At two different dates between 990 and 994, Sigeric, archbishop of Canterbury, was sent copies of the First and Second Series of Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies, a reflex of which survives in Cambridge, University Library MS Gg.3.28.¹ For various reasons, this manuscript can be seen as a copy, direct or indirect, of a manuscript which was used within its own scriptorium as a file-manuscript.² It is in a hand of the late tenth or early eleventh century and according to Godden is ‘either a product of Ælfric’s own scriptorium or a remarkably faithful copy of such a manuscript’.³ The two series of


³ Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies, ed. Godden, xliii. See also the comments by Sisam, ‘MSS. Bodley 340 and 342’, 168.
homilies are written out sequentially, as would be reasonable for a reference-copy, although the Latin prefaces refer to two small codices or books, prepared at different times and sent to Sigeric with an interval between them. The preface at the head of the First Series (which has a dual function in also being a statement about the whole enterprise) is introduced with the words ‘Incipit praefatio huius libri’, and there are subsequent references to ‘this codex’, ‘this book’ (once using the diminutive libellus), the inclusion of forty pieces in this book (i.e. one series only), and reference to ‘another book’ being under composition (i.e. the second series). At the end there is an anticipatory invitation to users to rearrange the material from the two books, each of which follows the church’s year, into one cycle, which would provide, in one sequence, a more complete coverage, but also some double provision. The Latin preface to the Second Series refers back to the first preface and is less informative, but it states that Sigeric has already received the first series in the form of a small codex, ‘per codicellum’ (also referred to in this preface as a libellus), and that the Second Series is now being sent separately. What was actually sent to Sigeric does not survive, and indeed there are no manuscripts of the Catholic Homilies in which the two sequences of homilies are preserved in their separate little books or little codices. CUL Gg.3.28 is the only complete copy of both series, it is the only manuscript which gives us the entire second series, and it is the only manuscript which preserves the prefaces and Ælfric’s final prayer.

The two Latin prefaces are in the form of letters to Sigeric, written in the appropriate professional language between ecclesiastics and couched in appropriately deferential tones. Ælfric excuses himself for his boldness in sending the homilies, he flatters Sigeric by submitting to his judgement, and he characterizes himself as unworthy; there is a submission to patristic authority, and a position of humility is maintained in the description of the work done: it is a simplification for simple folk, a meeting of a practical need, in

For the Latin preface to the First Series, see The homilies of the Anglo-Saxon church, ed. Thorpe I, 1–3; for the Second Series Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies, ed. Godden, I. I am indebted to the Librarian of Cambridge University Library for permission to consult CUL Gg.3.28 and to Peter Clemoes, who sadly died soon after this lecture was delivered, for his many stimulating conversations about Ælfric’s work and the manuscripts which bear witness to the Catholic Homilies.

For a translation of the two prefaces, see Ælfric’s Prefaces, ed. Jonathan Wilcox, Durham Medieval Texts, 7 (Durham: Dept of English, University of Durham, 1994), 127–9. The Latin texts are edited, 107–8 and 111. In his translation of the First Series preface, however, Wilcox does not reflect the diminutive form ‘in isto libello’ (line 16 of his Latin text), which he renders simply as ‘in this book’, although the diminutives are correctly rendered for the Second Series preface.
which the occasional use of the diminutive for *liber* and *codex*, whilst no doubt accurately representing the facts, has the effect within the text of contributing to the rhetoric of the modesty *topos*.

On one level this is, of course, exactly as it should be. Ælfric at the time was simply a monk and masspriest at the new foundation, or more probably the refoundation, of Cerne Abbas, whilst Sigeric was a relatively new archbishop. The *Catholic Homilies*, as far as we know, were Ælfric’s first major work, which further justifies the tone of the prefaces. Yet it does not follow that Ælfric was completely unknown. Within the hierarchy of the secular church Winchester, which Ælfric had left in 987, was within Canterbury’s jurisdiction, and there were close personal contacts between the diocesan and metropolitan see. Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester from 963 to 984, whose *alumnus* Ælfric declares himself to be in the opening words of the first letter to Sigeric, was a reforming colleague of Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury from 959 to 988; they had been associates (though not always happily) since their youth, and had been ordained on the same day. Dunstan’s successor at Canterbury, Archbishop Æthelgar, had been translated from Selsey, the next diocese to Winchester, where he had been bishop since 980, but he had previously been at Winchester, where, as a disciple of Æthelwold, he had become the first abbot of the reformed New Minster in 964. His successor at Canterbury, Archbishop Sigeric, had close connections with Dunstan, having been (as Æthelwold also was), a monk at Glastonbury, abbot of St Augustine’s Canterbury by 975, presumably through Dunstan’s influence, and then bishop of Ramsbury, the next diocese to Winchester on the northern side, which he held from 985 to 990, probably in plurality with the Canterbury abbacy. It should also be borne in mind that Ælfric had somehow achieved sufficient prominence at Winchester by 987 to be transferred to Cerne by Bishop Ælfrheah, Æthelwold’s successor, at the request of the thane Æthelmær, who had long-standing family connections with Bishop Æthelwold, and who had a prominent position in secular life, being the son of Æthelweard, ealdorman of the Western Provinces, and in his own right one of King Æthelræd’s *ministri*.

