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Investigation of Alfred the Great's cultural policy in Anglo-Saxon England: An approach based on Translation Studies

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Introduction

The kingdom of Alfred the Great represents a turning point in Anglo-Saxon history. Alfred, a learned king, is indeed responsible of a cultural, religious and military reform that aimed at the diffusion of certain books, mainly of translations of Latin texts into Old English. The objective of this analysis is to demonstrate the effectiveness of an approach based on Translation Studies for the analysis of Medieval texts. Furthermore, I have sought to draw some interesting considerations on the ideological and cultural value of a specific “Alfredian” translation. Within the wider discipline of Translation Studies, I have selected a specific subbranch which proved to be useful for our analysis: Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). This approach can be used when comparing textual segments and drawing considerations of a cultural nature is needed. Two concepts are especially useful for the purpose of this investigation: Toury’s concept of norms and Lefevere’s concept of patronage. Such an approach allows us to identify the changes implemented during the process of translation and to assume the cultural outcomes these changes operate. The textual segments that I have analysed in order to prove my assumptions are taken from one of the “Alfredian” main literary works: the *Old English Orosius*. In particular, I have been focusing on Book IV, which gives an account of the Second Punic War, and dwells at length on the figure of Hannibal. The aim of my investigation is to unveil the underlying reasons that constitute the ideological foundations of this specific translation. I have done so by mapping the target text onto its source, taking into consideration omissions, additions, re-elaborations, displacement but also the cultural context.

Chapter 1 provides some contextual information on Alfred’s kingdom. The Alfredian cultural, military and religious reform is discussed at length, starting by an account of the West-Saxon struggle against the Vikings. Notably, his military reform was connected to a revival of religion since the battles against the Vikings were interpreted as a holy war between pagans and Christians. A description of the fragmentated national identity that characterized England follows, as well as an account of Alfred’s endeavour to claim an authority as a king of all the English territories that were not under the Viking rule. Afterwards, the relevance of his cultural reform as a tool for enacting his scheme is deepened. Integral part of the “Alfredian” cultural production is a series of Old English

translations of Latin texts, but also works produced in the vernacular language. Among those, the books that, according to Alfred, were essential to learn, are briefly introduced, especially focusing on the abovementioned *Old English Orosius*. Furthermore, an account of Alfred's first steps towards learning is discussed, for the purpose of reflecting on his ability of translating. Tightly connected to this is the so-called Alfredian debate, which contests Alfred's authorship of certain books. I added some reflections on the kind of analysis that can be useful to assess this authorship: a stylometric analysis based on both function and content words, applied on different "Alfredian" translations. What emerges is that differences in lexical patterns are associable with different authors, but this study also has some limitations. Furthermore, the limited scope of the revival of Latin is hinted, together with a discussion on the revival of religion. To conclude, the ideological and propagandistic scope of the Alfredian cultural programme, which was coherent with Alfred's vision and instrumental for the administration of his reign, is examined.

Chapter 2 mainly focuses on the methodological approach that has been used for the purpose of my analysis: that of the empirical interdiscipline of Translation Studies. The discipline at large is introduced, briefly reconstructing its historical steps from the 1970s, to the contemporary increasing interest for target-oriented approaches and for Descriptive Translation Studies. Afterwards, Holmes's "map" of Translation Studies and its division into *pure* and *applied branches* is described, specifying how these two branches and the relative subbranches interact with each other. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on Toury's concept of norms within Descriptive Translation Studies, going through the historical steps of his approach to the subject, and therefore moving from Even Zohar's polysystem theory (from which Toury's early work develops) to the descriptivists' shift of approach from a prescriptive to a descriptive viewpoint. The utility of Descriptive Translation Studies in observing the choices made in the translation process is made clear in order to draw generalizations, and the interrelations that tie this branch to Translation Theory are discussed. Afterwards, the concept of assumed translation is explained by linking it to the case of pseudotranslations. The different steps that need to be taken in order to carry out an analysis are addressed, bearing in mind the importance of context. First, mapping textual segments of an assumed translation onto its assumed source is required. After this, norms need to be identified in order to carry out descriptive-explanatory research. The different kinds of norms are then tackled, starting

from the initial norm (which represents the highest-level decision) to the distinction between preliminary and operational norms. Toury's concept of equivalence and the basic choice between acceptability and adequacy is also hinted at. Toury's concept of norms can be complemented with Lefevere's notion of patronage, which enables us to draw some conclusions on the social impact of certain translation choices. In addition, the notion of patronage and its main components are defined. Tightly connected to patronage are the notions of change and poetics. I argue that translations project a certain image of the source texts based on the translator's ideology, which greatly contributes to determining the strategies used by him/her, and is particularly reflected in additions, omissions, displacements, and re-elaborations. Finally, I reflected on the use of Toury and Lefevere's theory for the analysis of "Alfredian" texts, proving the effectiveness of an analysis of this kind in order to investigate and justify the translator's choices and their cultural outlook, and raising some questions on the ideological aim of the *Old English Orosius*.

Finally, Chapter 3 concerns an analysis of Book IV of the *Old English Orosius*, compared to its source: the *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem*. The Second Punic War and the figure of Hannibal and of the Roman consuls are placed at the centre of this analysis. The text is introduced by some preliminary notes and its genealogy is explored. Afterwards, the initial part of my analysis is carried out by mapping some textual segments of the target text onto the corresponding segments of the source text. Then, in order to carry out this analysis, Toury's notion of norms is employed, and some cultural conclusions are drawn using Lefevere's notion of patronage. Next to the selection and comparison of relevant passages using an English translation of the Old English version, and an Italian one for the Latin source text, the historical accounts that are located in between these passages are summarized, in order to better follow the logical thread of Book IV. I mainly focused on additions, omissions, expansions, and displacements, paying particular attention to passages that are emphasized. Most importantly, the interpretation of the Roman battles against the Carthaginians is discussed. Some concepts that are analysed in depth are that of divine Providence, the *translatio imperii*, and the role of leaders as good and bad *exempla*. To conclude, I was finally able to identify and contextualize the translation choices present in the *Old English Orosius* by applying

Toury's concept of norms to the changes made by the translator in the selected passages and drawing some conclusions of cultural nature using Lefever's notion of patronage.

This investigation is concluded by arguing about the effectiveness of this approach for an analysis of this kind, and by exploring the underlying ideology of the *Old English Orosius* on different levels. Translation norms are unveiled, analysed, and justified and some hypothesis on the political, military, cultural, and identitarian scope of this translation are drawn.

Chapter 1. The reign of Alfred the Great: military achievements, educational policy, and cultural production

The reign of King Alfred (871-899), later known as the Great, represents a turning point in English history. Son of King Æthwulf and of Osburh, a pious and noble woman¹ who played an important role in fostering Alfred's passion for learning and religion, not only was he an impressive politician and an extremely talented man in military terms, his efforts in the spread of an education policy were just as extraordinary. In this chapter I am going to introduce the main aspects of Alfred's cultural, religious, and military policy, its scope and magnitude, as well as the main products of his cultural programme. Indeed, Alfred and his circle put a great effort into the production of texts, which mainly consist in translations of Latin works into Old English ones. The Latin texts in question are greatly revised in order to create new and original "Alfredian" texts, authentic tools for the king's propagandistic aims.

1.1 The West-Saxon struggle against the Vikings

Alfred succeeded in defending Wessex from the Viking attacks for the entire duration of his reign. This was possible through a military reform that managed to reorganize the army in order to defend the kingdom from further incursions.

This military reform is somehow linked to Alfred's religious programme, which, in its turn, is connected to his educational scheme: since many believed that the Viking attacks were the main cause for the decay of religion, it was essential to form a class of educated men who possessed adequate means, not only to help the king in the administration of his reign, but also to undertake a revival of culture and religion.² Furthermore, we may suppose that his encounter with Charles the Bald, not only spurred Alfred's interest in the Frankish kingdom and admiration for the Carolingian court, but it also inspired the king's way of dealing with Viking incursions.³

Even though Alfred gave proof of an excellent military management, the achievements and the power of the West Saxons sink their roots in the precedent reigns. Before Alfred's rule, Viking attacks were repelled by the West Saxons under the

¹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 68.

² Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 9-58.

³ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 18.

command of Egbert, assuring a change in the balance of power shifting the leading position from Mercia to Wessex. Wessex had in fact intensified its political power after the victory at Ellendun (825) by taking control of Surrey, Sussex, Essex, and Kent.⁴ During his kingship, while the Vikings controlled the north of England, Alfred successfully protected the south of the country,⁵ eventually leading all English people that were not under Danish rule to recognise him as a king. This was the first step towards the unification of England and the development of a national identity, an arduous military effort which was undertaken later in history by his successors.

Even though the Anglo-Saxons had to endure the Viking attacks throughout the 870s, shielded by a new system of defence, after the victory at Edington in 878, they could enjoy a period of relative peace during the following decade. This period of rest from continuous conflicts lasted only until the 892, when the Vikings returned from the Continent, but it was enough to enable Alfred to carry out his military, cultural and civil reform. Ultimately, the Vikings dispersed in 896, allowing Alfred to continue with the enactment of his programme.⁶

Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, together with the other accounts of the king's life, draws in fact a picture of a man who manages to become an exceptional war-leader, Christian, scholar and educationalist, overcoming a daunting illness, which haunts him for all of his life.⁷ All these aspects of the king's life often go hand in hand. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that his military effort is not disconnected from his Christian faith: Alfred interprets the battles against the Vikings as a holy war between pagans and Christians, a war that required major efforts against the well-organized Great Heathen Army.⁸

1.2 The scope and magnitude of the Alfredian educational and religious policy

Alfred admired the seventh century. He regarded it as a "Golden age", where knowledge and spirituality were flourishing. As opposed to it, the lack of education and of religious observance of the ninth century troubled him, both for ideological reasons,

⁴ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 14-15.

⁵ Discenza, 2011, p. 433.

⁶ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 9-10.

⁷ Davis, 1971, p. 170.

⁸ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 42.

but also for more practical ones.⁹ Alfred claimed that while previously England was a point of reference for the instruction of foreigners, now the situation had reversed and English people in search for knowledge were forced to travel abroad.¹⁰ To improve the cultural situation of his people and to assure a proper functioning and a correct administration of his reign, he needed to count on a trained and educated manpower. Despite this, during the ninth century, only a few Anglo-Saxon men could read texts written in the vernacular language, and even fewer had a knowledge of Latin. Needless to say, both religion and the teaching of English and Latin needed to be established again, as part of his plan to ensure a peaceful and prosper future. Furthermore, we can assume that Alfred's travels to Rome at a young age have influenced his life as an adult and King of Wessex when he decided to carry out a revival of learning in his kingdom.

A series of translations of great historical value were produced in only a decade: Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, St Augustine's *Soliloquies* and the first fifty psalms of the Psalter are attributed to Alfred according to Asser's account, whereas Gregory's *Dialogues*, Orosius's *Histories against the Pagans* and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* were translated by scholars as part of the cultural policy envisioned by Alfred. Another pivotal text written in Old English is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a collection of annals that describes a series of historical facts including Alfred's enactment of a military activity that aimed at defending his reign from the Vikings. Alfred and his circle also published a political treaty, a law-code (the *Domboc* or "book of judgments"), and further material either personal (such as letters) and instrumental for the administration of his reign, including a compilation of medical recipes called *Bald's Leechbook*.¹¹

In the letter placed as a preface to his translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, allegedly written in the first person by Alfred, he explicitly stresses the need for his people to receive a basic education concerning "certain books which are the most necessary for all men to know."¹² The king refers to certain English writings, mainly translations of Latin texts into Old English, as well as to Latin ones, among which the most relevant are those I mentioned above. A search for instructors from different parts of England started:

⁹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 25-26.

¹⁰ Davis, 1971, p. 175.

¹¹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 9-58.

¹² Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 28.

Grimbald, John the Saxon, Asser and several Mercian ecclesiasts were gathered at the king's court to introduce him to literacy and to Latin teachings.¹³ In fact, due to the scarce availability of scholars who were knowledgeable in Latin and in the liberal arts during his childhood, he had to wait for adulthood to receive this kind of teachings, which he absorbed eagerly, guided by Asser. Nevertheless, he demonstrated to be prone to learning since his childhood, considering that he was gifted with an incredible ability to memorize texts of different nature.¹⁴ Asser, in his *Life of King Alfred*, gives an account of Alfred early approach to literature: the young heir met vernacular literature in a book of poetry that his mother gave him, in a prayerbook that he owned, and in a *libellus* which contained some prayers, psalms and the day-time offices. Alfred proceeded to skilfully learn by heart these texts, that were read or recited to him by his teachers.¹⁵ We might assume that his mother played an important role in nurturing Alfred's interest in learning. Asser recalls an episode related to young Alfred's book of English poetry in which his mother, turning to him and to his brothers, uttered "I shall give this book to whichever one of you can learn it the fastest."¹⁶ Alfred, eager student, was the first of his brothers to learn to recite it.¹⁷ Furthermore, we can speculate that beside fostering Alfred's passion for learning, Osburh also influenced his interest for religious life. Asser seems to suggest Osburh's passion for books and for education, which may lead us to postulate that she received some kind of education. Taking into consideration that education at the time was responsibility of the Church, we might assume that her literacy goes hand in hand with her religiosity. Indeed, she is described by Asser as "a most religious woman"¹⁸, meaning that she was religiously pious.

A first account of the king's ability to translate is found in Asser's biography. At first glance, Asser seems to recount of the day when, under divine inspiration, Alfred started to read and translate. A more thorough reading makes it reasonable to assume that the bishop refers to the sharpening of the king's skills, skills that could be put to good use in an educational programme through the production of translations. In Keynes and Lapidge's words:

¹³ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 28.

¹⁴ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 14.

¹⁵ Pratt, 2014, pp. 306-307.

¹⁶ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p.75.

¹⁷ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p.75.

