was added Benedictine order and stabilitas. As a result, the missionary efforts of Wilfrid, Willibrord, and Boniface saw the supplanting of earlier Irish continental initiatives with a more permanent order: motivated by the overwhelming desire for self-exile and moderated by the Benedictine stricture of stabilitas, the efforts of Wilfrid and St. Boniface resulted in the eventual Christianizing of the new lands of the continental West.

In England, too, the Irish influence was strong within the Roman tradition, and two men in particular, Aldhelm (d.705) and Bede (d.732), both reflect that influence. Aldhelm was educated at the Irish monastery of Malmesbury, and later became the first bishop of Sherborne; as a scholar he embodied the amalgamation of the Celtic and Roman traditions. Although his Latin poetry is logarithmic and his prose almost unreadable, he illustrates both the emphasis given in the Irish schools to pagan Latin learning, a learning which was viewed with suspicion by Gregory the Great and Jerome, and the decline of creativity which had been prevalent in the days of Cicero. And it was that unique combination which was to characterize the early Anglo-Saxon centers of learning.

Although scholars were being trained in centers of learning in places such as Canterbury, York, Whitby, and

Malmesbury, no man was more representative of this learning than Bede. Called the "candle" of the Church, he symbolizes early Anglo-Saxon learning. Spending his entire life in the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, in the libraries of Benedict Biscop, Bede's broad education and voluminous writings indicate a great love of learning and teaching. He is concerned not only with Scriptural commentaries, but he ranges from history to the formulation of a calendar based on the birth of Christ. He was theologian, scholar, teacher, monk, and preacher, and, although he virtually never left his beloved libraries, his books and writings were read throughout the (literate) West. Bede represents the height of the Anglo-Saxon intellectual tradition, his History of the English Church and People was translated at Alfred's direction into Anglo-Saxon, and Bede himself had begun to write in the vernacular.

It was through Alcuin, the student of Bede, that this flourishing tradition of learning was transmitted to the emerging Frankish empire of Charles the Great. Alcuin's departure from York also marks a decline of learning and scholarship in England, and the historian must turn to the Carolingian court and its palace school, headed by Alcuin, to follow intellectual developments. Thoroughly trained in the Celtic tradition to love books and knowledge, it was, as we have seen possibly Alcuin who brought the original exemplar of the Consolation of Philosophy to western Europe

to be copied and taught. It was also with Alcuin that the values of monastic Christianity became married to the study of pagan authors, for it was under his tutelege that the Consolation became Christianized and thus appropriate for education and study in the monastic schools. Not all teachers approved his methods or choices of manuscripts; Bovo of Corvey, for example, strongly disapproved of the Consolation in particular, citing the many references to paganism.³ Nonetheless, Alcuin's influence prevailed as exemplified in the works of Remigius of Auxerre. Further, as the head of the palace schools and close to Charlemagne himself, it was Alcuin who was instrumental in shaping the tradition of Carolingian commentary which came to influence Alfred.

When Alfred wrote of the decline of learning in England north of the Humber in his preface to Gregory the Great's Pastoral Care he was referring to the age of Alcuin, Bede, and Aldhelm, of Wearmouth-Jarrow and York. In less than a century, from the last visit of Alcuin to England in 795 to Alfred's succession to the kingship of Wessex in 872, the great schools of York, Lindisfarne, Wearmouth-Jarrow had been devastated and their libraries plundered. The viking raids were primarily responsible for this cultural cataclysm. As the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records, it was the north, in 793, which suffered from them early, and in its highest shrine:

....on 8 June, the ravages of heathen men miserably destroyed God's church on Lindisfarne, with plunder and slaughter.⁴

And one year later, 794, the Chronicle notes:

And the heathens ravaged in Northumbria, and plundered Ecfrieth's monastery at Donemuthan [Jarrow]; and one of their leaders was killed there, and also some of their ships were broken to bits by stormy weather, and many of the men were drowned there. Some reached the shore alive and were immediately killed at the mouth of the river.⁵

It was in the ninth century, however, particularly after 832 that the viking raids were at their most pervasive and devastating--precisely at the time that Egbert, king of the West Saxons and grandfather to Alfred, was achieving the consolidation of that greater Wessex which Alfred was to later defend against the same invaders, and for which he completed his English translations.

The political history of the Heptarchy, or the seven kingdoms of Kent, Wessex, Sussex, Essex, East Anglia, Northumbria and Mercia is a complicated one of constantly changing boundaries and political alliances. Bede spoke of a common overlord, the imperator, and this appears to have been the recognized ruler of all the kingdoms.⁶ Though this rex Britanniae came from different kingdoms at different times, for example three Northumbrian kings had received this designation as had Offa of Mercia, Ethelbert of Kent and Raedwald of East Anglia, it was to Egbert of Wessex that the title is passed. Although Egbert had been exiled to the Frankish kingdom by Offa of Mercia and Brihtric of the West

Saxons, a common occurrence for English royalty who incurred the wrath of of a powerful king, his resumption of control of Wessex and the subjection of Mercia, Surrey, Kent, the South and East Saxons and East Anglia was accomplished in 823. By 827, the Chronicle recognized Egbert's predominance as overlord:

And that year Egbert conquered the kingdom of the Mercians, and everything south of the Humber; and he was the eighth king who was 'Bretwalda.'

Although the Chronicle fails to list Offa of Mercia as of the lineage of Bretwalda, indicating perhaps some lingering resentment of Egbert's exile at his hands, the designation of Egbert as overlord is clear.

Sources such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Asser's Life of King Alfred and William of Malmesbury's Chronicle of the Kings of England all attest not only to the political disruption in the monarchies of the early Anglo-Saxons, but also the overwhelming tumult caused by the invasion of the Danes. Although Egbert had consolidated the southern England into a single kingdom, he continued to be plagued by the vikings ravaging in Northumbria and Kent, and the threat was in no way diminished under his successor, Aethelwulf. Though local rivalries and dynastic disputes contributed to the decay of Anglo-Saxon learning, and although England was losing many of its scholars during the ninth-century to the continent and the Carolingian court,⁸ the eclipse of its culture was in large part the result of the Danish attacks.

The effects of the invasion upon the centers of learning in England cannot be overestimated. When the Great Army disbanded in 896, a once flourishing culture had vanished, and the Church itself had been eclipsed in those areas which the Danes had settled.⁹ The sees of Leicester and Lindsey had been moved to Dorchester-on-Thames, while Dunwich-Walton and Elmham were entirely abandoned. Lindisfarne was vacant of Englishmen and clergy by 835, its monks moving to Chester-le-Street; York somehow continued, though it did not flourish and Whithorn and Hexham were no longer active. Whitby, Bredon, Ripon, and Monkwearmouth had all been destroyed around the year 867.¹⁰ Whatever the causes, the situation facing Alfred in 872 was one in which he confronted not only the political demise of his kingdom and those aligned to him, but also the destruction of that unique and "golden" world of Bede.

Alfred is the only English king who bears the title of "The Great" and it was warranted not only by his wars against the Danes, but by his multi-faceted skills as a leader in battle, as administrator of the realm, and a scholar. It is to the development of these skills that we now turn, and a brief review of the sources of such information is in order. Of all the sources, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is the most reliable, though a bias towards Wessex is strongly evident. The Chronicle, however, in its treatment of Alfred, concerned itself primarily with the

Danish wars. Luckily, Alfred recruited a scholar from Wales, Asser, who not only taught Alfred and assisted in his translations, but himself wrote a hagiographical Life of King Alfred, which has been the subject of much scholarly debate. Asser's Life fleshes out the outline provided by the Chronicle and gives the reader an insight not only into Alfred the man, king, and scholar, but, in a far more subtle manner, reveals how Alfred was regarded by his teacher.