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7 For a summary of the careers of the archbishops of Canterbury in Æthelred’s reign, see Nicholas Brooks, *The early history of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984), 279.

8 See Barbara Yorke, ‘Æthelmær: the foundation of the Abbey at Cerne and the politics of the tenth century’, and the various references to Æthelmær in Simon Keynes, *The
Even so, it is right to see the prefatory letters as modesty *topoi*, for so they were intended: the ecclesiastical hierarchy is duly observed, and yet, as is the purpose of any modesty *topos*, the writer implicitly elicits from the addressee and from the larger indirect audience the assent which paradoxically invests the work with a measure of the authority that the writer seems to disclaim.

Within this complex rhetorical manoeuvre, and in harmony with it, Ælfric repeatedly presents his work as a translation: the words used are *transferre, translatio, interpretari*, and *interpretatio*. Yet we know that ‘translation’, narrowly defined, is wholly inadequate as a description of what Ælfric was doing in the *Catholic Homilies*, and we can see that this narrow sense of ‘translation’ is even belied by what Ælfric otherwise says in the prefaces themselves. On the one hand he states that he follows recognized authorities (with the references to translation being an implied guarantee of faithfulness to the tradition), but on the other he explains that he has made adjustments to content and style, in being selective, in abbreviating, and in aiming for clear and unambiguous English, avoiding obscurity and garrulous verbosity. As he says in the first letter, ‘Nec ubique transstulimus uerbum ex uerbo, sed sensum ex sensu’.9

The ‘word for word, sense for sense’ tag, which is traceable to Jerome and beyond him to classical theories of translation, is familiar to us in the Old English form used by Alfred in the preface to his translation of the *Cura Pastoralis*.10 It is not used by Ælfric in the vernacular, even when commenting on his acts of translation, but he does use it in the Latin preface to the *Lives of Saints*,11 and in the Latin letter to Archbishop Wulfstan which, in Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 190 and Oxford Bodley 343, stands as a preface to the Old English Pastoral Letters which Ælfric wrote on Wulf-

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9 ‘We have not translated word for word throughout, but sense for sense’: The homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, ed. Thorpe, I, 1.


stan's behalf. As has been noted elsewhere, the textual relationships of these two pairs of Old English letters seem to confirm that they derive ultimately from the manuscript which Ælfric sent to Wulfstan, and it would appear that they were incorporated into a commonplace-type compendium which lies behind the surviving manuscripts. It is worth noting in passing that there is a tendency for circumstantial prefaces not be copied in subsequent more general transmission. This is true of the Pastoral Letters and it is equally true of the Lives of Saints, where the preface survives only in Cotton Julius E vii, and of the Catholic Homilies for which, as already noted, the preface is extant only in CUL Gg.3.28. As circumstances change, the prefatory material obviously becomes less relevant, and it makes no sense to copy it when the collection as a whole is rearranged, adapted, or otherwise broken up.

The Lives of Saints collection, although described as a translation, adapts its source-materials, in content and style, for reasons which are set out in the prefatory material in terms similar to those used in connection with the Catholic Homilies. The two Old English Pastoral Letters for Wulfstan, though presented in the covering letter as translations of Ælfric's Latin originals, in fulfilment of Wulfstan's request, are in fact extensive adaptations of them, to the degree that they are best understood as versions rewritten for an audience not familiar with the learned Latin tradition on which they draw, but which Ælfric and Wulfstan, working as a reforming team in this instance, nevertheless perceived the need to transmit. Within this context, which is equally valid for the Catholic Homilies and the Lives of Saints, the 'word for word, sense for sense' tag accommodates a guarantee of faithfulness to the authoritative tradition and at the same time the necessary sensitivity to the capacities of the audience.

The verb that Ælfric uses in conjunction with the 'word for word, sense for sense' tag is transferre, for which the obvious contextual meaning is 'translate', as it is also in interpreting the statement in the Latin preface to Ælfric's Grammar, where he explains to the little boys that he has 'translated' for them excerpts from the greater and lesser Priscian:

12 *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics*, ed. Bernhard Fehr, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa. IX Band (Hamburg, 1914), reissued with a supplementary introduction by Peter Clemoes (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftlichen Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 68.