¹⁸ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 68

the reference is rather to an occasion when he resolved to perfect these skills for himself as a means of instructing others. If so, it may have been at about this time that Alfred decided to involve himself personally in a general scheme to produce translations of selected Latin works, for the instruction of all.¹⁹

This interpretation of the facts is just coherent to Alfred's learning path. Considering that his literary education started only in his adulthood, it is reasonable to discard the possibility of an abrupt and divinely guided improvement, and to opt for an interpretation which sees Alfred's first involvement in his cultural scheme.²⁰

Nevertheless, this educational programme was far from being accessible to all men. Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon society was not revolutionized by this revival of literature, since its scope was limited to men of high status and to court culture.²¹ More specifically, only royal children, the lay elite, churchmen and generally freemen of adequate means were encouraged to receive an education.²² The success of this cultural program is unquestionably the result of the king's persuasive power. In the prefatory letter of the *Pastoral Care*, he further stresses the importance of education for those who enjoyed a high status:

That all the youth now in England, born of free men who have the means that they can apply to it, may be devoted to learning as long as they cannot be of use in any other employment, until such time as they can read and write well what is written in English.²³

Those who learned to read all those books that were regarded by Alfred as "necessary for all men to know"²⁴ could probably reach a higher status and had the opportunity to gain more social value. In essence, education could determine one's hierarchical position in society. If educated young men could aim at obtaining prestigious positions, those who had more money or more talent could go even further in the royal court and in the church. Translators enjoyed a particular high status due to their ability to master two languages, and they could even aspire at becoming king's advisors. Translators could also suggest

¹⁹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 28.

²⁰ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 28.

²¹ Discenza, 2011, pp. 454-455.

²² Pratt, 2014, p. 308.

²³ Davis, 1971, p. 180.

²⁴ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 28.

what texts should be translated, even though the operation of translation was ultimately overseeded by Alfred.

The aim of Alfred's educational programme was not only to form and consequently to further improve the position of young affluent men. This cultural policy was instrumental since it also enacted an ethical and political education scheme which sought to shape the learners' ideology in a way that was coherent with Alfred's vision. This cultural programme, carried out through the writing and teaching of books in the vernacular language as well as in Latin,²⁵ was directed to the future leading men of both clergy and laity.²⁶ Those in charge of enacting this education plan were churchmen and especially bishops, since they usually received a well-rounded education.²⁷

Latin documents, that before Alfred's rule were for the exclusive use of the leading clergy and for those who intended to take the orders, were now also taught to secular people.²⁸ We find an account of this in Asser's biography: according to the bishop, Alfred created a school where the curriculum included both Latin and English. One of the scholars that attended this school was his son Æthelweard, who, for what we know, remained in the secular life. We can then suppose that both laity and clergy were educated here. Latin, therefore, was of interest of both groups, but it was not a central part of the king's cultural programme, since not even all Anglo-Saxon bishops mastered it. This made the understanding of the liturgy particularly difficult for them, and the need to make these Latin texts accessible to everyone was extremely felt.²⁹ Thus, the result of this renewed interest for Latin is precisely what led to a production of translations of certain Latin texts in the vernacular language.³⁰ Furthermore, Alfred describes this programme in the prefatory letter to the *Pastoral Care* in a very vague and permissive way, therefore we can assume that no strict programme to teach Latin to the clergy was undertaken.³¹

In addition to a promotion of learning conducted by means of a revival of literature, the king also aimed at a revival of religion. Indeed, according to Alfred, in the ninth century religious moral quality was in decay and in need to be restored.³² The need

²⁵ Discenza, 2011, pp. 433-467.

²⁶ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 9-58.

²⁷ Discenza, 2011, pp. 454-456.

²⁸ Pratt, 2014, pp. 307-308.

²⁹ Godden, 2002, pp. 598-599.

³⁰ Pratt, 2014, pp. 307-308.

³¹ Godden, 2002, p. 599.

³² Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 25-26.

for a revival of religion was particularly felt if considered that, in order to win over the Danes, they needed to gain God's favour once again. Religious education took place mainly through the distribution of copies of the *Pastoral Care*, which served as handbook for the bishops of his reign.³³ In the prefatory letter to the *Pastoral Care*, Alfred laments the decay of wealth and wisdom. An analysis of these two elements is provided by Discenza. The scholar interprets Alfred depiction of wisdom as a commodity of tangible value, which could be compared to the value of gold. Wisdom is perceived both as worldly knowledge, but also and mainly as knowledge of God. Wisdom is linked to wealth, which, in line with the Christian belief, could consist in a spiritual reward in the afterlife, but also in something of a beneficial nature for one's soul. Thus, Alfred is reimagining English society, envisioning knowledge and wisdom rightfully placed next to earthly treasures.³⁴

Alfred also founded two religious houses and sustained financially those survived to the Viking attacks at the end of the ninth century. These were other two key factors contributing to his picture of the revival of the Christian faith of the seventh century. Interestingly, this revival of religion incentivized the flourishing of visual arts.³⁵

1.3 The Alfredian debate

Only four works are described by Asser in *Life of King Alfred* as being translated personally by Alfred: Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, St Augustine's *Soliloquies* and the first fifty psalms of the Psalter. The last is included in this short list even though it lacks Alfred's signature. These texts are linked by many thematic connections that may induce us to believe Asser's story of a learned king is true.³⁶ Despite this account, the veracity of Alfred's authorship has been questioned by many scholars. Godden has given an interesting contribution to this debate analysing some indicators that may lead to question the king's authorship. For example, we may argue that he did not have the time to acquire the skills and knowledge required since he became literate only in his adulthood. In addition, he might had not the time to improve in such a short period of time since he was troubled with the administration of his

³³ Davis, 1971, p. 180.

³⁴ Discenza, 2011, p. 67.

³⁵ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 36-37.

³⁶ Pratt, 2014, p. 308.

kingdom. According to Godden, a further detail that may lead to question Alfred's authorship is the presence of striking differences between the "Alfredian" translations. This might suggest they were performed by different translators. An example is the case of *Consolation* and *Pastoral Care* which seem less related to each other if compared for instance to *Consolation* and *Soliloquies*.³⁷ What might indicate a lack of unity among these translations is the presence of different stylistic and linguistic features in the different texts.³⁸

The authorship of the Psalms is particularly contested. The methodology that Treschow and Gill used to assess authorship of *Psalms* is a stylometric analysis which consists in analysing the occurrence of function words in seven different "Alfredian" translations (Bede, Gregory's *Dialogues*, Orosius, *Pastoral Care*, the *Consolation of Philosophy*, *Soliloquies*, and *Psalms*). This is based on the assumption that, regardless of context, translators privilege the use of certain words. However, assessing words requires many considerations. It is important to note that words that are subject to constraints of the English style and words that depend on the Latin text are not considered in Treschow and Gill study as they do not signal a personal inclination of the translator. The two scholars eventually identified a list of function words and measured their frequency per 100 words. Further considerations reflect on the presence of an asyndetic parataxis in the Roman Psalter which was substituted with hypotaxis and syndetic parataxis in the Old English translation to make the verses flow better. Many of these words inserted in order to improve the flow are included in Treschow and Gill's list of seventeen words, but it should be considered that they represent a reaction to the Latin text and not a matter of the author's personal style. Another interesting analysis undertaken by Godden and Treschow in order to doubt the integrity of the Alfredian canon takes into consideration content words and their differences in usage. However, the development of Alfred's vocabulary should also be considered when listing recurrent words. The analysis of the frequency of occurrence of function words, added to that of context words, lead them to assume that the author of the Psalms was not Alfred, as opposed to what reported in Asser's *Life*. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the many challenges that creating a list of recurrent words poses may lead us to look critically at this study.

³⁷ Batley, 2009, pp. 190-192.

³⁸ Pratt, 2014, p. 308.

As I mentioned before, scholars' opinions on the authorship of "Alfredian" texts are often in disagreement. For instance, even though lately the authorship of the Psalms has been much disputed, Bately is not persuaded by Treschow and Gill's analysis: he is rather convinced that Alfred and his helpers are responsible for all of the four translations, since the differences in lexical patterns are not significant.³⁹

To conclude, given that Alfred explicitly affirms to have personally written only the laws and their prefaces and some autobiographical comments and reminiscences that we find in some of his translations,⁴⁰ and since we have no account of Alfred denying the participation of some helpers, the possibility of translations undertaken by persons other than the king does not sound as inconceivable.⁴¹ Whether King Alfred was the author of some of the Old English translations or not could be further investigated using linguistic evidence.⁴² The adoption of this methodology could be useful because differences in lexical patterns are possibly associable with different authors. The main obstacle though seems to reside in the selection of an adequate list of current words.

1.4 The Alfredian cultural production

Despite the doubts that circumnavigate Alfred's authorship, we cannot deny the importance of his role in the diffusion of "certain books which are the most necessary for all men to know."⁴³ Alfred's educational programme was enacted mainly through the translation of texts produced by the king and his circle, but also through texts written in Old English. It should be noted that most of the translations were revised and modified in order to convey a certain ideology coherent to Alfred's scheme. This would assure that the future political and religious classes were properly trained for the benefit of the reign. I am now going to briefly introduce the main translation works produced by Alfred and his cultural circle, translations that, given their many alterations, revisions, expansions, suppressions and omissions are to be regarded as new and original "Alfredian" texts.

Gregory's *Regula* or *Cura Pastoralis*, which enjoyed popularity throughout the Middle Ages, is composed of four books which describe the qualities, virtues, and responsibilities that a man needs to possess in order to be a shepherd of souls. Its Old

³⁹ Treschow, Gill and Swartz, 2009.

⁴⁰ Davis, 1971, pp. 169-170.

⁴¹ Discenza, 2006, p. 739.

⁴² Treschow, Gill and Swartz, 2009.

⁴³ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 28.

English version, the *Pastoral Care*, was the first translation product completed in the context of Alfred's policy, proving the centrality of this text in Alfred's scheme. This text is very faithful to its source,⁴⁴ but despite the adoption of a relatively conservative approach, Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis* underwent some transformations. Precisely, certain biblical quotations present in the text were altered for it to be in line with Alfred's ideology, and they exercise a strong authoritative power conferred not only by the Scriptures, but also by the King and by Gregory himself. The outcome of the modifications that were implemented is a new, intrinsically Alfredian text,⁴⁵ which provided spiritual guidance for the clergy, even though its principles are easily applicable in a more general sense. In his biography, Asser describes a parallel between Gregory's and Alfred's will to educate those in a position of responsibility. We have testimony of four helpers (Plegmund, Asser, Grimbald and John) collaborating to this translation work as mentioned by the king himself in the first-person letter placed as a preface to this text.⁴⁶ Furthermore, this Old English translation work is no less than a fundamental first step towards the use of the vernacular for literary translation.⁴⁷

Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* was also quite influential in Latin Middle Ages.⁴⁸ It consists in a dialogue between Boethius and the Lady of Philosophy. This dialogue resolves in a praise to the divine providence which is in line with Christianity. We can assume it was written by Alfred with the assistance of Asser. Unlike Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, this translation is quite free and does not necessarily stick to the original text in its entirety, shedding light and expanding on some aspects that otherwise would have been difficult to grasp by his audience. Furthermore, the Latin text was reframed in a more openly Christian key, changing the participants of the dialogue into Wisdom and Mind. Precisely due to the modifications implemented, this text is particularly revelatory of the king's ideology:⁴⁹ the text highlights the importance of intense study and synthesises late antique and classical learning elements.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁵ Faulkner, 2018, p. 138.

⁴⁶ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 29-35.

⁴⁷ Faulkner, 2018, p. 138.

⁴⁸ Discenza, 2006, p. 737.

⁴⁹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 30-31.

⁵⁰ Discenza, 2006, pp. 737-738.

The *Soliloquies* of St Augustine are a group of dialogues. The participants are the author's mind and reason, who discuss on philosophical topics, precisely on the soul's immortality. This translation is particularly important if considered its complementarity with some passages of the Old English Boethius.⁵¹ Both texts are very ambitious, loose, and original since their aim is to report some of the king's reflexions. As a matter of fact, some parts are even drawn from other texts.⁵²

Alfred also carried out an unfinished prose translation of the first fifty psalms of the Psalter at the end of his life. What stroke the king of Wessex's attention could have been the ideological similarity between himself and King David, especially in the first fifty psalms. The objective of this unfinished translation work was probably to contribute with further material useful to the teaching of Latin and to the revival of religion.⁵³ The Psalms' authorship has been questioned for a few reasons: they are not openly signed by Alfred, and they have many lexical discrepancies if compared to the three translation works named by Alfred (the Old English *Pastoral Care*, the Old English Boethius and the translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*).⁵⁴

Gregory's *Dialogues* was translated by Bishop Werferth of Worcester and consists in a conversation between the pope and a deacon during which Gregory describes the lives and miracles of numerous Italian saints. Another of the main themes of this text is the soul's immortality.

The Old English translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* is a very influential text which describes the spread of Christianity in England during the seventh century, and which aimed at establishing the Christian faith among Alfred's people. It served as a builder and reminder of the common past of the English, and it highlighted the importance of the Church: Anglo-Saxons are described as God's chosen people. Bede's work is translated in Anglian dialect, we can therefore assume that its author, which is anonymous, was one of the Mercian bishops selected by Alfred.

To conclude, the translation I am going to analyse in the third chapter through the lens of a specific academic interdisciplinary, Translation Studies, is another pivotal text translated by Alfred's cultural circle: the Old English translation of Orosius's *Histories*

⁵¹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 31.

⁵² Faulkner, 2018, p. 138.