Consider the following passage:

With many complaints, and with heartfelt regrets, he used to declare that among all the difficulties and trials of this life this [the lack of learning at an early age] was the greatest. For at the time when he was of an age to learn, and had the leisure and ability for it, he had no masters; but when he was older, and indeed to a certain extent had anxious masters and writers, he could not read. For he was occupied day and night without ceasing both with illness unknown to all the physicians of that island, and with the cares of the royal office both at home and abroad, and with the assaults of the heathen by land and sea. None the less, amid the difficulties of this life, from his infancy to the present day, he has not in the past faltered in his earnest pursuit of knowledge, nor does he even now cease to long for it, nor, as I think, will he ever do so until the end of his life.

Asser reveals a sensitivity to the human side of Alfred, the suffering monarch who regrets having been born in a time when he could not learn as he would have wished, yet continues to pursue knowledge and encourages the same in others. The reader of Asser, while understanding that Asser undoubtedly admired Alfred, can achieve a sense of Alfred the man, a man who, although he is king, had great longings

for another kind of life filled with books. Asser describes Alfred's early love of books :

Now it chanced on a certain day that his mother showed to him and his brothers a book of Saxon poetry, which she had in her hand, and said, "I will give this book to that one among you who shall the most quickly learn it." Then, moved at these words, or rather by the inspiration of God, and being carried away by the initial letter in that book, anticipating his brothers who surpassed him in years but not in grace, he answered his mother, and said, " Will you of a truth give that book to one of us? To him who shall soonest understand it and repeat it to you?" And at this she smiled and was pleased, and affirmed it, saying, "I will give it to him." Then forthwith he took the book from her and went to his master, and read it; and when he had read it he brought it back to his mother and repeated it to her.¹²

More hagiographical and further removed, and thus less reliable than either Asser or the Chronicle, is the twelfth century composition of William of Malmesbury's Chronicle of the Kings of England. Himself born about 1096, and thus well after the Norman conquest, William offers a history of the English monarchs, and draws on the Annals of St. Neots itself built upon Asser. The story of Alfred's first book is related by William:

....the king gave his whole soul to the cultivation of the liberal arts, insomuch that no Englishman was quicker in comprehending, or more elegant in translating. This was the more remarkable, because until twelve years of age he absolutely knew nothing of literature. At that time, lured by a kind mother, who under the mask of amusement promised that he should have a little book which she held in her hand for a present if he would learn it quickly, he entered upon learning in sport indeed at first, but afterwards drank of the stream with unquenchable avidity.¹³

William of Malmesbury has a very different attitude about Alfred that is less personal and more hagiographical, and it has generally been dismissed as unreliable. We came closer to Alfred in his own writings the preface to Gregory the Great's Pastoral Care, for example, and the preface to Alfred's Laws. Though there may be some question as to whether some of these writings were genuinely Alfred's, they do at least reflect his attitudes. If there is doubt about Malmesbury's or even Asser's account of Alfred's love of learning, consider what Alfred says himself:

So completely had learning decayed in England that there were very few men on this side of the Humber who could apprehend their services in English or even translate a letter from Latin into English, and I think that there were not many beyond the Humber. There were so few of them that I cannot even recollect a single one south of the Thames when I succeeded to the kingdom. Thanks be to God Almighty that we now have any provision of teachers. And therefore I charge you to do, as I believe you are willing, detach yourself as often as you can from the affairs of the world, to the end that you may apply that wisdom which God has granted you wherever you may be able to apply it. Remember what temporal punishments [the invasions] came upon us, when we neither loved wisdom ourselves nor allowed it to other men; we possessed only the name of Christians, and very few possessed the virtues.¹⁴

Though the sources are fragmentary, then, sometimes hagiographical, sometimes of dubious authenticity, they can be used to produce a picture of Alfred, and to indicate the type of milieu in which he functioned.¹⁵

Alfred's birthdate is not established clearly in either Asser or the Chronicle; the Chronicle notes that in 853

Aethelwulf sent his son Alfred to Rome and Asser verifies this, adding that this was in Alfred's eleventh year. However, in a prior passage for 851, Asser notes that this was in Alfred's third year of life, and in another chronicle, that of Simeon of Durham, writing in the twelfth century, the year 854 is noted as Alfred's sixth year.¹⁶ However, in two other passages from Asser, the years 867 and 869 are noted as Alfred's 19th and 21st years of life respectively. It seems likely, then, that Alfred was born in 848 or 849. If we can accept 848 as his year of birth, then Alfred made his first visit to Rome at the age of five. On the first trip, he met the pope and was "consecrated" king, which, though it is more likely that he was given the honorary insignia of consul rather than the kingship, surely impressed Alfred with the pomp and glory of Rome.¹⁷ Alfred's role during the second trip is obscure, and the entries in the Chronicle and in Asser shed little light on the matter. From the events surrounding Aethelwulf's return, however, it can be surmised that this journey was more than just a pilgrimage to Peter's See. Athelstan, Aethelwulf's son, had been given the kingdom of Kent and the West Saxons in 836, a position which Aethelwulf had held under king Egbert. After Aethelwulf had gone to Rome, a twelve month sojourn, his other son, Aethelbald, having been left in charge of Wessex, attempted to usurp the throne in his father's absence with the help of bishop Ealhstan and

the ealdorman who governed the eastern provinces. Aethelwulf, however, insured a successful return to his kingdom by associating himself by marriage with the Frankish royal house and taking as wife the thirteen year old Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald. When Aethelwulf did return to England the insurrection was aborted by a compromise, and Wessex was given to Athelbald. Alfred, then at an early age, had had a first-hand experience of the well-structured Frankish court, and the eternal city of Rome. To the adult Alfred, these other courts contrasted sharply with the court his father, his brothers Aethelbald, Ethelbert, and then Ethelred, and, finally, he himself headed, and may have influenced him in the policies he later pursued.

If Egbert's reign can be considered one of enlargement of the lands within the purvue of West Saxon royalty, then those of his successors must be characterized as defensive, both internally and externally. Alfred's childhood and youthful years were full of warfare and uncertainty. In 851, two years before Alfred was first sent to Rome, Aethelwulf faced a large Danish fleet at the mouth of the Thames, a force which had already defeated Brihtwulf, king of the Mercians, and he defeated the Danes at Aclea only after London and Canterbury had been stormed. King Athelstan won a decisive victory at the coastal city of Sandwich, capturing nine ships that same year, while for the first time, the Danes wintered on the island of Thanet, just