⁵³ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁴ Treschow, Gill and Swartz, 2009.

against the Pagans, known as *World History*. Paulus Orosius was born in Portugal but later moved to the city of Hippo, Africa. He established a friendship with St Augustine, who commissioned to him the composition of this work just after Alaric the Goth's sack of Rome in 410.⁵⁵ The Old English Orosius carries a concise account of a universal history that goes from the sin of Adam to Alaric's sack of Rome, a series of catastrophic events which improves only with Christ's birth.⁵⁶ This text was probably written as a form of reassurance for the Christians after the fall of Rome. To justify God's plan, the past of the pagan believes predominance over Christianity is described as even more tragic than the present. In like manner, a translation of this text could offer comfort to Alfred's people, besieged by the Danes.⁵⁷ This text denies the contemporary assumption that the abandonment of the pagan believes led to decay, representing a defence of Christianity. Alaric and his Goths were indeed heretical Arians, but some of them were also Christians.⁵⁸ The Old English translation, carried out by a West Saxon who remains anonymous, is again unfaithful and loose. Many explanations were added, and Orosius' polemic against the pagans is revisited.⁵⁹ Furthermore, passages were indeed purposefully omitted in an editorial choice that aimed at rephrasing the relationship between Anglo-Saxons and the German invaders and Rome: in the *World History*, Goths are depicted as being ethnically related to Germans, and therefore to Anglo-Saxons. These modifications answered to one of the aims of Alfred's policy which consisted in the historical identification of Anglo-Saxons with Christendom.⁶⁰

1.5 Alfred's construction of an Anglo-Saxon cultural identity

As I already anticipated, Alfred and his circle produced a series of Old English texts that revisited Latin translations and historical facts also for ideological and propagandistic purposes. Alfred's aim was to create a narrative that would legitimize his authority as a king for all the people of the southern reigns of England in a context of intense fragmentation. This is precisely why the creation of a common identity was an

⁵⁵ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, pp. 32-33.

⁵⁶ C. von Nolcken, 1982, p. 175.

⁵⁷ Davis, 1971, p. 180.

⁵⁸ Harris, 2001, p. 496.

⁵⁹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 33.

⁶⁰ Harris, 2001, pp. 501-504.

important and powerful tool to achieve an adequate perception of his authority and legitimation as a king and of his power in the minds of his subjects.

As we know, at the time, England was not unified. Despite this lack of a common identity, Alfred eventually managed to be recognised as a king by the people from the Southern kingdoms of England that did not belong to the Danish rule.⁶¹ Beside Wessex, Alfred's kingdom expanded until, by the 890s, he controlled Wight, Wessex, Sussex, Cornwall, London, Kent and some parts of Mercia.⁶² Thus, while he controlled the southern part of the isle, the Vikings took the place of all native dynasties excluding Alfred's. Nevertheless, the presence of distinct regional identities persisted until the Norman conquest in the eleventh century. In such a fragmented context, a sense of common identity needed to be manufactured not only in the present, but also in past history.⁶³

Contributing to the creation of a sense of national identity, the term *Angelcynn*, used to refer to Anglo-Saxon people, was propagated by Alfred and his circle through the production of texts. Nevertheless, this is not the first instance of a term used to refer to the Anglo-Saxons as a united people. Alfred indeed may have come across the Latin term *Angli* during his pilgrimage to Rome, in his early life. As a matter of fact, Roman already identified English speaking people as belonging to the same group, a view that was also common to the continental scholars of Alfred's court. This ideology was not current among Anglo-Saxons, though.⁶⁴ Instrumental in the creation of a common identity was also the treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, Viking king of the Danelaw, which defined the boundaries between the two territories. English people could now identify the existence of two opposing factions: the heathen Danish and the Christian Anglo-Saxons, two people having to two different ethnic identities.⁶⁵

The need in creating a common English-Christian identity is evident if we analyse the contemporary annals included in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. In fact, this collection of annals describes thoroughly the ethnogenesis of the English people. In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, the Anglorum are defined as a group formed by West Saxon, Mercian, Kentish and potentially Northumbrian and East Anglian. The Anglorum are depicted as

⁶¹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 45.

⁶² C. Konshuh, 2020, p. 179.

⁶³ Konshuh, 2020, pp. 158-159.

⁶⁴ Konshuh, 2020, pp. 157-158.

⁶⁵ Harris, 2001, pp. 507-508.

being different from the Romans and Britons (Celtic people). Furthermore, all the annals legitimize Alfred's authority as a ruler over the West Saxons and Anglo-Saxons' authority over the Britons and Vikings.⁶⁶

Even though the context of the compilation of the early annals precedes Alfred's reign, these historical records were organized and selected to legitimize the authority of Alfred and the House of Wessex over all the other English reigns.⁶⁷ Much of the early annals was taken from different historical sources, including Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and Orosius' *Historia adversos paganos*.⁶⁸ It is in The Old English Translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* that the Anglo-Saxons are described as descending from the Saxons, the Angles and the Goths, the strongest German tribes.⁶⁹ According to Harris, the *World History* greatly contributed to the identification of the Anglo-Saxon as a single people as well, both in ethnical and in religious terms. This explains why the Old English Orosius is helpful for the reconstruction of this identity a posteriori, identity characterized by a morality in line with Christianity. In fact, the Old English translation shifts from a concept of "Roman Christ to a Germanic Christendom."⁷⁰

Furthermore, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Asser's *Life* contribute to the legitimization of Alfred as a king of all people from the southern kingdoms recounting of four-year-old Alfred consecration as the future ruler of the Anglo-Saxons by pope Leo IV. However, a letter written by the pope tells us that he did not truly consecrate Alfred as a king. He rather "decorated him as a spiritual son"⁷¹ receiving "the dignity of the sword and the vestments of the consulate, as is customary with Roman consuls"⁷², in a purely symbolic ritual. Indeed, his older brothers became king before him.⁷³ Despite the scholarly debates that concern this account of events, the strong impression that Alfred's ceremony left on his contemporaries and its political and symbolic importance is undeniable. In addition, we may suppose that the translator of the Orosius created a parallel between Alfred and Caesar's entries in Rome, arguing that this is the reason why

⁶⁶ Konshuh, 2020, pp.157-159.

⁶⁷ Konshuh, 2020, p. 177.

⁶⁸ Konshuh, 2020, pp. 159-160.

⁶⁹ Harris, 2001, p. 501.

⁷⁰ Harris, 2001, pp. 493-494.

⁷¹ Davis, 1971, p. 176.

⁷² Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 15.

⁷³ Davis, 1971, p. 176.

this text lingers to such a great extent on Caesar's ceremony of the triumph, modifying Orosius original work. Alfred's consecration "alluded both to the biblical accounts of royal anointings and to Charlemagne's imperial coronation"⁷⁴ and "might represent the continuation of the rite of imperial investiture in ancient Rome"⁷⁵ for contemporaries. The importance of Alfred's ceremony is enhanced if we consider that not even Caesar were granted such honour. We may therefore assume that this narration of the facts is a propagandistic attempt to create a parallel between Alfred and Caesar as the founders of a glorious dynasty.⁷⁶

To conclude, the texts produced by Alfred and his circle answered to the king's need for propaganda: it was necessary to devise an instrument able to prompt indoctrination and loyalty and to cause enthusiasm, in order to exercise effective power over his subjects⁷⁷ and to implement his cultural and religious policy.

⁷⁴ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 16.

⁷⁵ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 16.

⁷⁶ Khalaf (forthcoming), pp. 15-18.

⁷⁷ Davis, 1971, pp. 181-182.

Chapter 2. Through the lens of Translation Studies

Considering the lack of evidence that prevents us from stating with certainty how many different persons were involved in the production of the “Alfredian” translations, the conclusion one may draw on the translator’s action are hypothetical. Bearing this in mind, some interesting considerations both of linguistic and cultural nature can still be drawn using a comparative approach. For this purpose, Translation Studies prove to be useful. Indeed, what I am going to focus on in this chapter, after a brief introduction on the discipline of Translation Studies, is mainly Toury’s notion of norms and Lefevere’s notion of patronage.

2.1 An introduction to Translation Studies

Translation Studies is a relatively new, empirical and semi-autonomous interdiscipline which was envisioned by James S. Holmes and inspired by other empirical disciplines such as linguistics⁷⁸, modern languages and comparative literature⁷⁹. After a long time, Translation Studies has finally lost its status of a hybrid area of study, achieving full recognition as a scientific discipline which, however, benefits of the contribution of related areas.⁸⁰

The discipline and its structure were presented by Holmes at the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen, 1972.⁸¹ Holmes played a pivotal role in laying the groundwork of the discipline and even proposed the name of “Translation Studies” in his paper “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies” as an alternative for denominations used at the time such as “translatology” and “translation science”, or “science of translating”. Unfortunately, for the following twenty years the work of Holmes on translation remained mostly unknown. Only after his death, Holmes’s paper started to slowly spread and gain recognition among translation scholars, finally leading the term “Translation Studies” to affirm itself in the English-speaking world in contrast to the other terminologies that persisted in other languages.⁸² Indeed, after Holmes Symposium on Translation Studies in Amsterdam (1990), his basic “map” of the

⁷⁸ Toury, 2012, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁹ Munday, 2009, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁰ Malmkjær and Windle, 2011, p. 1.

⁸¹ Toury, 2012, pp. 1-2.

⁸² Munday, 2009, pp. 4-5.

discipline was employed to situate individual approaches to the study of translation and their relations. His map, among others, remains the most productive one to date.⁸³ Since Holmes's time, the scope of the discipline developed and has been greatly transformed.⁸⁴

Until the Nineteen-sixties, the application-oriented branch of Translation Studies was predominant. Only later, the need to test, compare and replicate the findings of individual studies in order to facilitate an accumulation of knowledge in an organized way prompted an interest for the *pure* branch of the discipline, and especially for Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS).⁸⁵ The development of Translation Studies as an independent discipline has not been a linear process, and thus far the study of translation has led to the development of different approaches. Among the most influential one finds Descriptive Translation Studies and Skopos theory.

In the 1970s, Translation Studies detached themselves from a source-oriented approach that regarded translations as representations of source texts that preceded them, and from a focus on the *applied* side of the discipline. This new and, at the time, unexplored approach, defined as “target-oriented”, focuses on the fact that despite their status and function translations reflect their target culture system. On the contrary, earlier, the constraints that take place in the target culture had had a less relevant place. This switch to target-orientedness was formulated by Hans J. Vermeer with his paradigm of *Skopostheorie* and by Toury, with the main difference that the former focuses more on the *applied* side of the theory and the latter on the *descriptive* one.⁸⁶ Among the *pure* branch of the discipline, Descriptive Translation Studies were met with great success, and have seen the contribution of scholars such as Gideon Toury, André Lefevere, James Holmes and Itamar Even-Zohar, who offered insights into the changing patterns of translation norms as well as on the reception of translation in the target culture.⁸⁷

In the 1980s and 1990s though, Translation Studies took an interesting turn with an increasing interest for the cultural studies of translation. Lefevere greatly contributed to this approach with substantial work on ideology, patronage, poetics, and translation as “rewriting”.⁸⁸

⁸³ Toury, 2012, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁴ Munday, 2009, p. 9-11.

⁸⁵ Toury, 2012, pp. XII-XIII.

⁸⁶ Toury, 2012, pp. 18-19.

⁸⁷ Bassnet, 2011, p. 83

⁸⁸ Munday, 2009, p. 7.

2.2 Holmes's "map" of Translation Studies

Holmes's abovementioned "map" of Translation Studies, which was represented graphically by Toury, is split between *pure* and *applied branches*.⁸⁹ Toury's research work focuses mainly on the descriptive branch of *Pure Translation Studies*.⁹⁰ *Pure* translation studies are further divided between two branches: *Theoretical (General and Partial)* and *Descriptive Translation Studies*. The former branch, as conceived by Holmes, aims at developing a theory that can explain and predict all phenomenon happening within the field of translation, a very challenging mission to accomplish.⁹¹ The latter branch is divided into three independents but related sub-branches of research: *function-* (of product and of process), *process-* and *product-oriented*. The *applied* branch is purely prescriptive and branches off into translation training, translation aids and translation criticism.⁹²

It is important to underline the relationship that ties the *Pure* and the *applied* branch of the discipline: according to Toury, a quest for laws is what concerns the *pure* branches of the discipline as well as its *applied* extensions.⁹³ In fact, descriptive-explanatory investigations is vital for the elaboration of the theory, and studies that are not only observational, but also experimental, are fundamental to revise and to enrich the theory of Translation Studies.⁹⁴

2.3 Toury's concept of norms in DTS

Toury's research work dwells at length on Descriptive Translation Studies, an underdeveloped but much needed area of Translation Studies, constituting "a systematic branch proceeding from clear assumptions and armed with a methodology and research techniques made as explicit as possible and justified within Translation Studies itself".⁹⁵

Toury's early work develops from the context of Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, which, as argued by Hermans, "studies translated literature as a system that interrelated dynamically with the source system"⁹⁶. According to Toury, at the time

⁸⁹ Toury, 2012, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁰ Munday, 2009, pp. 9-11.

⁹¹ Toury, 2012, p. 11.

⁹² Toury, 2012, p. 3.

⁹³ Toury, 2012, p. 295.

⁹⁴ Toury, 2012, pp. 301-302.

⁹⁵ Toury, 2012, p. XIII.

⁹⁶ Munday, 2009, p. 10.

translations were studied not as isolated texts but as “facts of target cultures”,⁹⁷ mainly taking into account their cultural, literary and socio-historical contexts. Toury and the descriptivists detached themselves from this approach, shifting their focus from a prescriptive to a descriptive viewpoint. What is central to Toury’s work is the concept of “norms”, which operate in the translation process. The choices made by the translator throughout the translation process may differ according to culture and historical settings, and possibly result in the creation of patterns.⁹⁸ We can then affirm that norms are linked to regularities of behaviour and to the descriptive branch of the discipline. Descriptive Translation Studies indeed observe the choices made in terms of translational behaviour in a corpus of selected translated texts, engaging in the formulation of generalizations through the use of a replicable methodology. From these generalizations could be drawn laws of translation, albeit very tentative and general at times.⁹⁹

Another purpose of Descriptive Translation Studies is to confront the position of a given translation (or a group of translations) in its assumed host culture to the original position that was attributed to its source text, explaining and analysing potential differences. Indeed, the position that a translation has in its target culture and its function can vary according to the strategies adopted by the translator and to the relationships it has with its source text, including the type of text in question and the cultural groups that perform translation.¹⁰⁰ An (assumed) translation is any text which is presented or regarded as a translation. This includes translations that are drawn from more than one source text or even texts whose source is only assumed. This is the case of pseudotranslations, that remain a legitimate object of study in Descriptive Translation Studies.¹⁰¹ Indeed, a target text can be studied as a translation even in the absence of an assumed source text or in the presence of more than one source.¹⁰²

Descripted Translation Studies and Translation Theory are mutually connected, since the results drawn from well-performed studies can enrich the theoretical branch, revising the theory itself or simply relating to it, and therefore proceeding to verify, refute or modify general hypothesis. Cumulative findings can indeed contribute to the

⁹⁷ Munday, 2009, p. 10.