off the coast of Kent. Two years later in 853, Aethelwulf cemented an alliance with Burgred, a recent successor to the throne of Mercia, by helping him to subject the Welsh to Burgred's authority and giving Burgred his daughter in marriage. The Danes who had wintered in 851 on Thanet were defeated there by a combined army of Kent, Huda and Surrey, the English losses including two ealdormen. In 855, the year that Aethelwulf gave a tenth of his lands to the Church and journeyed to Rome, the Danes wintered on Sheppey, a small island near the mouth of the Thames. Two years after Aethelwulf's return to England, he died and his treacherous son, Aethelbald not only succeeded to the throne, but also married Judith, his own stepmother. Ethelbert became king of the East Saxons, Kent, Surrey and the South Saxons. By 860, Aethelbald was dead and Ethelbert became king of the whole kingdom, and ruled without the internal strife which had disrupted the latter part of his father's reign. During Ethelbert's reign of five years, the Danes stormed Winchester in the south of England near the Test river, and a combined force from Hampshire and Berkshire was required to defeat them. In the year of Ethelbert's death, the Danes once again took Thanet, demanded and received tribute from Kent for peace, and then proceeded to ravage eastern Kent. By the time Ethelred succeeded to the throne in 865, the Danes had taken winter quarters in East Anglia, where they received horses. It is at this juncture that the Danes

changed from a piratical force to a land-based army intent on settlement rather than just raiding; from East Anglia, in 867 they moved into Northumbria, across the Humber, to York, where the Northumbrians set aside their own internal political differences and attacked them. The battle was a cataclysmic defeat for the Northumbrian army, and both kings, the deposed Osbert and the usurper, Aella, were killed. Having destroyed the Northumbrian kingdom, a peace was made and the Danes moved to Nottingham in Mercia for the winter. In 868, Burgred of Mercia appealed to Ethelred for help in removing the Danes from his lands. Asser reports that in this year, Alfred obtained a wife from a royal family of Mercia, and, with the two kingdoms allied again by marriage, Ethelred and Alfred accompanied the West Saxon army to engage the Danes at Nottingham. The Danes had built a fortress there and would not give battle to the English; a peace was made with the Mercians. Returning to York the following year, the Great Army rode south in 870 to Thetford in East Anglia for winter quarters; Edmund, consecrated king in 856 at the age of fourteen, faced the Danes and was killed, and his land conquered. 871 saw the Great Army ride south to Reading, in south-central England on the Thames; the Danes were engaged by the ealdorman Aethelwulf and later by Ethelred and Alfred, "and the Danes had possession of the battlefield."¹⁸ According to the Chronicle, four days later, Ethelred and Alfred fought the Danes at Ashdown,

where the Chronicle cites this episode:

But Alfred and his men, as we have heard from the accounts of truth-telling eye-witnesses, came to the place of battle the more rapidly and readily. For his brother, King Ethelred, was still in his tent, praying fervently and hearing Mass, and he stoutly declared that he would not depart thence alive until the priest had made an end of saying Mass.¹⁹

The battle was heated, Alfred attacking the underlords and Ethelred advancing against the Danish kings, the Great Army having divided itself thus. Two Danish kings were killed, as were five "jarls" or sublords, and the Christians "pursued them until dark and everywhere laid them low."²⁰ It was later that year that Ethelred died, and Alfred succeeded to the West Saxon throne.

At the age of 24, Alfred had journeyed to Rome twice, witnessed an insurrection by his older brother, watched his three brothers ascend the throne and die, saw what had been sporadic raids by the vikings become a Great Army which occupied East Anglia, Northumbria, portions of Mercia and threatened his own Wessex, and was a veteran of some of the fiercest battles between the Danes and the Christians. It is difficult to conceive of a more arduous and onerous task than the one which faced him in 872 after Ethelred's death:

He began to reign, then, as it were against his will, inasmuch as he did not think that it was within his power, trusting in the aid of God alone, ever to withstand such great fierceness of the heathen, since, while his brothers yet lived, he had suffered many and manifold trials.¹⁻³⁰

What, then, were Alfred's accomplishments? The most

immediate threat, clearly, was the presence of an enemy with a land-based force and seemingly intent upon colonization. Faced with an army which he could not defeat consistently on land Alfred began to alter his tactics, one example of how he used traditional tools in novel ways: instead of limiting his assaults to land, Alfred took the battle to the seas, capturing one Danish vessel out of six or seven, and putting the rest to flight. This must have surprised the Vikings, who had long relied on the seas and waterways of England for their raids, for this is the first instance where the Anglo-Saxons used their boats for the purpose of engaging the Danes, and it was one which they turned to on several occasions later. Nonetheless, the land forces of the Danes moved from Cambridge south to Wareham, in the middle of the southern coast, under the cover of night. Alfred made a "sure agreement"²² with them which included the taking of Danish hostages and the swearing of oaths on the holy ring of the Danes, a "thing which they would not do before for any nation."²³ Regardless of the ceremony, while Healfdene was sharing out the land of the Northumbrians and the northern army turned to settlement and cultivating, the southern army:

....as was ever its custom, it acted deceitfully, and considered neither the hostages nor its oath, nor the faith which it had sworn. For upon a certain night it broke the treaty, and dispatched all the horsemen that it had westwards into Devonshire, and it made a sudden raid upon another place which²⁴ is called in the Saxon tongue Exeter....

Asser reports that more heathen were arriving every day,²⁵ and Alfred responded by ordering that long ships be built so that he might continue to battle the Danes on the seas before they reached England rather than after.

Following his fugitive sojourn at Athelney in 878, Alfred won a decisive battle at Edington and, in 880, was able to achieve a more lasting peace. The Danes once again began a series of attacks in 892 but by then, Alfred had established a system of military duty, built burhs, designed ships (though not too well it seems), and effectively prevented the Danes from achieving the successes of a quarter of a century earlier. Although Alfred was never free from war or the threat of war, the initiatives and innovations which he undertook under pressure of attack, and necessity, became the foundations upon which his son, Edward the Elder, and grandsons would build the kingdom of England.

Amongst all the problems which faced him, the collapse of the Church and learning was of great concern to Alfred. It threatened not only the existence of Christianity, but the very basis of government itself. Literacy and education were necessary if effective royal rule was to be sustained and executed. As Asser records, as soon as he had any respite from the Vikings, Alfred sought out scholars wherever he could find them:

He would obtain, whencesoever he could, those who might assist his righteous intention and who might be able to aid him in acquiring the wisdom

for which he longed, whereby he should gain his passionate desire. As the prudent bee in time of summer leaves the cells that it loves at dawn of day, and steers its course, swiftly flying, through the unknown ways of the air, and pitches upon many and divers blooms of herbs and plants and fruits, finding that which best pleases it and bearing it home, so the king turned the gaze of his mind afar and sought from abroad that which he had not at home, that is, in his own kingdom.²⁶

Looking first northward to Mercia, Alfred recruited Werferth, bishop of Worcester, "who was well learned in the Holy Scriptures."²⁷ Aethelstan and Werwulf as well came from Mercia at about the same time, in the late 880's, and Plegmund followed shortly after, to be installed as archbishop of Canterbury in 890. Plegmund had been well recommended by the archbishop of Rheims, Fulk, and from this same archbishop, Alfred requested a monk named Grimbald, who came to him in 886-7. John the Old Saxon came from Germany and was installed as abbot of Alfred's new monastery at Athelney, where his strict rules and foreign conventions alienated the other monks. Asser, Alfred's biographer, came from Wales in early 886.²⁸ The specific roles of Werwulf and Aethelstan are unclear, but Werferth is known to have translated Gregory the Great's Dialogues into Anglo-Saxon, while Plegmund, John and Grimbald assisted in the translation of Gregory's Cura Pastoralis. Asser, for his part, had an early, crucial role in Alfred's personal education:

For when we were one day sitting together in the royal chamber and were holding converse upon divers topics, as our wont was, it chanced that I

repeated to him a quotation from a certain book. And when he had listened attentively to this with all his ears, and had carefully pondered it in the deep of his mind, suddenly he showed me a little book, which he carried constantly in the fold of his cloak. In it were written the Daily Course, and certain psalms, and some prayers, which he had read in his youth, and he commanded that I should write that quotation in the same little book.