⁹⁸ Windle and Pym, 2011, p. 7.

⁹⁹ Munday, 2009, pp. 9-11.

¹⁰⁰ Toury, 2012, pp. 7-8.

¹⁰¹ Toury, 2012, pp. 27-30.

¹⁰² Toury, 2012, p. 94.

elaboration of the theoretical side of the discipline through the formulation of laws, which can only be based on likelihood, and through the finding of restrictions (such as rank, text-type, medium, time and others) that contribute to their refinement. In a few words, hypothesis can be tested thanks to descriptive analysis.¹⁰³

Toury, adopting a target-oriented framework, describes translations as a way of “filling in gaps”¹⁰⁴ in the target culture with something missing and preferably prestigious. Despite this, a translation requires some changes in order to be accepted by a target culture. For this reason, translators can be described as unique pieces, or rather novelties, just like every source text. In some cases, groups of texts may be translated in a similar way and have similar patterns, representing a reflection of the models for acceptable translations imported in a certain culture. If on the one hand, translations modify some elements of the source text to adapt to their context, on the other one they also retain some features of it. Taking the context into account is essential since a translation and its original text occupy two different positions in the relative cultural settings, position which is usually deliberately designed. Furthermore, the position of a translation and its status can be hypothesized, also retrospectively, through descriptive findings considering the original position of the text, its linguistic make-up, its relationship with the original and the translation tradition it is part of.¹⁰⁵

According to Toury, and from a target-oriented angle, translation analysis starts by investigating facts that are then submitted to scrutiny: first *observables* (the translated utterances and their constituents) and only later, reconstructing *non-observables* (such as the process of creation of a given translation and the strategies adopted).¹⁰⁶ Then, once the source text of an assumed translation has been found, it is necessary “to map the assumed translation onto its assumed counterpart”¹⁰⁷, which helps to reconfirm its appropriateness as an assumed source text.

Mapping each assumed translation onto its assumed source (in this order!) would thus result in assigning the status of translation solutions to various constituents of

¹⁰³ Toury, 2012, pp. 8-10.

¹⁰⁴ Toury, 2012, p. 21.

¹⁰⁵ Toury, 2012, pp. 22-25.

¹⁰⁶ Toury, 2012, p. 31.

¹⁰⁷ Toury, 2012, p. 32.

the target text, which would so far have been considered, rather vaguely, as ‘translational phenomena’.¹⁰⁸

Usually, are series of paired segments of assumed translations or phenomena occurring in it to be mapped onto parallel segments of its source, rather than entire texts.¹⁰⁹ Translation relationships are discernible between textual segments that are very often small-scale and lower-level linguistic items, rather than between texts as wholes. Coupled pairs of replacing and replaced textual segments should determine each other mutually,¹¹⁰ but they have no need to be identical since in case of omissions or additions one of the two segments can even be absent.¹¹¹ Studying a large number of pairs may lead us to draw some conclusions concerning regular patterns adopted¹¹² and generalization about the kind of translation equivalence.¹¹³

Toury’s conception of equivalence is that of a historically-oriented notion with a descriptive potential, rather than a ahistorical and largely prescriptive concept as defined by other authors:¹¹⁴ equivalence, defined as “that translation relationship which would have emerged as constituting the norm for the pair of texts under study”¹¹⁵, is a pivotal element that can always be found in the relation between a translation and its assumed source. Of course, this postulate can be realized in different ways.¹¹⁶

The identification of coupled pairs is not sufficient to carry out an analysis: other data such as systemic position, school of translators, period, test-type and other relevant criteria is needed.¹¹⁷ Finally, pairing translation and norms can be a starting point for some descriptive-explanatory research. Even though norms usually intersect with the translator’s own liberties, they can deviate from prevailing patterns leaning toward non normative and anti-normative solutions which can be sanctioned negatively.¹¹⁸

What defines the ‘value’ of a translation are two essential and connected principles: acceptability vs. adequacy. According to Toury, the translator is always

¹⁰⁸ Toury, 2012, p. 103.

¹⁰⁹ Toury, 2012, p. 32.

¹¹⁰ Toury, 2012, pp. 102-103.

¹¹¹ Toury, 2012, p. 104.

¹¹² Toury, 2012, p. 107.

¹¹³ Toury, 2012, p.117.

¹¹⁴ Toury, 2012, p. 85.

¹¹⁵ Toury, 2012, p. 32.

¹¹⁶ Toury, 2012, pp. 113-114.

¹¹⁷ Toury, 2012, p. 33.

¹¹⁸ Toury, 2012, pp. 61-68.

confronted with this basic choice between adequacy, subjecting himself/herself to the original text's norms and relations, and acceptability, applying the linguistic and literary norm of the target culture.¹¹⁹ Acceptability and adequacy are incompatible, the closer you get to the former, the further from the latter. Despite this, a text never replicates one or the other altogether, and it is important to find an adequate balance between the two.¹²⁰ One of the main purposes of the analysis of translation texts is indeed to collocate the choices of the translator in a continuum that connects these two different poles. Specifically, what determine this position are norms.¹²¹

Three types of competing norm often occur: mainstream norms (direct translational behaviour that dominate the centre), old-fashioned norms (remnants of previous mainstream norms that are becoming relegated to the margin) and avant-garde norms (rudiments of what may become part of a new set of norms in the future).¹²² Translational norms and norm-governed behaviour can influence translations of all kinds and at every stage of the translation act. Editors, publishers, proofreaders, revisers, censors, etc., taking part in the process of translation, may adopt common attitudes that reinforce each other decisions or may subscribe to non-occurring or even contradictory norms.¹²³ Norms are characterized by socio-cultural specificity and potential instability: sometimes they change quickly, other times they endure for a long time.¹²⁴ I am now going to summarize the nature of norms and their role in target-oriented Descriptive Translation Studies, as presented by Toury.

First of all, I am going to focus on the initial norm in translation. It consists in making a decision between the two extreme orientations of translation: leaning more to adequacy or to acceptability. The first option results in the text reflecting faithfully its assumed original and its norms and features, or the norms of a particular tradition within the source text, or even the source culture at large. This procedure inevitably leads to certain incompatibilities with target culture practices. The second option complies with the target culture norms, conferring a secondary position to the source text and its web of

¹¹⁹ Broeck, 1981, p. 85.

¹²⁰ Toury, 2012, p. 116.

¹²¹ Toury, 1981, pp. 23-24.

¹²² Toury, 2012, pp. 76-77

¹²³ Toury, 2012, pp. 81-82.

¹²⁴ Toury, 2012, p. 86.

relations.¹²⁵ We need to remember that shifts from the source text are an inevitable and distinctive feature of translation and that they are found even in the most extremely adequacy-oriented translations, making it the most adequate candidate for translation universals, according to Toury. Toury confers the initial norm logical priority, it is the highest-level decision which is followed by more specific choices of a lower level, such as choosing the proximity to either one or the other extreme.¹²⁶ In addition, two main groups of norms can be identified: preliminary and operational norms.

Preliminary norms “have to do with two main sets of considerations which are often interconnected: those regarding the existence and actual nature of a translation policy, and those related to the directness of translation”.¹²⁷ Translation policy concerns factors governing the choice of text-types that are translated and imported into a target culture in a given point in time. Different policies may apply to different subgroups, in terms of both text-types, medium and human agents, and the interface between the two often offers fertile grounds for policy hunting. Focusing now on the directness of translation, it concerns level of tolerance for translating texts from certain languages. In fact, different languages may have a different status for certain cultures.

Operational norms direct the decisions made during the translation act itself and affect the text matrix, its textual make-up and verbal formulation. They also govern relationships between target and source texts or segments. Simply put, they ascertain what remains intact and what would tend to be subdued to modifications. Operational norms include matricial and textual-linguistic norms. Matricial norms govern the degree of fullness of the translation (there could be omissions and additions), its location or distribution in the text and the text segmentation into chapters, stanzas, passages and suchlike both in the text or in paratexts.¹²⁸ On the other hand, textual-linguistic norms govern the selection of linguistic material used to replace original material in the target text, which explain why these norms have similarities to norms governing non-translational text-production in the same culture.

¹²⁵ Toury, 2012, p. 79.

¹²⁶ Toury, 2012, p. 80.

¹²⁷ Toury, 2012, p. 82.

¹²⁸ Toury, 2012, pp. 82-83.

Preliminary norms enjoy both logical and temporal priority over the operational ones. Despite this, between the two groups we can find relations including mutual influence and even two-way conditioning.

Every model that supplies performance instructions is defined as a restricting factor. Translations may be either imposed on the target culture or introduced into it. They are sometimes even rejected by the target culture but overtime they may manage to carve a niche for themselves losing their alienness and become accepted.¹²⁹ Furthermore, norms determine the kind of equivalence that is present between a translation and its source. Finally, in order to reconstruct translational norms, two sources of data are used: textual sources (the translation themselves) and extratextual sources (semi-theoretical or critical formulations).¹³⁰

2.4 Lefevere's concept of patronage

Toury's concept of norms can be supplemented with Lefevere's concept of patronage, which enables us to draw some conclusions on the social impact of certain translation choices. According to Lefevere, whatever text-type they reproduce, translators enact a manipulation of the original work to some extent for the purpose of making them fit in with the dominant ideological or poetological current.¹³¹

Society consists of two control factors that interact with each other. The first is the literary system which is controlled by the "professionals": critics, reviewers, teachers and translators repress certain literary works that are opposed to the dominant concept of literature, or better of what literature, according to the dominant ideology, should be. The second control factor is found mostly outside the literary system. The author calls it "patronage".¹³² Patronage "will be understood to mean something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the readings, writing, and rewriting of literature".¹³³ In this context, power is not merely a repressive force, it is also regarded as a force that spreads knowledge, produces discourse, and induces pleasure.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Toury, 2012, p. 84.

¹³⁰ Toury, 2012, p. 87.

¹³¹ Lefevere, 1992, p. 8.

¹³² Lefevere, 1992, pp. 14-15.

¹³³ Lefevere, 1992, p. 15.

¹³⁴ Lefevere, 1992, p. 15.

Patronage consists of three elements: an ideological component and a subject matter, which place some constraints in terms of choice and development of form; an economic component (the rewriter can indeed earn a certain amount of money); finally, patronage is also composed by status, since acceptance of patronage also means being accepted into a certain group and lifestyle. Patronage can be both undifferentiated and differentiated. In the first instance the three components I briefly summarized above are dispensed by the same person. This is the most diffused kind of patronage and can be easily seen when an absolute ruler attaches a writer to his or her court and gives him or her a pension. The second instance occurs when the three elements (the ideological component, the economic component, and the status) are not linked.¹³⁵

Another pivotal aspect that is tightly connected with patronage is change, a functional aspect to a literary system. A literary system has the power to impact its environment through different types of literary productions, including rewritings. If on one hand changes of patronage can operate changes in the literary system,¹³⁶ literary systems, including the process of rewriting, contributes to the codification of poetics.¹³⁷

A poetics, besides being characterized by specific genres, devises, prototypical characters, motifs and so on, also bears the concept of what literature should be in a certain social system and therefore implies a selection of relevant themes. Therefore, its devices are functional to the ideology that the dominant literary production carries at a certain point in history.¹³⁸ That is the reason why we can define poetics as historical variables, with a functional and inventory component that changes overtime in order to accommodate certain views.¹³⁹ Translations contribute to changes in poetics, in Lefevere's words:

Rewritings, mainly translations, deeply affect the interpretation of literary systems, not just by projecting the image of one writer or work in another literature or by failing to do so [...] but also by introducing new devices into the inventory component of a poetics paving the way to changes in its functional component.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Lefevere, 1992, pp. 16-17.

¹³⁶ Lefevere, 1992, pp. 23-24.

¹³⁷ Lefevere, 1992, p. 28.

¹³⁸ Lefevere, 1992, p. 26.

¹³⁹ Lefevere, 1992, p. 35.

¹⁴⁰ Lefevere, 1992, p. 38.

Furthermore, translations project a certain image of the source texts based on the translator's ideology, either for the active will of the translator or because it was imposed to him/her by some form of patronage as a constraint by the dominant poetics in the target culture. What greatly contributes to determining the strategies used by a translator is indeed ideology, which is particularly evident in additions of passages which are not present in the source text or in omissions.¹⁴¹ The image of the original text projected by a translator, besides being influenced by ideology and poetics, can also be influenced by the intended audience. This projection takes place through strategies which are not limited to the realm of poetics, but they rather have to do with ideology, poetics, Universe of Discourse, and linguistics.¹⁴²

A translator, as I suggested before, can adopt different stances based on the objective he/she has in mind. According to John Hookham Frere there are two archetypes of translator: the "faithful translator" and the "Spirited Translator". The "faithful translator" conveys the current authoritative interpretation of the source text, conserving ideology and poetic and retaining the cultural prestige of the original text. Furthermore, he/she works on the level of the word or of the sentence. Fidelity in translation goes hand in hand with a conservative ideology. We can argue that a text can be more "faithful" when it manages to grasp the function of words within the totality of the scene/text rather than translating word for word. On the other hand, the "Spirited Translator" employs the corresponding modern phrases instead of those of the source text, he substitutes the peculiarities of the past with those of his own time and nation, he/she is not conservative in either poetological or ideological terms of the "received" interpretation. This kind of translator operates changes to the original text making it lose its "classical" status and prestige and shocking his/her audience.¹⁴³

To conclude, translations and other form of rewritings are very common, especially when prestigious source texts are translated into cultures with a low self-image.¹⁴⁴ Whatever the reasons that lie under the production of a translation work, rewritings have the power to shape the reception of a work, a literature, or an author in a specific source culture.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Lefevere, 1992, pp. 41-42.