....But I found no empty space in that same book in the which I might write that quotation, since it was altogether filled with many matters.

....And I....made ready a book of several leaves, in haste, and at the beginning of it I wrote that quotation according to his command. And on the same day, by his order, I wrote in the same book no less than three other quotations pleasing to him, as I had foretold.

Now from the time of the writing of that first quotation, he straightway stove earnestly to read and to translate into the Saxon tongue, and after that to teach many others.²⁹

Alfred himself describes, in his preface to Gregory's Cura Pastoralis, how the other "helpers" assisted him:

When I remembered how the knowledge of the Latin language had previously decayed throughout England, and yet many could read things written in English, I began in the midst of the other various and manifold cares of this kingdom to turn into English the book which is called in Latin Pastoralis and in English 'Shepherdbook,' sometimes word for word, sometimes by paraphrase; as I had learnt it from my Archbishop Plegmund, and my Bishop Asser, and my priest Grimbald and my priest John. When I had learnt it, I turned it into English according as I understood it and as I could render it most intelligibly; and I will send one to every see in my kingdom; and₃₀ in each will be a book-marker worth 50 mancuses.

Alfred's acquisition of scholars from without his kingdom was not unlike Charlemagne's own plan of education; though there was no English palace school under that name, the recruitment of court scholars on the continental model was an important and influential undertaking. But though

the model was Frankish, the execution was novel: Alfred might recruit scholars, but he also chose to learn to read and translate himself and to direct the whole program by personal involvement. Unlike Charlemagne, and although he took a minimal initiative in establishing monasteries, he sought to educate his clergy and advisors through the medium of the vernacular which his subjects could read, or at least hear with comprehension. Anglo-Saxon culture had an ancient and strong aural tradition. Alfred himself had listened attentively to Saxon poems when he had no masters to teach him to read, and the translation of important Latin texts into the vernacular would make available to large segments of his society "wisdom" which would otherwise have been unavailable. Yet, it needs to be asked who Alfred made these translations for, and what exactly it was that he translated?

It seems that Alfred's first translation, the Cura Pastoralis was completed by 890, or shortly thereafter.³¹ This was followed by the translations of Bede's Ecclesiastical History, Orosius' Historia adversus Paganos, Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, and finally Augustine's Soliloquies, which Alfred called Blossoms. For Alfred, a pious man, the reestablishment of the ecclesiastical life, both secular and regular was essential to the reconstruction of his kingdom. Fulk of Rheims, in an abstract of his letter to Alfred in connection with Plegmund's appointment to the

archbishopric of Canterbury, commented and advised on the conditions of the times:

To Alfred, a king across the sea, he sent friendly letters, thanking him that he had appointed a man so good and devout and suitable according to the rules of the Church as bishop in the city called Canterbury. For he had heard that he was concerned to cut down with the sword of the word that most perverse opinion, arisen from pagan errors, until then surviving among that people. This opinion seemed to permit bishops and priests to have women living near them, and anyone, who wished, to approach kinswomen of his own stock, and, moreover, to defile women consecrated to God, and, although married, to have at the same time a concubine. How contrary all these things are to sound faith he showed by most convincing examples and cites₃₂ in support the authority of the holy fathers.

In another letter addressing Alfred's request for Grimbold, Fulk expresses both his hope that Alfred can rebuild the monastic tradition and his opinion of the state of affairs in England:

....you administer strenuously the profit of the kingdom committed to you from above, both by striving for and defending its peace with warlike weapons, with the divine assistance, and by earnestly desiring with a religious heart to raise the dignity of the ecclesiastical order with spiritual weapons. Hence we beseech the heavenly clemency with unwearied prayers...in order that peace may increase for your kingdom and your people in your days, and also that the ecclesiastical order--which, as you say, has fallen in ruins in many respects, whether by the frequent invasion and attack of pagans, whether by the great passage of time or the carelessness of prelates or the ignorance of those subject to them--may be reformed, improved and extended by₃₃ your diligence and zeal as quickly as possible.

Thus the first priority after securing peace in the realm was to reestablish the ecclesiastical order, and to do

this Alfred needed an educational program designed for a clergy who could not read Latin. To Alfred, the Cura Pastoralis, a handbook for the clergy written by the pope who had sent Augustine to Canterbury, seemed to be the perfect tool. His translation of this work is fairly exact and faithful to the original, owing in part to the subject matter of the book, the aid rendered by his helpers, and, perhaps, to Alfred's own inexperience at translation, which limited his individuality. However, as Alfred became more skilled, his translations took on a more personal tone, as well as being better adapted to the Anglo-Saxon community.

The next two translations reflect Alfred's interest in history, a history which was threatened with eclipse by the destruction of the libraries and books in which it was embodied. Though Bede was Anglo-Saxon, he wrote almost entirely in Latin, and his Ecclesiastical History was essentially worthless to a Latinless clergy. To that translation Alfred added another historical work. Orosius' History is similar in that it was written against a background of Christian civility and order. Written at the behest of Augustine of Hippo, whose own City of God had a similar origin, Orosius' History served as both an historical text and a moral teacher. Alfred's treatment of Bede's work was precise with the exception that he excluded many of the documents found in the Latin version, as well as the account of the Easter controversy which preceded the

Synod of Whitby. In Orosius, however, Alfred used a freer hand, and included a section on the geography of the lands of the Danes, a subject which had an obvious interest for him and his people. In altering this text from the late Roman period, Alfred made the work relevant to Anglo-Saxons of the ninth century. This developing boldness and originality in the translation, which increasingly reflected his own hand, is perhaps best seen in the preface to his last translation, St. Augustine's Soliloquies:

Then I gathered for myself staves and props and bars, and handles for all the tools I knew how to use, and crossbars and beams for all the structures which I knew how to build, the fairest pieces of timber, as many as I could carry. I neither came home with a single load, nor did it suit me to bring home all the wood, even if I could have carried it. In each tree I saw something that I required at home. For I advise each of those who is strong and has many weapons, to plan to go to the same wood where I cut these props, and fetch for himself more there, and load his wagons with fair rods, so that he can plait many a fine wall, and put up many a peerless building, and build a fair enclosure with them; and may dwell therein pleasantly and at his ease winter and summer, as I have not yet done.³⁴

I have read this passage many times, and each time I feel great sympathy for the king who, in great pain and through great turmoil, went to the "wood" for his people, choosing that which seemed to him best. He could have chosen differently or, like his predecessors, not chosen at all, but unlike them he was driven by a purpose at once principled and practical. The pathos of Alfred is that he never had the opportunity to dwell in his enclosure: that

was for others to enjoy.

The clearest examples of Alfred's process of selection, and his originality of expression and use is best exemplified in his Laws and in his translation of Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, which will be discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter. Alfred himself reveals how he came to promulgate his Laws:

Then I, King alfred, collected these together and ordered to be written many of them which our forefathers observed, those which I liked; and many of those which I did not like, I rejected with the advice of my councillors, and ordered them to be differently observed. For I dared not presume to set in writing at all many of my own, because it was unknown to me what would please those who should come after us. But those which I found anywhere, which seemed to me most just, either of the time of my kinsman, King Ine, or of Offa, king of the Mercians, or of Ethelbert, who first among the English received baptism,³⁵ I collected herein, and omitted the others.

For the first time in English history, laws were gathered outside the traditions of a single kingdom or people, the kingdom of Wessex, in much the same way as Alfred had recruited scholars and manuscripts from outside his kingdom and his race. In relying on the traditional, yet at the same time utilizing those traditions in novel ways, Alfred proceeded to reshape his kingdom in every respect, and to lasting effect.

CHAPTER VI

ALFRED'S CONSOLATION

By the time that the Consolation reached Alfred, it had already undergone substantial transformation at the hands of continental and Carolingian commentators. The textual history of the work, despite recent scholarship, remains obscure and conjectural, but if it is at present unclear which version of the Consolation reached Alfred, it is plain that this question is of secondary importance in the consideration of the Alfredian version. Whichever version was the foundation of Alfred's work, his treatment of it made it substantially his own, and earlier commentaries had the function of making accessible and intelligible to Alfred and his circle a treatise which, in its original form, would have been wholly foreign to his experience and understanding. In this section, Alfred's understanding of that work, his attitude about it and his treatment of it will be considered.

Space precludes a line-by-line comparison of the two texts.¹ But, some of the most outstanding discrepancies are noted below. Two primary theories have arisen concerning the nature of the Alfredian alterations: F. Anne Payne has suggested that the limitations of the Anglo-Saxon language

were such that Alfred simply could not express the ideas and concepts contained within the Boethian text. Another theory, advanced by Kurt Otten, asserts that Alfred relied heavily on commentaries and that the text or texts which he had to translate from were so altered that the original Boethian text had been substantially changed. W. F. Bolton, however, has generally refuted Payne's contention by showing that Alfred was capable of expressing concepts quite as complex as those in Boethius' text. It was Bolton's further suggestion that Alfred, a man of tradition, had relied on the traditional interpretation of the Consolation which had grown out of the Carolingian palace schools, merely adding some of his own thought to make the final work intelligible to his people. It my own conclusion that while Alfred indeed had a text or texts which contained commentaries, and from which he derived some of the information contained in the version of the Consolation which he composed, it was not simply a translation which he completed but an original work which was roughly based on the Latin version available to him.

The Alfredian version of the Consolation offers some interesting and unique differences from the Latin original. It may be called a "translation" only in the loosest sense: what began as five books of prose and meter became under Alfred forty-two books of prose. Little or no book-by-book comparison is therefore possible. The proper term must then

be Alfred's "version" since the term translation implies that Alfred simply made available in Anglo-Saxon what had been written in Latin. The nature of Alfred's additions, deletions and transmutations cannot either be completely attributable to the commentaries which he had at his disposal, nor would an actual determination of what those commentaries contained reveal a great deal about the nature of his version. A more precise insight into what Alfred changed and why can be gleaned from his own words, quoted earlier:

Then I gathered for myself staves and props and bars, and handles for all the tools I knew how to use, and crossbars and beams for all the structures which I knew how to build, the fairest pieces of timber, as many as I could carry. I neither came home with a single load, nor did it suit me to bring home all the wood, even if I could have carried it. In each tree I saw something that I required at home.²

With such a statement, it would be unlikely that Alfred would have relied entirely upon any one commentary or translated word for word a text which he felt was useful. He never intended to "bring home all the wood," and when we look to Alfred's version of the Consolation we must not expect to find clear indicators to any specific commentary or text, for the final product was to be Alfred's own "building," from timber of his own choosing.

The first indication that Alfred intended to create an original work is the nature of the restructuring of the book. The Alfredian version bears "no consistent structural

relationship to its source,"³ and this can easily be seen in Alfred's division of the books. Where Boethius divided Book IV and V, Alfred places the division within chapter 40 between proses 4 and 5; when Boethius discusses Mt. Aetna in II, pr.6, Alfred offers his own interpretation in two chapters, 15 and 16. The Boethian text, as noted earlier, is written in the Mennippean satirical style, that is, with meters or poetry interspersed between prose passages and which either introduce or summarize adjoining prose; Alfred, on the other hand, includes all of the poetry at the end of the book almost as an addendum. In fact, there are far more differences in the structures of the two texts than there are similarities. In altering the basic structure of the Consolation, Alfred frees himself from the constraints of a strict translation, expanding certain passages and moving others for emphasis in order to make the Anglo-Saxon version more suitable for the need which he hoped it would fulfill.

More important than the structural differences between the books are the textual disparities between Alfred's Consolation and Boethius' final work. The alterations which Alfred made to Boethius' Consolation fall into four broad categories: additions whose function it is to explain people, places, or things which would be completely unfamiliar to the Anglo-Saxon audience; additions and alterations which make ideas and concepts in the Boethian

text compatible with traditional Anglo-Saxon thought or additions which reflect Alfred's personal viewpoint; additions which make specific references to Christian ideology or theology, thus Christianizing the text; and omission of Boethian passages which are incongruent or irrelevant to the general focus of the Alfredian version. Because of the substantial number of changes that Alfred made in creating his version of the Consolation, not every occurrence of each category will be given; nonetheless, a clear idea of the thrust of Alfred's text will be illustrated with the knowledge that there exist in the text many other examples.

Boethius made many references to people and places which he assumed would be familiar to the readers of his own time. In Book II, prose 7, Boethius, through Lady Philosophy, examines how limited is fame:

Furthermore, this narrow enclosure of habitation is itself peopled by many races, which differ in their language, in their customs, in their whole scheme of living; and owing to difficulty of travel, diversity of speech, and rarity of intercourse there cannot reach them the fame even of cities, much less of individual men. Cicero himself has written somewhere that in his time the fame of Rome had not yet crossed the mountains of the Caucasus, and yet the Republic was then mature and formidable to the Parthians and other nations on those parts. Do you see, then, how narrowly limited must be the glory which you labor to extend more widely? Where the name of Rome cannot pass, will the fame of a Roman ever come?⁴

Alfred chose to elaborate on this passage in a terminology which his audience could understand in chapter eighteen,

prose 2:

Consider also that in this little park which we before have spoken about, dwell very many nations, and various, and very unlike both in speech, and in manners, and in all the customs of all the nations, which ye now very immoderately desire that ye should spread your name over. This ye never can do, because their language is divided into seventy-two; and every one of these languages is divided among many nations, and they are separated and divided by sea, and by woods, and by mountains, and by fens, and by many and various wastes, and impassable lands, so that even merchants do not visit it. But how, then, can any great man's name singly come there, when no man there hears even the name of the city, or of the country, of which he is an inhabitant? Moreover, thou knowest how great the power of the Romans was in the days of Marcus, the consul, who was by another name Tullius, and by a third Cicero. But he had shown in one of his books, that, as then, the Roman name had not passed beyond the mountains that we call Caucasus, nor had the Scythians who dwell on the other side of those mountains even heard the name of the city or of the people: But at that time it had first come to the Parthians, and was then very new. But nevertheless it was very terrible thereabout to many a people. Do ye not then perceive how narrow this your fame will be, which ye labour about, and unrighteously toil to spread? How great fame, and how great honour, dost thou think one Roman could have in that land, where even the name of the city was never heard, nor did the fame of the whole people ever come?