¹⁴² Lefevere, 1992, p. 100.

¹⁴³ Lefevere, 1992, pp. 49-58.

¹⁴⁴ Lefevere, 1992, p. 88.

¹⁴⁵ Lefevere, 1992, p. 110.

2.5 Towards the use of Toury and Lefevere's theory for the analysis of "Alfredian" texts

Approaches based on Translation Studies are rather unexplored in Medieval Studies and in particular in the field of Germanic languages. Despite this, an analysis of this kind is particularly useful to investigate and justify the translator's choices.¹⁴⁶

In the next chapter, I am going to analyse some passages of the Old English Orosius precisely under the lens of Translation Studies, employing Toury's concept of norms and drawing some conclusion for what concerns their social impact using Lefevere's notion of patronage. Indeed, we can argue that the lexical and linguistic choices employed, as well as the number of additions, omissions, and re-organization of the source text's content, are detectable through the norms codified by Toury. Consequently, the adoption of these norms has a strong social impact. This is the common thread that links Toury and Lefevere's theories.

More precisely, we may argue that the use of certain norms could either aim at giving prestige to the "Alfredian" cultural production and his court or contributing to the translator's creation of a prestigious status. Indeed, if we speculate that Alfred did not actually contribute to his cultural production, we may suppose that the translator wanted to undergo this patronage for certain reasons¹⁴⁷ and possibly to gain recognition as a socio-culturally significant translator. This of course requires adopting the norms favoured by the dominant culture.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, the translation choices employed in the Old English Orosius and its substantial transformation, beside modifying the structure of the text, impact its ideological foundation. For this reason, we may argue that this text answers to Alfred's propagandistic aims and to his desire to be recognized as a ruler of the Angelcynn. This is implicitly done through the creation of connections with some of the more important Roman military leader and with the first conquerors of Britain:¹⁴⁹ "the translator intended to turn the *Historiae* into a compilation of good and bad exempla from the past for the instruction and guidance of future rulers in the correct management of power".¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, if we postulate that the readership had access to both source and target text, we may discard the possibility of a translation work carried out for the

¹⁴⁶ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 5.

¹⁴⁸ Toury, 2012, p. 277.

¹⁴⁹ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 4.

simplistic aim of expanding the readership of Orosius's Latin text. On the contrary, the Old English Orosius represents a new text which carries original content.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 13.

Chapter 3. Interpretation of the battles between Romans and Carthaginians according to the *Old English Orosius*

In this chapter, I am going to compare Paulus Orosius's *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem*, a Christian Universal History, to its "Alfredian" free rendering,¹⁵² the *Old English Orosius*. The source text is an account of human history that covers a period of time that goes from the Creation to the early fifth century, narrated under a Latin perspective. This text aims at countering the credence that the conversion from pagan beliefs to Christianity provoked the fall of Rome, through a list of adverse events that preceded the sack of Rome undermining the suffering of the contemporaries and somehow promoting Christianity. The West-Saxon translator undertakes a work of selection, re-organization, omission and addition of historical material in order to condense the information contained in the Latin source text, but also, as I argue, to provoke an ideological shift which was allegedly functional to Alfred's reign.¹⁵³

3.1 Some preliminary notes on the *Old English Orosius*

Interestingly, the author of the *Old English Orosius* explicitly sets itself as a different entity if compared to Paulus Orosius, and therefore bluntly presents his text as a translation. He does so using the phrase *cwæð Orosius* (Orosius said), which also contributes to conferring authority to the author of the translated text.¹⁵⁴ This may represent an attempt to be recognized as a socio-culturally significant translator¹⁵⁵ by means of undergoing the norms dictated by the dominant patronage in question.

According to Hurley "the *Orosius* narrator functions as a judge of good and evil, assessor of what is shameful, and the arbiter of what should and should not be preserved in the writing of history's decrees."¹⁵⁶ The changes implemented by this translator concern both the past itself and its morality, that is to say the way it is interpreted.¹⁵⁷ Just as Orosius, the unknown translator of his text takes advantage of the past: the future ruling class of the Alfredian reign, young nobles, aristocrats, but also people of lower rank,

¹⁵² Leneghan, 2015, p. 658.

¹⁵³ Khalaf (forthcoming), p.4.

¹⁵⁴ Hurley, 2013, p. 405-410.

¹⁵⁵ Toury, 2012, p. 277.

¹⁵⁶ Hurley, 2013, p. 422.

¹⁵⁷ Hurley, 2013, p. 422.

needed to be introduced to the teaching of translation works which aim was to instil certain political and ideological contents.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Orosius' polemic against the pagans is revisited:¹⁵⁹ rather than teaching history in a polemical perspective, as Orosius did, the translator of the *Old English Orosius* regarded history as a subject containing *exempla* that needed to provide edifying lessons.

Many early scholars interpreted the modifications apported to the text, and especially the several omissions, as a sign of the translator's lack of ability. Later, the reading of the several omissions, additions, and reorganizations of the textual material, was no longer interpreted as a mere incomplete summary of Orosius's text, but as an intentional and functional reinterpretation of historical facts.¹⁶⁰ It is already clear how this "Alfredian" text is more than a mere rewriting, since the message of Orosius and the ideology of the original text is revisited in a new and original work.¹⁶¹

3.2 The text's genealogy

As I argued in the first chapter, the authorship of the "Alfredian" texts is contested. However, we can place the *Old English Orosius* in time and draw some considerations on the language that was used. The earliest of the two surviving manuscript of the *Old English Orosius*, British Library Additional MS 47967 (the Lauderdale or Tollemache Manuscript), was copied in the late ninth or early tenth century, at Winchester. Despite having no record of the date in which the *Old English Orosius* was written, it is the use of the early West Saxon dialect that suggests the date of composition of the text.¹⁶² The responsible was allegedly the same scribe who wrote the entries for the late ninth and early tenth century in MS A of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.¹⁶³ Both texts, indeed, contribute to the ethnical and religious identification of the Anglo-Saxons.¹⁶⁴ Interestingly, much of the early annals of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was taken from the *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem*, among other sources.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ Hurley, 2013, pp. 405-406.

¹⁵⁹ Keynes and Lapidge, 1983, p. 33.

¹⁶⁰ Konshuh, 2020, pp. 159-160.

¹⁶¹ Hurley, 2013, pp. 405-406.

¹⁶² Konshuh, 2020, pp. 159-160.

¹⁶³ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 656-658.

¹⁶⁴ Harris, 2001, pp. 493-494.

¹⁶⁵ Konshuh, 2020, pp. 159-160.

3.3 Analysis of some textual segments

The *Old English Orosius* explores the main historical events of the four greatest empires of the world: Babylon, Macedon, Carthage and Rome. The translated text omits most of Book VII of its source text, shifting the focus from the fall of Rome to its rise.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, the Old English rewriting does not omit much of the historical narrative in the first four books, up to the fall of Carthage, since most of the condensation work takes place in the last three books. Because of this work of condensation, the Old English version is more than half as long as the Latin.¹⁶⁷ In particular, I am going to analyse some passages of Book IV which are mostly concerned with the Second Punic War with a particular focus on the character of the Carthaginian general Hannibal, remembered as the general who took his thirty-seven elephants in Italy across the Alps in 218 BC.¹⁶⁸ As anticipated, I am going to do so using a specific methodological approach based on Translation Studies and in particular employing Toury's notion of norms and Lefevere's notion of patronage. Furthermore, I am going to map the source text, the *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem* (OH), onto its target text, the *Old English Orosius* (OEO), focusing on some interesting passages that will allow us to draw some considerations on the ideological background of this "Alfredian" translation.

The changes that concern the text's structure are dictated according to what Toury defines as "matricial norms". Despite these changes in the OEO, the account of the battles between the Carthaginians and the Romans sticks to the initial position of the source text. Indeed, Book IV of both versions especially focuses on this series of battles, even though some hints on Hannibal and the Carthaginians can be found also in Book V. The historical events narrated in the original text are mainly compressed in three chapters of the target text: chapters 8, 9 and 10.

At the end of chapter 6 of the OEO, the translator gives a brief account of one the first successes of young king Hannibal against the Romans, in the Carthaginian island of Lilybaeum – episode which is reported more expansively in OH. The following year, according to both the Latin and the Old English version, Hannibal comes back to Italy and ravages its coasts. At this point, the Romans granted a peace to the Carthaginians at condition that they retreated from Sicily and Sardinia, and in exchange for a monetary

¹⁶⁶ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 659-690.

¹⁶⁷ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 656-657.

¹⁶⁸ Edwards, 2001, p. 900.

compensation.¹⁶⁹ This peace agreement will soon be broken, as we will see in chapter 7 of the OEO.

T. Manlio Torquato C. Atilio Bubulco consulibus Sardinia insula rebellavit auctoribus Poenis. Unde mox Sardi subacti et oppressi sunt; Carthaginiensibus autem violatoribus pacis, quam ipsi poposcissent, inferri bellum decretum est.¹⁷⁰

When Titus Manlius and Torquatus Gaius and Atilius Bubulcus were consuls in Rome, the Sardinians, with Carthagian encouragement, fought against the Romans and were soon defeated. Then the Romans made war on the Carthaginians because they had broken the peace agreement.¹⁷¹

This peace was eventually reobtained but lasted only one year. A series of battles between the two factions follow in chapter 8 of the OEO. First, Hannibal besieges the Spanish city of Saguntum, which favoured the Romans, for eight months, starving all of them to death. Hannibal then forced his way through the Pyrenees and the Alps creating a road over the Mount of Jove until they reached the plain with great difficulty.¹⁷² The name “Mount of Jove”, which is the late antique name for the current Great Saint Bernard pass over the Alps, where the temple of Jupiter was erected,¹⁷³ is absent in the Latin version. Then, we found a series of unsuccessful military events for the Romans after which Hannibal left, passing over Etruria, which in the OEO is indicated using the general term Apennines.¹⁷⁴ Here, during a snowstorm, many men and animals perished because of the cold.¹⁷⁵ Hannibal, cunning man, eventually managed to surprise the consul Flamino¹⁷⁶ and destroyed the Roman army in the battle of the Trasimeno lake,¹⁷⁷ which in the OEO is highly condensed.

One of the modifications implemented in the OEO concern the displacement of certain textual segments. An example is the following passage:

¹⁶⁹ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, pp. 256-257.

¹⁷⁰ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, pp. 306-308.

¹⁷¹ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p.259.

¹⁷² OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 265.

¹⁷³ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 441

¹⁷⁴ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 319.

¹⁷⁵ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p.265.

¹⁷⁶ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, pp. 319-321.

¹⁷⁷ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 321.

Diris tun etiam Romani prodigis territi sunt. Nam et solis orbis minui visus est et apud Arpos parmae in caelo visa, sol quoque pugnasse cum luna, apud Capens interdiu duas lunas ortas, in Sardinia sanguine duo scuta sudasse, Faliscis caelum scindi velut magno hiatu visum, apud Antium metentibus cruentas spicas in corbem decidisse.¹⁷⁸

Many portents were seen at that time. First the sun appeared to shrink. The second was that the sun and moon seemed to fight each other: these marvels were seen in Arpi. In Sardinia two shields were seen to sweat blood. The Faliscians saw the sky appear to gape open. To the people of Antium, it appeared that when they harvested their grain and had filled their baskets, the heads of grain were all bloody.¹⁷⁹

The segment concerning divine manifestations is placed after the battle of the Trasimeno lake in the OEO, and more precisely, after the capturing of the Carthaginian general Mago in Spain on part of consul Scipio, brother of the homonymous consul. The OH instead, originally places this segment before the account of the battle of Trasimeno. I would argue that the omission of the fact that the portents described in this section specifically impacted the Romans in the OEO aligns itself with the concept of Providence: this may be one of the manifestations of God against the victory of the pagan Carthaginians, against the future Romans of Christian faith.¹⁸⁰

In chapter 9 of the OEO, the consuls Lucius Aemilius, Paulus Publius and Tentenius Varro advanced an army against Hannibal in 540. The OEO adds a specific account of how Hannibal defeated the Romans.

Anno ab Urbe condita DXL L. Aemilius Paulus et P. Terentius Varro consules contra Hannibalem missi inpatientia Varronis consuls infelicissime apud Cannas Apuliae vicum omnes pane Romanae spei vires perdiderunt. Nam in ea pugna XLIII milia Romanorum interfecta sunt, quamquam et de exercitu Hannibalis magna pars caesa est. Nullo tamen Punico bello Romani adeo ad extrema internecionis adducti sunt. Perit enim in o consul Aemilius Paulus, consulares aut praetorii viri viginti interfecti sunt, senatores vel capti vel occisi sunt triginta, nobiles viri trecenti, pedestrium militum XL milia, equitum tria milia quingenti. Varro consul cum quinquaginta

¹⁷⁸ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 318.

¹⁷⁹ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p.268-269.

¹⁸⁰ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 321.

equitibus Venusium fugit. Nec dubium est ultimum illum dim Romani status futurum fuisse, si Hannibal mox post victoriam ad pervadendam Urbem contendisset.¹⁸¹

Five hundred and forty years after Rome was built, when Lucius Aemilius and Paulus Publius and Terentius Varro were consuls, they advanced with an army against Hannibal. But he defeated them through the same trick that he had used at their first meeting, and also with a new one that they hadn't heard before, which was that he left some of his army in a secure position and advanced with others against the consuls. As soon as they met they retreated toward those that were in reserve, and the consuls pursued him killing the soldiers and thinking that they were going to have the biggest victory that day. But as soon as Hannibal reached his forces he defeated all the consuls and slaughtered an immense number of Romans, such as never before or since had fallen in a single battle. There were forty-four thousands dead, and he killed two of the consuls and captured the third. On that day he might have achieved power over all the Romans if had pressed on to the city.¹⁸²

Even though the scope of the event is described as equally tragic for the Roman army, the translated text inserts additions in order to emphasise Hannibal's trickery.