Although considerably longer than its Latin counterpart, Alfred was quite economical in his prose; his purpose here is to educate his reader about Cicero as well as about the nature of the world beyond the shores of England. This tendency of Alfred's to educate his reader is further evidenced in his treatment of Aetna which occurs in two passages. First, consider Boethius' reference to Aetna:

What am I to say of offices and authority, which

you extol to heaven, not knowing what true dignities and dominion mean? What Aetnas, belching forth flames, what overwhelming flood could deal such ruin as these when they fall into the hands of evil men? I am sure you remember how your ancestors wished to do away with the Consular power, which had been the very foundation of liberty, on account of its holders' arrogance, just as your forefathers had too in earlier times expunged from the state the name of King on account of the same arrogance. (II, pr.6)⁶

In the following two quotations, the first at the end of book fifteen and the second in book sixteen, the pedagogical tone of Alfred is clear:

But now the covetousness of men is as burning as the fire in hell, which is in the mountain that is called Aetna, in the island that is called Sicily. The mountain is always burning with brimstone, and burns up all the near places thereabout.

Will he not then do as they did, and still do? slay and destroy all the rich who are under, or anywhere near him, as the flame of fire does the dry heath field, or as the burning brimstone burneth the mountain which we call Aetna, which is in the island of Sicily? very like to the great flood which was formerly in Noah's days. I think that thou mayest remember that your ancient Roman senators formerly, in the days of Tarquin the proud king, on account of his arrogance first banished the kingly name from the city of Rome. And again, in like manner, the consuls who had driven them out, these they were afterwards desirous to expel on account of their arrogance (but they could not); because the latter government of the consuls still less pleased the Roman senators, than the former of the kings.

Clearly, Boethius is saying that the dignity of office depends entirely on the men who hold that office, and his reference to Aetnas is a metaphor for the destructive capability inherent in holding such power. Alfred, however, is teaching another lesson: he describes where Aetna is and

how terrible is its fury, as noted in the first selection, and then builds on that image, previously unfamiliar to the Anglo-Saxon, to illustrate the destructiveness of abused power, and links it, including a reference to Noah and the flood, to an event which was renamed for its destructiveness and which any proper Christian would know.

By making Boethius' "overwhelming flood" into "Noah's" flood, Alfred is adding to the text an idea with which his readers can identify. He continues to do this with other, more obscure Boethian concepts and with which he has to contend. At the very beginning of the Latin Consolation, Philosophy dismisses the Muses of poetry from Boethius' cell so that the Muses of Philosophy can administer their own cure, and this occurs after a description of Lady Philosophy; Alfred chose to describe Wisdom after he (Alfred also changed the sex of Philosophy when he changed the name) had cast out the "worldly cares" from Boethius' mind and turned Boethius toward his "precepts" (Ch.3,pr.1). Substituting "worldly cares" (woruldsorga) for Boethius' Muses, though changing the meaning somewhat, actually makes the passage more relevant to a Christian reader in the late ninth century. The mythological figures of the sixth century had long been replaced by Christian figures such as angels and demons; the ninth century culture did not understand the full implications of creatures like the Muses of poetry as Boethius' readers would have. Though the concept itself was

not incompatible, the terminology was incongruent with the terms which a ninth century reader would have been familiar and have easily understood.

In addition to substituting or altering the terms and ideas of Boethius' work to make them more accessible, Alfred used his book as a format for his own original additions for which there is no counterpart or corollary in any commentary. In Book II, prose 7, Boethius pleads his purity of motive to Lady Philosophy and denies that he ever cared much for earthly power and fame:

O Philosophy, thou knowest that I never greatly delighted in covetousness and the possession of earthly power, nor longed for this authority. [I desired the best tools so that virtue would not pass quietly unpraised.]

(Tum ego, scis, inquam, ipsa minimum nobis ambitionem mortalium rerum fuisse dominatam; sed materiam gerendis rebus optavimus, quo ne virtus tacita consenesceret.)

Alfred, however, adds quite a different flavor to this passage which reflects his own concerns about his role as a king:

O Reason, indeed thou knowest that covetousness and the greatness of this earthly power never well pleased me, nor did I altogether very much yearn after this earthly authority. But nevertheless I was desirous of materials for the work which I was commanded to perform; that was, that I might honourably and fitly guide and exercise the power which was committed to me. Moreover, thou knowest that no man can show any skill, nor exercise or control any power, without tools and materials. That is, of every craft the materials, without which man cannot exercise the craft. This, then, is a king's materials and his tools to reign with: that he have his land well peopled; he must have prayer-men, and soldiers, and workmen. Thou knowest that without these tools no king can show his craft.

This is also his materials which he must have besides the tools: provisions for the three classes. This is, then, their provision: land to inhabit, and gifts and weapons, and meat, and ale, and clothes, and whatsoever is necessary for the three classes. He cannot without these preserve the tools, nor without the tool accomplish those things which he is commanded to perform. Therefore I was desirous of materials wherewith to exercise the power, that my talents and power should not be forgotten and concealed. For every craft and every power soon becomes old, and is passed over in silence, if it be without wisdom. Because whatsoever is done through folly, no one can ever reckon for craft. This is now especially to be said; that I wished to live honourably whilst I lived, and after my life, to leave to the men who were after me, my memory in good works.

Alfred, continues the text with Wisdom's admonition that fame is fleeting and limited. In so doing he offers an accurate interpretation of the Boethian text and at the same time makes it vividly sensible and practical to Anglo-Saxon readers. Perhaps his early exposure to Saxon poems and the role of the hero therein influenced his own view of his role as king, and this sense of history may have underlined the motivation for many of his writings, either commissioned or by his own hand. While he may not have actively sought fame, Alfred did not want men to forget what he had accomplished, and, to some degree, how he accomplished it.

The lack of specific Christian language in Boethius' Consolation posed no real problem for Alfred. Alfred adds the four cardinal virtues in his version as a part of Wisdom's speech about the abuse of power:

Thus wisdom is the highest virtue, and it has four other virtues; of which one is prudence, another temperance, the third is fortitude, the fourth justice. (Ch. 27, pr. 2)

Although there is no counterpart for this addition in any surviving commentary, it would appear that such ideas were so common in ninth century thought that Alfred felt no qualms about including them in a discussion of virtue in general.¹⁰ What for Boethius was the sentence, "Heavenly and divine substances have at hand an acute judgment, an uncorrupted will, and the power to effect their desires," (V, pr. 2) becomes in Alfred,

Angels have the right judgments and good will; and whatever they desire they very easily obtain, because they desire nothing wrong. (Ch. XL, pr. 7)¹¹

There are other Christianized additions which Alfred chose to include in his version, and some were derived from other commentaries¹², others have no known source other than Alfred himself. Whatever the origins of such additions, Alfred felt that including them in his own version would contribute to the text and further his goals in writing it. That Alfred did not include everything from the original Boethian text is evident in his treatment of Book V where major portions of the discussion of free will are contained. As noted earlier, Boethius had grappled with the questions of predestination and free will in a well ordered dialogue. This entire section has been omitted from the Alfredian version. We can only guess why; perhaps such a discussion was outside the parameters which Alfred had established for the purpose of the book, or perhaps the Boethian solution

was an unacceptable one both to him and his readers. Alfred offers us no explanation of his own, though this omission has been the subject of a heated scholarly debate.¹³

Whatever the reason, this discussion was part of the wood that Alfred did not bring home.