As a testimony of his victory, Hannibal sends to Carthage three measures of gold rings. In the OEO an explanation is added in order to introduce an Anglo-Saxon audience, which was very unlikely accustomed to Roman uses, to this practice: "from those rings you could tell how many of the Roman nobility had fallen, since it was the custom among them in those times that no one could wear a gold ring unless he was of noble birth".¹⁸³

The passage that follows gives an account of the valour of the Romans and especially of Scipio, who discouraged Cecilius Metellus' enterprise of abandoning Italy.

Quod auctore Caecilio Metello confirmatum fuisset, nisi Cornelius Scipio tribunus tunc militum, idem qui post Africanus, dextrico gladio deterrisset ac potius pro patriae defensione in sua verba iurare coegisset.¹⁸⁴

After that battle the Romans were so distraught that their consul Caecilius Metellus and all the senate had thought that they should abandon Rome and even all of Italy.

¹⁸¹ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 322.

¹⁸² OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 269.

¹⁸³ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 271.

¹⁸⁴ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 322.

They would have done so if Scipio, who was the most senior of the military men, had not stopped them, when he drew his sword and swore that he would rather kill himself than abandon the land of his father. He said too that he would pursue as an enemy anyone who spoke of leaving Rome. By that means he forced them all to swear an oath that they would all either die in their country or live in their country.¹⁸⁵

The translator expands the passage in which Scipio makes the Romans swear oaths emphasizing the need for national unity in a context of invasion. The translator's interpretation of the source text may see the heroic resistance of the Roman leaders to the Carthaginians as a model for contemporary rulers.¹⁸⁶

At this point, all of Italy changed faction and started to support Hannibal because they did not believe that the Romans, or any other army, could ever win over him.¹⁸⁷ But the main turning point, and the first evident manifestation of Providence, can be found in the following passage:

Post hoc L. Postumius praetor adversus Gallos pugnare missus cum exercitu caesus est. Deinde Sempronio Graccho Q. Fabio Maximo consulibus Claudius Marcellus expraetore proconsul designatus Hannibals exercitum proelio fudit primusque post tantas reipublicae ruins spem fecit Hannibalem posse superari.¹⁸⁸

the Romans appointed as consul Claudius Marcellus, who had been Scipio's comrade. He went secretly with a small detachment to the wing of Hannibal's army that the latter was in, and killed many of them, putting Hannibal himself to flight. So Marcellus had shown the Romans that it was possible to defeat Hannibal, though they had previously doubted whether he could ever be defeated, however big the force against him.¹⁸⁹

The translator, while adapting the account of the heroic act of resistance of Claudius Macellus, omits some details that are irrelevant in order to condense the information of the original text: he omits the names of the consuls mentioned in OH, and transforms Marcellus himself into a consul. Furthermore, he emphasises Mercellus's stealthiness,

¹⁸⁵ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 271.

¹⁸⁶ Leneghan, 2015, p. 691.

¹⁸⁷ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 272.

¹⁸⁸ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 324.

¹⁸⁹ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 273.

characteristic that enabled him to defeat Hannibal and his invading Carthaginian army. Claudius Marcellus, after countless defeats, was the first to give hope to the Romans.¹⁹⁰ Since many more Romans were killed again by hand of Hannibal, this victory was not definitive, but rather a glimpse of hope for the future of the Empire.¹⁹¹

Another instance of omission is the following:

Pudet recordationis, quid enim dicam improbitatem magis an miseriam Romanorum? Immo verius vel improbam miseriam vel miseram improbitatem.¹⁹²

Orosius represents a judge of what, according to his morality, is considered as a shameful historical narrative to be passed on, or as proper history instead. Indeed, the abridgements of the OEO occasionally aim at silencing those stories.¹⁹³ Under this perspective, Orosius places the historian as “arbiter of history”,¹⁹⁴ someone who has the power to choose to omit what is evil and therefore not worthy of record. In the OEO, the judgment of this stories and the desire to silence them are attributed to Orosius through the *cwæð Orosius* construction, rather than to the translator.¹⁹⁵

At this point, the Latin text briefly recaps the main events that had happened: despite a poorly equipped army and far outnumbered by their enemies, the Romans managed to combat four overseas war (in Macedonia against the Macedonian king, in Spain against Hasdrubal, in Sardinia against the Sardinians and the Carthaginian, and eventually even a fourth one against Hannibal). This, probably for the sake of concision, is not reported in the Old English text.

Chapter 10 of the OEO begins with the capture of consul Marcellus Claudius in Syracuse, in 543. On another front, Hannibal went from Campania to the river Anio, at three miles from Rome, and then advanced to Collin gate. But when the consuls aligned themselves to combat, another one of the most explicit manifestations of the divine Providence took place. As follows:¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 692-693.

¹⁹¹ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 273.

¹⁹² Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 326.

¹⁹³ Hurley, 2013, p. 425.

¹⁹⁴ Hurley, 2013, p. 426.

¹⁹⁵ Hurley, 2013, p. 427.

¹⁹⁶ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 275.

S. At ubi expositae utrimque acies constiterunt, in conspectu Romae praemium victoris future tantus se subito imber e nubibus grandine mixtus effudit, ut turbata agmina vix armis retentis in sua se castra colligerent. Deinde cum serenitate reddita in campum copiae atque in aciem redissent, rursum violentior fusa tempests maiore metu mortalium audaciam cohercuit territosque exercitus refugere in tentoria cogit. Tunc conversus in religionem Hannibal dixisse fertur, potiundae sibi Rome modo voluntatem non dari, modo potestatem. Respondeant nunc mihi obtrectatores veri Dei hoc loco: Hannibalem a capessenda subruendaque Roma utrum Romana obstitit fortitudo an divina miseratio? Aut forsitan conservati isti dedignantur fateri, quod Hannibal et victor extimuit et cedens probavit ac - si istam divinam tutelam per pluviam de caelo venisse manifestum est, ipsam autem pluviam opportunis et necessariis temporibus non nisi per Christum, qui est verus Deus, ministrari etiam ab huiusmodi satis certo sciri nec negari posse existimo: maxime nunc - quando ad documentum potentiae eius, cum siccitate turbante pluviam poscere adsidue contingit, et alternis vicibus nunc gentiles nunc Christiani rogant nec umquam etiam ipsis testibus factum est, ut optati imbres superveniant nisi in die, quo rogari Christum et Christians rogare permittitur - procul dubio constat, urbem Romam per hun eundem verum Deum, qui est Christ's less, ordinantem secundum placitum ineffabilis iudicii sui, et tunc ad future fidei credulitatem servatam fuisse et nunc pro parte sui incredula castigatam.¹⁹⁷

But when they were about to join battle there was a huge deluge of rain, so that none of them could wield their weapons and so they separated. When the rain stopped they came together again, and again there was a similar downpour so that they separated again. Then Hannibal realized, and himself said, that though he was wanting and expecting to overcome the Romans, God did not permit it. Tell me now you Romans, said Orosius, when or where did it happen before the time of Christianity that either you or anyone else could procure rain from any gods by prayer, as people could afterwards, when Christianity came, and as many good people still can from our savior Christ, when there is need? It was clear enough that the same Christ who later turned the Romans to Christianity sent the rain for their protection, though they did not deserve it, in order that they themselves and many others through them might come to Christianity and the true faith.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, pp. 328-330.

¹⁹⁸ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, pp. 276-277.

Just like Paulus Orosius, the translator of the OEO takes advantage of past history learning from it. In the text's discussion of the Punic Wars, a possible defeat of the Romans at the hands of Hannibal is avoided because of a series of rainstorms. The storm returned three times, after which the non-Christian Hannibal understood that God did not allow his power over the Romans: even though they were not worthy of it yet, the Christian future of the Romans preserved them during non-Christian times. This event can be placed in the wider picture of God who, to enable their future conversion to Christianity, and that of many others through the reading of history, needed to save them. Even though this passage underwent an abridgment in its Old English version, the reading does not change: the narrator has learned from the past and can correctly interpret Christian history, as opposed to Romans that are ignorant. God indeed, is asking the Romans to answer for their lack of knowledge, given that even Hannibal, who was non-Christian, was able to interpret the rain sent by God. History is interpreted according to the notion of divine Providence, a non-linear and non-chronological concept according to which the future always influences the past, which is employed very frequently in the text.¹⁹⁹

At that time, the two consuls Scipio were killed in Spain, defeated by Hasdrubal. The namesake young son of one of the two consuls was the only one to be willing to lead the campaign in Spain because of a desire to avenge his uncle and father.²⁰⁰ Scipio reached New Carthage and besieged Mago, Hannibal's brother. At this point we find an interesting addition that seems to be in line with Germanic culture.

*Scipio annos natus viginti et quattuor imperium in Hispaniam proconsulare sortitus, ultionem praecipue patris et patru animo intendens, Pyrenaeum transgressus primo impetu Carthaginem Novam cepit, ubi stipendia maxima, praesidia valida, copiae auri argentique magnae Poenorum habebantur; ibi etiam Magonem fratrem Hannibalis captum cum ceteris Romam misit.*²⁰¹

When Scipio reached the city of New Carthage, now called Cordova, he besieged Mago and [...] the king himself was captured. He killed or captured all the others, and sent the king in chains to Rome, with many of the chief counsellors. A lot of

¹⁹⁹ Hurley, 2013, pp. 423-424.

²⁰⁰ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, pp. 278-279.

²⁰¹ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 332.

treasure was found in the city; Scipio sent some of it to Rome and ordered some to be shared among the army.²⁰²

This may represent another parallel that the translator meant to create between Alfred and the Anglo-Saxons on the one hand, and Scipio, in this case, and the Romans, on the other one, employing the figure of the *beahgifan* (ring-giver). The element of the distribution of riches from a generous leader to his retinue is a *topos* present in all Germanic cultures, and especially in epic and commemorative Germanic literature. It was indeed one of the most important virtues of a Germanic chieftain.²⁰³ For instance, Hrothgar, king of the Danes, is often described as *beahgiva* in the *Beowulf*. This practice refers to the *comitatus*, a Germanic institution composed by devotees that follow a leader who is known for his courage and military value. Entering a *comitatus* meant social promotion and possibility of material enrichment: when a soldier entered the service of a leader, he was rewarded with riches depending on his performance in battle.²⁰⁴ The figure of the treasure-giver is also juxtaposed to Caesar, a worthy ruler according to Anglo-Saxon standards, as is suggested in the episode in which he distributes to his army a treasure that amounts to a sum that cannot be estimated.²⁰⁵ Indeed, munificence, kindness and generosity are features attributed also to Alfred by Asser and all his contemporary accounts.²⁰⁶

The fights between the Roman and the Carthaginian armies proceeded on different fronts.²⁰⁷ Consul Macellus fought with Hannibal for three days, at the end of which the consul prevailed. But, the following year, the Carthaginian general managed to kill the consul. Furthermore, at that time, Scipio defeated Hasdrubal in Spain.²⁰⁸

Scipio in Hispania Poenorum ducem Hasdrubalem vicit et castris exit; praeterea LXXX civitates aut deditione aut bello in potestatem redegit; Afris sub corona venditis, sine pretio dimisit Hispanos.²⁰⁹

At that time Scipio defeated Hasdrubal, Hannibals' other brother, in Spain, and eighty cities submitted to him. Scipio so hated the Carthaginians that when he had

²⁰² OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 279.

²⁰³ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 17.

²⁰⁴ Battaglia, 2013, pp. 119-122.

²⁰⁵ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 17.

²⁰⁶ Khalaf (forthcoming), p. 20.

²⁰⁷ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 333.

²⁰⁸ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, pp. 279-280.

²⁰⁹ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, pp. 332-334.

defeated them he sold some of them but would not keep the money that he was given for them but gave it to others.²¹⁰

The OEO adds that the Roman general gave the reaches he obtained by defeating the Carthaginians to others. This passage may be another reference to the generosity of Roman consuls, in line with the representation of Alfred and the figure of the *beahgifan*.

When Hasdrubal marched from Spain to Italy to help his brother, the consuls Claudius Nero and Marcus Liuius Salinator discovered him.²¹¹ Hasdrubal was killed on the Metaurum river, and his army defeated.²¹² The number of Roman citizens killed in battle is omitted in the Old English version, probably to give more relevance to the victory of the Romans. From this moment on, God has in store a series of favourable events for the Romans. In both versions Hasdrubal's head was cut off and thrown in front of Hannibal's camp to testify his death. What follows is narrated in the following passage:

Hannibali captu fratris sui Hasdrubalis ante castra proiectum est. Quo viso et simul clade Poenorm cognita, anno tertio decimo quam in Italiam veneat refugit in Bruttios.²¹³

The consuls ordered Hasdrubal's head to be cut off and thrown in front of Hannibal's camp. When Hannibal learned that his brother had been killed and so many of his army with him he was for the first time fearful of the Romans and he moved to the territory of the Bruttii.²¹⁴

In this passage, the Old English translator inserted an explicit reference to the fear that, for the first time, Hannibal felt for the Romans. This is a further testimony that the Carthaginians' good luck is fading.

After a one-year peace, a series of Roman victories followed: Scipio, who became consul, killed Hanno, and after this the Carthaginians advanced against Scipio and camped near the city of Utica. But since the sentries had been placed far from the fortified camp, Scipio sent a few men to set fire to the Carthaginian camp, killing most of them.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 281.

²¹¹ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 281.

²¹² Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 334.

²¹³ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 336.

²¹⁴ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 281.

²¹⁵ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, pp. 281-283.

Poeni trepidi cum casu accidisse ignem putarent, inermes ad extinguendum concurrerunt: quare facile ab armatis oppressi sunt. In utrisque castris quadraginta milia hominum igni ferroque consumpta sunt, capta quinque milia, duces ipsi miserabiliter ambusti aegre effugerunt.²¹⁶

When those who were in the camp realized this, they ran there in groups to help the others, and Scipio struck them down as they arrived, through the whole night until daytime, and after that he struck them down all through the day as they fled.²¹⁷

In the OH the Carthaginians did not realize that this fire was intentionally set by the Romans, and, since their enemies were not equipped with weapons, the scope of the Roman victory is somehow undermined. I argue that the modifications implemented by the translator of the OEO, and the reiteration of a battle that continued “all through the day”,²¹⁸ aim at emphasising the military value of the Romans.

Then, Hasdrubal and Syphas advanced a second time against Scipio but they lost again and again. The Carthaginians had no more hopes than call Hannibal back from Italy, after ten years. But, while he was sailing towards his land, the unwelcome vision of a broken tomb, according to pagan customs, forced them to turn away from that point and to land in Leptis. Arrived in Carthage, he asked Scipio for peace, but this was not granted and many of Hannibal’s men were killed.²¹⁹ Eventually, at the time when Gaius Cornelius and Lentulus Publius were consuls, peace was agreed with the Carthaginians by Scipio at the same conditions of the peace which is narrated at the end of chapter 6 of the OEO: the island of Sicily and of Sardinia would go to the Romans, and the Carthaginians should pay a monetary compensation. The cost of the peace though is not present in the Latin source text, enabling us to count it as an addition. The text proceeds to narrate the contrasting relationship between Rome and Carthage, and the battles which follow.²²⁰

3.4 An interpretation of the Roman battles against the Carthaginians

The interpretation of the extenuating Roman battles against the Carthaginians is debated by scholars. Simeon Potter argues that the translator may have drawn an implicit

²¹⁶ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, p. 336.

²¹⁷ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 283.

²¹⁸ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, p. 283.

²¹⁹ OE Orosius, Godden, 2016, pp. 283-285.

²²⁰ Or. Hist, Lippold, 1998, pp. 343-345.

reference to the dark days of the Viking battles of the 870s when referring to the Romans' struggles.²²¹ If we adopt this view, we can suppose that this translation could offer comfort to the Anglo-Saxons, besieged by the Danes.²²² Furthermore, as argued by Leneghan, the *Old English Orosius* contributes to the identification of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom, and especially of Wessex, with the great Roman empires and as a process of *translatio imperii*, "the transference or succession of empires, contingent on the Christian virtue of its rulers",²²³ that will lead to their overlordship in Britain.²²⁴

Despite this, it is difficult to imagine how a translator with a West Saxon perspective could have such a positive standpoint in a precarious political context in which the wars against the Danes, both at land and sea, were at their peak, and a positive outcome was far from certain. Potter again, adds that given that Alfred was king of all territories except those under control of the Danes, considerations that link a reversal of fortune for the Romans to a much desired but unlikely definitive victory on part of the West Saxons over the Danes, might be artificial. He rather argues that the concept of *translatio imperii*, is more applicable to the political situation of early tenth-century Wessex, rather than to the end of Alfred's reign: indeed, the West-Saxon kings could claim that they held power over the whole island of Britain only at the time of the reigns of Edward and Æthelstan. In particular, Edward, Alfred's son was less educated in book learning but more successful in his military achievements. In this context, the circulation the *Old English Orosius* might have been functional to the creation of his authorship as an English and powerful monarch. Edward's son, Æthelstan, used the diffusion of books to sustain his image as emperor and patron of scholars in a much more substantial way.

While Leneghan agrees to this vision of a text with a political aspiration that was of interest of the West Saxon court in the late ninth and early tenth centuries for political aims, Kretzschmar and Godden argue that the *Old English Orosius* had no political relevance to contemporary Anglo-Saxon politics, both in Alfredian era or in the times that follow. According to him, the text in question was mainly employed to educate scholars about world history and geography.²²⁵

²²¹ Leneghan, 2015, p. 694.

²²² Davis, 1971, p. 180.

²²³ Leneghan, 2015, p. 656.

²²⁴ Leneghan, 2015, p. 688.

²²⁵ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 694-696.

In a few words, we can speculate that the aim of the text was either to confer prestige to Alfred and his entourage through the use of learning tools, or, if we accept a larger periodization (870-930), as Godden does, we can also speculate that it was²²⁶ “a means of political affirmation in the context of a world history.”²²⁷

3.5 A victory guided by divine Providence

Adopting the concept of *translatio imperii*, Wessex can be placed at the end of a line of great empires, whose power was transferred from the continent to the island, and from the Roman to the Anglo-Saxons. These populations are favoured by God because of their king’s Christian conduct.²²⁸ The identification of the Anglo-Saxons with the Romans is indeed justified by Christianity, reinforcing the interpretation of the recent conquests of the West Saxons²²⁹ as a “manifestation of God’s favour”.²³⁰

Chapter 4 of the *Old English Orosius* is a way to mediate between past and present sorrows.²³¹ According to Leneghan, the retention and expansions of the original text’s introductions which are found in Book II and V indicate explicitly the translator’s concern with *translatio imperii* and the continuing role of Providence in the faith of kingdoms and Empires, which was central in Anglo-Saxon teachings. Despite this, the role of the Providence is clearly seen also in the battles between Romans and Carthaginians in book IV. In Leneghan’s words:

I would suggest that Orosius’s detailed account of the successful defence of Rome against the invading Carthaginians during the Second Punic War (OH IV.8–10) provided the English translator with a [...] serviceable analogy for the defence of Wessex against the Vikings.²³²

Leneghan notices how, comparing the rise and fall of Babylon and Rome in book II, the *Old English Orosius* emphasises the role of God in rewarding rulers who observe Christianity, aspect which is less stressed in the Latin source text. This is evident also in Book IV. Interestingly, this interpretation of historical events may also contribute to

²²⁶ Khalaf (forthcoming), p.4.

²²⁷ Khalaf (forthcoming), p.4.

²²⁸ Leneghan, 2015, p. 697.

²²⁹ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 683-684.

²³⁰ Leneghan, 2015, p. 684.

²³¹ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 678-680.

²³² Leneghan, 2015, pp. 690.

reinforcing Alfred's authority as a Christian king protected by the divine Providence, unlike less fortunate populations of the past.²³³ In the *Old English Orosius*, the Christianity of rulers is able to grant them God's favour.

Furthermore, Khalaf compared the figure of Alexander the Great in the *Old English Orosius* and in its source text. According to him²³⁴ "the translator intended to turn the *Historiae* into a compilation of good and bad exempla from the past for the instruction and guidance of future rulers in the correct management of power".²³⁵ According to this view, the re-elaboration of Orosius's original text transforms Alexander the Great as a model and edifying example of what should be a correct behaviour of a ruler in the exercise of power, in a way that is coherent with Alfred's cultural and political programme, and to the battles between Wessex and the Goths. As we already argued, also the model of the Romans Emperors and consuls against the savage Carthaginians, led by a power-mad king, can be included in this discourse.²³⁶

3.6 Some final considerations on Translation Studies

After having analysed through a descriptive approach both source and target texts, we may argue that the translator's choices in terms of the initial norm, and therefore in terms of the basic choice between adequacy and acceptability, lean more towards the latter. This implies substantial shifts which are reflected in the operational norms adopted. First, the degree of fulness of translation is reduced, for the purpose of a more condensed work. In addition, many passages are omitted, added or displaced, and the segmentation of chapters is revisited. This change refers to what Toury calls "matricial norms". The modifications that the translator of the *Old English Orosius* decided to implement may answer to the concept of patronage and mainly to religious, military, political (much disputed reading of the text) and ethnographic concerns of the Alfredian reign.²³⁷ Translations, in fact, manipulate the original texts using norms in order to accommodate a certain ideology, which is more likely to be dominant, especially in court culture. Clearly, this translation had a certain prestige, conferred by the status of its source, and in particular by its text-type and original language. These choices are classified by Toury

²³³ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 683-684.

²³⁴ Khalaf (forthcoming), p.4.

²³⁵ Khalaf (forthcoming), p.4.

²³⁶ Leneghan, 2015, pp. 689-691.

²³⁷ Leneghan, 2015, p. 660.

among the preliminary norms (respectively translation policy and directness of translation) and play an important role in conferring prestige either to Alfred and his circle, or, if we hypnotize that the patronage in question was not imposed on the translator, in conferring the status of socio-culturally significant translator to the author. On the other hand, certain omissions or additions simply aim at adapting the text to a different, Anglo-Saxon readership, or to condense the lengthy historical accounts of the original work.

Conclusion

In view of what has been discussed so far, it can be claimed that Translation Studies is a useful discipline not only for the analysis of recent literary texts, but also in the field of Medieval Studies. To prove this, I selected a precise cultural context, that of Alfred the Great's kingdom, and I analysed some segments of a famous "Alfredian work", the *Old English Orosius*, through a comparative and target oriented approach. We can argue that this translation is a novelty, a unique piece, considering the many modifications that reshape its ideological foundations.

The segments selected for this analysis mainly concern the account of the Second Punic War and the figure of Hannibal. Descriptive Translation Studies proved to be particularly useful for the purpose of an investigation of this kind, through which the translator's choices are analysed and contextualized. On the other hand, the *applied* and the theoretical branches are not particularly useful for this investigation since the aim of this analysis is not to draw translation laws.

The two pivotal concepts that I employed for the purpose of my analysis are Toury's notion of norms, which can be identified during the analysis of a translation, and Lefevere's notion of patronage. The first step in order to carry out an analysis of the two translations is that of mapping the assumed translation, the *Old English Orosius*, onto its source, the *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem*. Through a work of comparison, I identified some patterns in the norms employed by the translator, which reflect specific translation choices and shifts from the source text, and which enabled me to draw conclusions of social and ideological nature.

The analysis I carried out through a descriptive approach suggests that the choices taken by the translator in terms of the initial norm lean more towards acceptability than towards adequacy. This inevitably implies substantial shifts, that we can classify among operational norms. More specifically, for what concerns the choices undertaken in terms of matricial norms, a great number of omissions, additions, displacements and re-elaborations took place in the Old English translation. Furthermore, the segmentation of chapters is revisited.

First, it is clear that the translator's aim was to produce a more condensed work, where the lengthy historical accounts narrated in the source text are summarized. The

fullness of translation is therefore reduced. Another underlying reason for the production of this translation may have been the simplistic aim of expanding the readership of the original Latin text.

Furthermore, in some instances, the modifications implemented aim at adapting the text to an Anglo-Saxon readership. This is the case of additions to specify elements that Anglo-Saxons were not accustomed to, such as the tradition of sending gold rings as a testimony of a victory. On the other hand, certain changes may be consistent with the concept of patronage and impact the text's ideological foundations.

Indeed, certain shifts found in textual segments of the target text may in turn be responsible for ideological shifts, and be instrumental for religious, military, ethnographic, and political concerns of Alfred's reign. As discussed in Chapter 3, the political reading of the *Old English Orosius* is much disputed, and many believe that it better identifies the reigns of the tenth century, when the West-Saxons could claim they held power over Britain.

Translations, especially in court culture, undergo a certain patronage which dictates a certain manipulation of the original text for the purpose of accommodating a dominant ideology. Considering that, in the prefatory letter to the *Cura Pastoralis*, Alfred mentions the participation of some helpers in the translation of the texts produced in the context of his cultural production, and since the identity of some of the translators (included that of the *Old English Orosius*) is unknown, the conclusions that may be drawn are not clearcut. It is reasonable to draw different hypothesis on the concept of patronage, considering possible shifts of context. Whatever the purpose the translator of the text had in mind, we cannot deny the prestigious status of this work, a status which was transferred from its source. As we argued, the selection of an original text, which is characterized by a certain text-type and by a certain, and possibly prestigious, original language, has some inevitable consequences.

If we assume that the patronage in question, and therefore the selection of certain dominant themes and genres, was dictated by Alfred and his court, the prestige of this source and the ideological shifts implemented may had certain purposes in the context of his cultural, religious and military reform.

First, the Roman battles against the Carthaginians may be a direct reference to the battles between the West Saxons and the Danes. Through a process of *translatio imperii*,

the Anglo-Saxons, especially of Wessex, identified themselves with the Roman Empire in a process that would lead to the overlordship of Britain, and to the recognition of Alfred as a ruler of the *Angelcynn*. This narration of historical events could indeed provide reassurance to the Anglo-Saxons. As we argued, taking into account the fragmented contemporary political context, this vision is much disputed by scholars.

Another interesting outcome of this process of *translatio imperii* is the connection between Alfred and other military leaders, such as Caesar, Alexander, and, as I tried to demonstrate in my analysis, several Roman consuls. One of the translator's aims may have been to provide good and bad *exempla* in order to bestow edifying lessons. In the textual segments I analysed, Hannibal and the other Carthaginian consuls provide a bad *exemplum*, while the Roman consuls represent a role model of valorous and righteous leaders.

In Alfred's cultural reform, military effort is not detached from Christian faith. As emerged from our analysis, according to the *Old English Orosius*, the Romans were favoured by God and protected by the divine Providence because of their future conversion to Christianity. Indeed, the translator may have interpreted the recent conquests of the West-Saxons as guided by God, identifying the Anglo-Saxons with the Romans because of the common belief in Christianity.

By providing an historical identification of Anglo-Saxons with Christendom, the *Old English Orosius* may also have been a tool for the creation of a common identity, both in ethnical and religious terms. The creation of a common identity was an essential tool for Alfred to achieve an adequate perception of his authority and legitimation as a king in the minds of his subjects. This contributed to his need for propaganda, essential in order to implement his cultural and religious policy.

In the *Old English Orosius*, the heroic resistance of Romans and their valour in battle is rendered through the expansion of certain passages. This constitutes a model for contemporary rulers. I argue that this connection is reinforced by providing Roman leaders with characteristics that are also associable to Alfred. In the passage in which Scipio besieged New Carthage and gave some of the treasure to his army, this connection is particularly evident. Indeed, this refers to the Germanic *topos* of the "ring-giver", drawing a parallel between Scipio and Alfred, which is relevant for an Anglo-Saxon audience: both are worthy, munificent and generous rulers.