A direct comparison between the Boethian Consolation and the Anglo-Saxon Consolation would be somewhat misleading; Alfred did not have a text before him which did not contain a commentary, the only available texts of the Consolation having been well worked in the schools of Alcuin and his heirs.¹⁴ And yet, no one commentary which survives can completely account for the changes which Alfred made in his version. Such a comparative analysis, while interesting, can shed only a little light on what Alfred wished to accomplish, for, to use his own metaphor, it is of only marginal use to know where the wood came from to determine what the building looked like.

Why Alfred should have chosen this book is another question which must remain open, though we can speculate that the nature of the meditations surely must have appealed to this ninth century Englishman who came so close to losing learning, monastic life and even his very kingdom. But Alfred was a man of strongly practical sense who clearly valued wisdom, and he said so repeatedly. For him, then, the Consolation was not simply a work of great personal appeal and value, but a handbook of wisdom practically

applied: something to educate and inspire his administrators and officials. Asser tells the story of how Alfred had the sons of nobles educated, and how he admonished his own judges to learn:

He would inquire whether it [an unfair judgment] was from ignorance, or from ill-will of any sort, from love or fear of any man, or from hatred of others, or from greed of any man's money. Then if those judges professed that they had so judged those causes for that they could come to no better understanding on the matter, he would correct their inexperience and foolishness with discretion and moderation. And he would speak and say, "I marvel greatly at this your insolence, since by the gift of God, and by my gift, you have assumed the duties and rank of wise men, but have neglected the study and exercise of wisdom. I command you, therefore, either to lay down here that exercise of earthly power which you enjoy, or to take care to apply yourselves with much greater zeal to the study of wisdom. (Asser, p 89)¹⁵

And when they heard these words they were terrified and as if they had been corrected with the greatest judgment, the ealdormen and reeves strove to turn themselves with all their might to the work of learning justice. Wherefore in a marvelous way almost all the ealdormen, reeves and officers, who had been illiterate from infancy, studied the art of letters, preferring to learn an unwonted discipline with great toil than to lose the exercise of power. (Asser p. 90)¹⁶

Here there are echoes of the Carolingian court, of the crucial role of education in its development, and indicative of the appeal of the Consolation on a variety of levels, to men like Alcuin and Carolingian successors. In all this the role of Alfred is not unlike that of the H.G.Wells character in The Time Machine who, after returning to his own time from the future where civilization, after a cataclysm, was beginning to rebuild, takes three books back into the future

to begin the process. Alfred was faced with rebuilding his culture, and he chose the books which he felt were the most important and made them available in the Anglo-Saxon tongue:

They did not think that men would ever become so careless and learning so decayed; they abstained intentionally, wishing that here in the land there should be the greater wisdom, the more languages we knew....Then I remembered also how the divine law was first composed in the Hebrew language, and afterwards, when the Greeks learnt it, they turned it all into their own language, and also all other books. And the Romans likewise, when they had learnt them, turned them all through interpreters into their own language. And also all other Christian nations turned some part of them into their own language. Therefore it seems better to me, if it seems so to you, that we also should turn into the language that we can all understand some books, which may be most necessary for all men to know.

Clearly, Alfred felt that the Consolation was one of those books that all men should know. Its wisdom is homespun and its wording is clear, precise and pedagogical. The sentiments of the Latin text are Christian, and, once the terminology had been explained by the commentators, the text intelligible. When Alfred translated the Latin into Anglo-Saxon, he incorporated many of the commentaries into the text itself, along with his own comments, and thus the Latin composition, through translation, became compatible not only with ninth century thought, but with Anglo-Saxon culture and circumstances as well. Alfred had already provided books in English for the clergy in Gregory the Great's Pastoral Care and Orosius' History of the World, and an ecclesiastical history in Bede's History. For his lay

administrators, however, who were for the most part illiterate in English, much less Latin, he produced his own Consolation. Those who could read were expected to read the Consolation: those who could not were strongly encouraged to learn and could listen to it in their own tongue. Whatever the personal appeal of the Consolation to Alfred, and it is evident that it appealed greatly to him, for Alfred the king it was a tool, a practical guide to wisdom, no longer simply an intellectual approach to Christian faith.

NOTES

Chapter I

1. Frederick B. Artz, The Mind of the Middle Ages, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1954), 180. This is an outstanding work regarding the intellectual development of the medieval world.

Chapter II

1. Howard Rollin Patch, The Tradition of Boethius (New York: Oxford University Press, 1935), 3.

2. Edward Kennard Rand, Founders of the Middle Ages (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), 135.

3. Rand, 135.

4. Rand, 135.

5. John Matthews, "Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius," in Boethius: His Life Thought and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 20.

6. Matthews, 20.

7. Matthews, 24.

8. Matthews, 24.

9. Rand, 141.

10. Eleonore Stump, Boethius's "De topicis differentiis", (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 14.

11. Rand, 158.

12. Rand, 144.

13. Rand, 145.

14. Rand, 146.
15. Rand, 142.
16. Rand, 146.
17. Stump, 15.
18. William Bark, "Theodoric vs. Boethius: Vindication and Apology," in Boethius, ed. Manfred Fuhrmann and Joachim Gruber (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 13.
19. Bark, 21.
20. Bark, 21.
21. Bark, 21.
22. Rand, 149; Patch, 57; and Bark, 23.
23. Stump, 15.
24. Bark, 24.
25. Bark, 24.
26. Bark, 25.
27. Bark, 25.
28. Bark, 27.
29. Bark, 27. See his note #55.
30. Matthews, 24.
31. Henry Osborn Taylor, The Emergence of Christian Culture in the West (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), 53 and 54.
32. Matthews, 28.
33. Matthews, 28.
34. Matthews, 29.
35. James J. Buchanan, ed., Boethius The Consolation of Philosophy, with an Introduction by Whitney J. Oates, Milestones of Thought in the History of Ideas, ed. F. W. Strothmann (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1957; reprint, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1970), 17.

36. Quoted from Matthews, 30.
37. Patch, 1.
38. Matthews, 37.
39. Buchanan, 5.
40. Patch, 21.
41. Patch, 20.

Chapter III

1. Henry Osborn Taylor, The Medieval Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 189.

2. Cornelia Johanna de Vogel, "The Problem of Philosophy and Christian Faith in Boethius' Consolatio," in Boethius, ed. Manfred Fuhrmann and Joachim Gruber (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 287.

3. Buchanan, 1.
4. Buchanan, 1.
5. Buchanan, 4.
6. Buchanan, 10.
7. Buchanan, 12.
8. Buchanan, 13.
9. Buchanan, 15.
10. Buchanan, 17.
11. Buchanan, 18-20.
12. Buchanan, 20.
13. Rand, 171.
14. Rand, 172.
15. Buchanan, 33.
16. Watts, 97-98.

17. Rand, 173.
18. Rand, 172.
19. Vogel, 300.
20. Buchanan, 37.
21. Buchanan, 45.
22. Rand, 175.
23. Rand, 176.
24. Buchanan, 48.
25. Buchanan, 67.