The ideological scope of this translation is also reflected in the educational programme of the ruling class, but also of lower-class people. The *Old English Orosius*, a universal history, educated the readers on history and geography, and instilled a certain ideology that was coherent with Alfred's vision. This assured that the future leading class enacted a correct management of power.

On the other hand, if we postulate that the patronage in question was not imposed on the translator, we may argue that the adoption of mainstream norms, favoured by the dominant culture and classifiable under the "Alfredian" ideological current, was directed towards the achievement of a status of socio-culturally significant translator on part of the author. Furthermore, this might also have had economic benefits for the translator, who, by the way, covered a prestigious position in Alfred's reign because of his knowledge, and could also aim at becoming king's advisor.

Furthermore, as we argued, a text can be defined as "faithful" when it grasps the function of words within the totality of the scene. The *Old English Orosius* can indeed be described as "faithful" in many passages, despite its substantial condensations. But, overall, if we take into account the relevant modifications that take place in certain passages, its underlying ideology is profoundly changed.

In conclusion, this analysis has gone some way into investigating the effectiveness of Translation Studies in analysing Medieval translation works, proving that the translator's choices can be identified using the concept of translation norms, and that these choices have a social impact, whose interpretation can change according to the context.

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Summary in Italian

Il regno di Alfredo il Grande, re del Wessex (871-899), rappresenta un punto di svolta nella storia anglosassone. Ha infatti attuato una riforma culturale il cui scopo era quello di rendere fruibili una serie di testi, ritenuti dal re stesso essenziali per l'educazione della futura classe dirigente. La diffusione di questi testi, e dunque la riforma culturale in atto, era a sua volta intrinsecamente legata ad una riforma religiosa e militare.

Per l'intera durata del suo regno, Alfredo combatte contro i vichinghi per difendere il territorio del Wessex: una riorganizzazione delle forze militari, e dunque una corretta formazione dei suoi sudditi, era necessaria. Le credenze religiose che imperavano al tempo attribuivano le sciagure legate alle invasioni vichinghe ad un decadimento della fede cristiana da parte degli anglosassoni e, per giunta, la battaglia con i danesi era interpretata come una guerra sacra fra pagani e cristiani. Nonostante i successi militari, il regno di Alfredo resta piuttosto frammentato in quanto il nord dell'isola era sotto il controllo danese. In un tale contesto, Alfredo e il suo circolo produssero una serie di traduzioni di testi che rivisitano fatti storici per motivi ideologici e propagandistici. Questo puntava a conferire legittimità ad Alfredo come re di tutti i regni inglesi, esclusi quelli che erano sotto il dominio danese, e alla creazione di un senso di identità comune.

Oltre alla decadenza religiosa, anche il lettorato era ormai ridotto a pochi individui. Dunque, assieme alla religione, anche l'insegnamento dell'antico inglese e del latino dovevano essere riportati in auge. Questo avvenne attraverso la traduzione di testi latini, ma non mancano testi composti direttamente in antico inglese. Questi testi sono rivisitati mediante diverse operazioni, motivo per il quale possono essere definiti come nuovi e originali. I principali sono: *Cura Pastoralis* di Gregorio Magno, *De consolatione philosophiae* di Severino Boezio, i *Soliloqui* di Agostino d'Ippona e i primi cinquanta salmi del Salterio, che sono attribuiti ad Alfredo con la contribuzione di alcuni aiutanti, secondo Asser. I *Dialoghi* di San Gregorio Magno, le *Storie contro i pagani* di Paolo Orosio e *Storia ecclesiastica del popolo inglese* di Beda il Venerabile sono invece stati tradotti da terzi, ma possono essere contate come parte integrante della produzione culturale pensata da Alfredo.

Asser ci racconta i primi approcci di Alfredo alla letteratura, inizio del percorso che lo porterà a ricoprire la veste di traduttore di alcune opere. Questo, come riportato

nella lettera inserita come prefazione della *Cura Pastoralis*, avvenne con l'aiuto di alcuni vescovi. Molti traduttori delle opere "alfrediane" rimangono però anonimi. Il racconto dei primi passi di Alfredo verso l'istruzione ci permette di riflettere sulla sua effettiva abilità come traduttore. Strettamente legato a questo aspetto è il cosiddetto dibattito alfrediano, che contesta la paternità di Alfredo per quanto riguarda le opere che, secondo Asser, sono state da lui tradotte.

L'obiettivo di questo elaborato è di analizzare un particolare testo "alfrediano", le *Storie contro i pagani* di Paolo Orosio, utilizzando una metodologia specifica: la disciplina empirica dei Translation Studies, ideata da James S. Holmes. Holmes sviluppa una "mappa" della disciplina, che vede diverse ramificazioni in diversi sottogruppi. In particolare, l'approccio utilizzato nell'analisi in questione è basato sui Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), ramo che sta riscuotendo particolare interesse, a discapito dell'approccio prescrittivo utilizzato in passato. La metodologia dei Descriptive Translation Studies permette di osservare le scelte fatte in termini di comportamento del traduttore durante un determinato processo traduttivo osservando un corpus di testi selezionati e sviluppando generalizzazioni attraverso l'utilizzo di una metodologia replicabile. Da queste generalizzazioni è possibile sviluppare leggi di comportamento traduttivo. Possiamo infatti affermare che i Descriptive Translation Studies sono intrinsecamente legati alla teoria della traduzione, in quanto le ipotesi possono essere testate mediante un'analisi descrittiva.

Gideon Toury sviluppa delle teorie in ambito descrittivo. In particolare, si avvicina al concetto delle norme traduttive, elementi che governano le scelte compiute dal traduttore durante il processo traduttivo. L'*initial norm*, decisione di livello più alto alla quale seguono scelte più specifiche, consiste nel compiere una scelta fra i due estremi approcci alla traduzione: riguarda infatti l'imprescindibile tensione fra *acceptability* e *adequacy*. Nel primo caso il traduttore si attiene alle norme del testo originale, nel secondo applica invece le norme linguistiche e letterarie della cultura di arrivo. Occorre ricordare che quelli che Toury chiama *shifts*, cioè mutamenti, sono inevitabili e presenti anche nelle traduzioni che più tendono verso l'*adequacy*. In seguito, possiamo identificare altri due gruppi di norme: *preliminary norms* e *operational norms*. Le *preliminary norms* si suddividono in *translation policy*, che riguardano fattori quali la scelta della tipologia testuale del testo da tradurre e importare in una determinata cultura,

e la *directness of translation*, che concerne invece il grado di tolleranza relativo alla traduzione da lingue diverse dalla fonte originale. Le *operational norms* determinano invece cosa rimane intatto e cosa è soggetto a modificazioni. Si suddividono in *matricial norms*, che stabiliscono il livello di completezza della traduzione (potrebbero essere presenti omissioni e aggiunte) e la segmentazione in capitoli, strofe, passaggi, e così via, e *textual-linguistic norms*, che invece determinano la selezione di materiale linguistico usato per sostituire il testo originale. Le *preliminary norms* godono di priorità sia logica che temporale rispetto alle *operational norms*. Nonostante ciò, le due si influenzano reciprocamente.

La prima fase per realizzare un'analisi descrittiva consiste nel mappare determinati segmenti del testo originale su segmenti corrispondenti della sua traduzione. Queste coppie possono non essere identiche, a causa di omissioni, aggiunte oppure assenza del segmento corrispondente.

L'utilizzo di un metodo comparativo permette di trarre conclusioni interessanti sia di natura linguistica che culturale. Infatti, il concetto di norme traduttive di Toury può essere integrato con il concetto di *patronage* di Lefevre, permettendoci di esplorare l'impatto sociale di determinate scelte linguistiche. Secondo Lefevre, qualsiasi tipologia testuale riproducano, le traduzioni attuano una manipolazione del testo originale al fine di far sì che si adattino all'ideologia e alla corrente poetica dominante. Vedendo al concetto di *patronage*, questa nozione è strettamente legata a quella del potere, in questo caso forza più positiva che opprimente, in quanto permette la diffusione della cultura e del dialogo. Il *patronage* è composto da tre elementi: una componente ideologica, una economica e una di status.

Il testo analizzato in questo elaborato è la traduzione di *Storie contro i pagani* di Paolo Orosio. Questo testo contiene un racconto conciso della storia universale che va dal peccato originale al sacco di Roma, narrato da una prospettiva latina. Questo testo funge da difensore della religione cristiana: il passato pagano è descritto come ancora più tragico dell'attualità, dove il cristianesimo era ormai affermato, negando le superstizioni secondo cui l'abbandono delle credenze pagane portava a decadenza. Il traduttore, un sassone occidentale che rimane anonimo, ha intrapreso un lavoro di selezione, riorganizzazione, omissione e ampliamento del materiale storico, provocando un cambiamento ideologico che si pensa essere funzionale al regno di Alfredo. L'autore dell'*Orosio* antico inglese si

pone come un'entità diversa rispetto a Paolo Orosio, presentando chiaramente il testo come una traduzione. La portata polemica di Orosio contro i pagani è rivisitata, la storia infatti non è insegnata in prospettiva polemica ma piuttosto come portatrice di *exempla* che forniscono lezioni edificanti.

L'*Orosio* antico inglese esplora gli avvenimenti storici di quattro dei più grandi imperi del mondo: Babilonia, Macedonia, Cartagine e Roma. L'attenzione è spostata dalla caduta di Roma alla sua ascesa, in quanto la traduzione omette gran parte del libro VII della fonte originale, e in generale gran parte degli ultimi tre libri. Questo elaborato si concentra sul racconto della seconda guerra punica e in particolare sul generale cartaginese Annibale, utilizzando principalmente la nozione di norme traduttive di Toury e quella di *patronage* di Lefevere. Innanzitutto, occorre mappare il testo fonte, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem*, sull'*Orosio antico inglese*. Le scelte traduttive, e quindi le norme traduttive impiegate, sono in seguito analizzate, permettendoci di trarre alcune conclusioni sull'ideologia soggiacente a quest'opera, tenendo conto del contesto culturale di riferimento.

Questo testo tende più verso l'*acceptability* che verso l'*adequacy (initial norm)*, a causa di una serie di modificazioni quali omissioni, aggiunte, spostamenti, rielaborazioni, e diversa segmentazione in capitoli (*matricial norms*). Inoltre, questa traduzione, il cui obiettivo potrebbe essere un'espansione del lettorato del testo originale, è il risultato di un lavoro di sintesi dei racconti storici narrati da Paolo Orosio.

Talvolta, alcuni cambiamenti vogliono semplicemente adattare il testo al lettorato di riferimento, come nel caso di aggiunte che specificano elementi a cui gli anglosassoni non erano soliti. Dall'altro canto determinati cambiamenti potrebbero essere coerenti con il concetto di *patronage* e influenzare le fondamenta ideologiche del testo.

Innanzitutto, questo testo ha uno status prestigioso, trasferito a sua volta dalla posizione dell'originale. Se consideriamo che il *patronage* in questione, e quindi la selezione di determinati temi e generi dominanti, è stato dettato da Alfredo e dalla sua corte, alcuni cambiamenti potrebbero essere stati impiegati ai fini di una propaganda di tipo militare, culturale, religioso e identitario.

Un esempio è la battaglia fra romani e cartaginesi, che potrebbe essere un riferimento diretto alla battaglia fra sassoni occidentali e danesi. Il processo di *translatio imperii* portava i sassoni a identificarsi con i romani in un processo che avrebbe guidato

Alfredo al dominio dell'*Angelcynn*. Questa visione, dato il contesto politico frammentato del tempo, è spesso contestata dagli studiosi. Inoltre, il processo di *translatio imperii* permette di identificare Alfredo con altri leader militari quali Cesare, Alessandro Magno e, come dimostrato da quest'analisi, diversi consoli romani. Il traduttore potrebbe quindi aver voluto fornire una serie di modelli sul comportamento al quale un condottiero dovrebbe attenersi o, viceversa, che dovrebbe evitare, come nel caso di Annibale. Questa connessione fra leader contemporanei e del passato è rinforzata dal traduttore associando i consoli romani a caratteristiche tipiche di Alfredo quali generosità e dispensazione di ricchezze: questo è il caso del *topos* germanico del "donatore di anelli".

Inoltre, l'elemento della divina provvidenza è centrale: al pari dei romani, favoriti da Dio per la loro futura conversione al cattolicesimo, i sassoni occidentali potrebbero aver interpretato le recenti vittorie contro i vichinghi come guidate dalla provvidenza, identificandosi con i romani a causa della loro fede comune. Inoltre, l'*Orosio* antico inglese potrebbe essere uno strumento per la creazione storica di un'identità anglosassone comune, essenziale per legittimare l'autorità di Alfredo. Nell'*Orosio* antico inglese la resistenza eroica dei romani e il loro valore in battaglia sono enfatizzati attraverso l'espansione di certi passaggi, fungendo da modello per i futuri leader.

La portata ideologica di questa traduzione era indirizzata alla formazione della futura classe dirigente in materie quali storia e geografia, instillando una determinata ideologia che assicurava una formazione in linea con una corretta amministrazione del regno. D'altro canto, l'adozione volontaria di norme convenzionali, e quindi favorite dalla cultura dominante, da parte del traduttore potrebbe mirare all'ottenimento di un certo status, e di conseguenza ad una migliore posizione sociale e ad un maggiore introito economico.

Infine, un testo può essere definito come "fedele" qualora riesca a cogliere la funzione delle parole in contesto. L'*Orosio* antico inglese può quindi essere definito come "fedele" in determinati passaggi, ma, complessivamente, considerando le modificazioni presenti in certi tratti, l'ideologia soggiacente alla fonte originale è profondamente mutata nel testo di arrivo. Inoltre, questo elaborato vuole sostenere che un approccio basato sui Translation Studies, alquanto inesplorato nell'ambito degli Studi Medievali delle lingue Germaniche, sia utile per indagare e giustificare le scelte del traduttore, scelte che hanno un forte impatto sociale.