Chapter IV

1. Dorothy Whitelock, ed., English Historical Documents c. 500-1042 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 589.
2. Stopford A. Brooke, The History of Early English Literature (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 445.
3. Brooke, 448.
4. Whitelock, 786.
5. Andrew Fleming West, Alcuin and the Rise of the Christian Schools (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1903), 160.
6. W. F. Bolton, "How Boethian is Alfred's Boethius?," in Studies in Earlier Old English Prose ed. by Paul Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 160.
7. Jacqueline Beaumont, "The Latin Tradition of the De Consolatione Philosophiae," in Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 279.
8. Watts, 68.
9. Whitelock, 786.

10. Watts, 80.
11. Beaumont, 280.
12. Beaumont, 281.
13. Beaumont, 282.
14. Beaumont, 283.
15. H. F. Stewart, "A Commentary by Remigius Autissiodorensis on the De Consolatione Philosophiae of Boethius," Journal of Theological Studies XVII (1916): 23.
16. M. B. Parkes, "A Note on MS Vatican, Bibl. Apost., lat. 3363," in Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 425.
17. Parkes, 426.
18. Parkes, 426.
19. Bolton, 153.
20. See also Brian Donaghey, "The Sources of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae," Anglia, 82 (1964).

Chapter V

1. James Westfall Thompson and Edgar Nathaniel Johnson, Medieval Europe, 300-1500 (New York: W. W. Norton), 212.
2. Thompson and Johnson, 216.
3. Patch, 27.
4. Whitelock, 176.
5. Whitelock, 167.
6. Whitelock, 13.
7. Whitelock, 171.
8. Whitelock, 28.

9. David Harrison, England Before the Conquest, (Ipswich: Hadden Best, 1921), 294.
10. Harrison, 294.
11. Asser, Life of King Alfred, transl. by L. C. Jane (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964), 20.
12. Asser, 18.
13. William of Malmesbury, Chronicle of the Kings of England, transl. by J. A. Giles (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1847; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1968), 120.
14. Whitelock, 818.
15. For a survey of the sources of Alfred's life, see the prefaces to Asser, Malmesbury, Whitelock and Harrison.
16. Whitelock, 251.
17. Whitelock, 115.
18. Whitelock, 177.
19. Asser, 26.
20. Asser, 29.
21. Asser, 30.
22. Asser, 34.
23. Whitelock, 179.
24. Asser, 34.
25. Asser, 35.
26. Asser, 57.
27. Asser, 57.
28. Harrison, 295.
29. Asser, 70-71.
30. Whitelock, 819. It is thought that the Jewel of Alfred was a part of one of these book-markers.
31. Harrison, 297.

32. Whitelock, 813.
33. Whitelock, 814.
34. Whitelock, 844.
35. Whitelock, 373.

Chapter VI

1. Kurt Otten, Konig Alfreds Boethius (Tubingen, 1964), 119-57; 284-5.
2. Whitelock, 844.
3. Bolton, 153.
4. Buchanan, 19.
5. Samuel Fox, King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of Boethius "De Consolatione Philosophiae" with a Literal English Translation, Notes and Glossary (London: George Bell and Sons, 1909), 63.
6. Buchanan, 17.
7. Fox, 49-50.
8. Fox, 59.
9. Fox, 97.
10. Bolton, 160.
11. Fox, 243.
12. Stewart, 39.
13. Bolton, 163.
14. Bolton, 163.
15. Asser, 89.
16. Asser, 90.
17. Whitelock, 819.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Artz, Frederick B. The Mind of the Middle Ages. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954.
- Asser. Life of King Alfred. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by L. C. Jane. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966.
- Bark, Willaim. "Theodoric vs. Boethius: Vindication and Apology." In Boethius, ed. Manfred Fuhrmann and Joachim Gruber, 11-32. Darstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984.
- Beaumont, Jacqueline. "The Latin Tradition of the De Consolatione Philosophiae." In Boethius, His Life, Thought, and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson, 278-305. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981.
- Blair, Peter Hunter. An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England. Cambridge: University Press, 1956.
- Boethius. The Consolation of Philosophy. Translated with an Introduction by V. E. Watts. New York: Penguin Books, 1987.
- Bolton, W. F. "How Boethian is Alfred's Boethius?" In Studies in Earlier Old English Prose, ed. Paul E. Szarmach, 153-168. New York: State University of New York Press, 1986.
- Brooke, Stopford A. The History of Early English Literature. New York: Libraries Press, 1892.
- Buchanan, James J., ed. Boethius "The Consolation of Philosophy". With an Introduction by Whitney J. Oates. Milestones of Thought in the History of Ideas, ed. F. W. Strothmann. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1970.
- Donaghey, Brian S. "The Sources of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae." Anglia 82 (1964): 23-57.
- Dwyer, Richard A. Boethian Fictions. Cambridge: The Medieval Academy of America, 1976.

- Fox, Samuel. King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of Boethius "De Consolatione Philosophiae" with a Literal English Translation, Notes and Glossary. London: George Bell and Sons, 1909.
- Glaskoin, C. J. B. Alcuin: His Life and his Work. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
- Godden, Malcolm. "King Alfred's Boethius." In Boethius, His Life, Thought, and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson, 419-424. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981.
- Giles, J. A., ed. The Whole Works of Alfred the Great. 2 vols. New York: AMS Press, [1969].
- Hughes, Kathleen. "Evidence for contacts between the churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age." In England Before the Conquest, ed. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes, 49-67. Cambridge: University Press, 1971.
- Kirby, Helen. "The Scholar and His Public." In Boethius, His Life, Thought, and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson, 44-69. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981.
- Matthews, John. "Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius." In Boethius, His Life, Thought, and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson, 15-43. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981.
- Mohrmann, Christine. "Some Remarks on the Language of Boethius, Consolatio Philosophiae." In Boethius, ed. Manfred Fuhrmann and Joachm Gruber, 302-310. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984.
- Owen, Gale R. Rites and Religions of the Anglo-Saxons. New York: Dorset Press, 1985.
- Parkes, M. B. "A Note on MS Vatican, Bibl. Apost., lat. 3363." In Boethius, His Life, Thought, and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson, 425-427. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981.
- Patch, Howard Rollin. The Tradition of Boethius. New York: Oxford University Press, 1935.
- Plummer, Charles. The Life and Times of Alfred the Great. New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1902; reprint New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1970.
- Rand, Edward Kennard. Founders of the Middle Ages. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929.

- Shirley-Price, Leo. Bede: A History of the English Church and People. New York: Penguin Books, 1986.
- Stewart, H. F. "A Commentary by Remigius Autissiodorensis on the De Consolatione Philosophiae of Boethius," in The Journal of Theological Studies, vol. XVII, 1916.
- Stump, Eleonore. Boethius's "De topicis differentiis." With Notes and Essays by Eleonore Stump. London: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Taylor, Henry Osborn. The Emergence of Christian Culture in the West. With a Foreward and Bibliography by Kenneth Setton. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958.
- _____. The Medieval Mind. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Thompson, James Westfall and Edgar Nathaniel Johnson. Medieval Europe 300-1500. New York: W. W. Norton, 1937.
- de Vogel, Cornelia Johanna. "The Problem of Philosophy and Christian Faith in Boethius' Consolatio." In Boethius, ed. Manfred Fuhrmann and Joachim Gruber, 286-301. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984.
- Whitelock, Dorothy, ed. English Historical Documents. vol.1. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Wittig, Joseph S. "King Alfred's Boethius and its Latin Sources: a Reconsideration." In Anglo-Saxon England, ed. Peter Clemoes. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.