13 Joyce Hill, 'Monastic reform and the secular church', 112. For the textual relationships, see Fehr's introduction to *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics*, x-xxii and the supplementary introduction by Clemoes, cxxvii-cxlv, especially cxxxiii-cxlv.
Ego Ælfricus, ut minus sapiens, has exceptiones de Prisciano minore uel maiore uobis puerulis tenellis ad uestram linguam transferre studui ...”

But ‘to translate’, in the current modern sense of ‘to turn from one language to another’, is a specialised part of the semantic range of transferre; more literally, and more broadly, it means ‘to carry across’, trans-ferre, a meaning which is self-evident in the word-form. The noun formed from it, translatio, which Ælfric also uses, in the first Latin letter to Sigeric at the head of the Catholic Homilies and in the preface to the Lives of Saints, has a similar range of meanings. The other terms used by Ælfric, interpretari and interpretatio, lack the transparency of transferre. In antiquity, as Rita Copeland has demonstrated, interpretatio was the Latin equivalent of hermeneia, meaning ‘signification’, ‘interpretation’, but it could also be used to describe a negotiation between a given text and its readers, and a ‘going between’ or ‘carrying over’ from one language to another (usually, in this cultural context, between Greek and Latin). In the Middle Ages, these senses were preserved, but with specialised focus on interpretatio as exegetical commentary and as interlingual glossing or translation (in the modern sense), in which the act of interpretatio might be a translation between human languages or, analogously, a translation between the mysterious word of God encapsulated in divine Scripture and the more limited powers of human comprehension. As far as Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies are concerned, the translatio or interpretatio, the mediation, the exegesis, the carrying over, had a complex function for it interpreted divine scripture, it was an act of interlingual translation, and it was also a carrying over from one culture to another – a complex and highly literate ecclesiastical tradition being transmitted across the diglossic divide, as a reforming act, to an audience which, though it may have included secular priests, was essentially uneducated in the concepts and language from which the ‘translation’, the ‘carrying over’ was being made. As with other translators in the patristic and medieval Christian tradition (but unlike the classical translators), there was no attempt to displace the primary language, but rather ‘to resolve the difference by pointing...’

Ælfric’s translation practice and the terminology he uses in his various prefaces are discussed by Wilcox, Ælfric’s Prefaces, 63–5.

Copeland, Rhetoric, hermeneutics and translation in the Middle Ages, 87–97.
towards a communality of source and target in terms of the immanence of meaning', although this was not achieved without anxiety, as we shall see later. The references to 'translation' in the prefatory material to the Catholic Homilies might seem innocent enough, as approximations to what was being done and as contributions to the modesty topos, but within them there are larger claims. It is to these that I should now like to turn.

I remain for the moment with the first letter to Sigeric, in which Ælfric states that his sources were Augustine, Jerome, Bede, Gregory, Smaragdus and sometimes ('aliquando') Haymo. We know that he is justified in claiming to have used Haymo; Ælfric cites him by name as a validating authority in two of the Catholic Homilies and in 1961 Cyril Smetana brought forward several instances of use in his study of 'Ælfric and the homiliary of Haymo of Halberstadt'. As we now know, the Haymo in question is Haymo of Auxerre, who died in 865/6, not Haymo of Halberstadt (778–853). This has no real impact on the validity of Smetana’s basic work, although a more thoroughgoing analysis of Ælfric’s homilies alongside the Carolingian homiliaries on which he drew calls into question some of Smetana’s examples, at the same time as it adds further instances which Smetana overlooked. I bring forward some of these new examples in some forthcoming case studies of the Catholic Homilies and I am confident that more will be identified. What remains to tease us,

17 Ibid., 43. As Copeland notes later, 'Unlike the Roman model of translation, medieval Latin exegesis has no acknowledged political agenda of rivalry with the tradition it seeks to assimilate' (103), and despite the anxieties which surround it, interlingual translation is intended to foster continuity, whilst paradoxically drawing attention to discontinuity (see especially 106). For further comment on the anxieties of interlingual translators, see 63–5 below. The relationship between source-text and target text is summed up by Copeland, 30, in words which are particularly applicable for Ælfric: 'The aim of translation is to reinvent the source, so that, as in rhetorical theory, attention is focused on the active production of a new text endowed with its own affective powers and suited to the particular historical circumstances of its reception'. For a discussion of the relationship between source text and target text in the Anglo-Saxon context, see Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe's 1993 Toller Memorial Lecture, 'Source, method, theory, practice: on reading two Old English verse texts', Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 76 (1995), 51–73.

18 The homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, ed. Thorpe, I, 1: 'Hos namque auctores in hac explanatione sumus sequuti, videlicet Augustinum Hipponensem, Hieronimum, Bedam, Gregorium, Smaragdum, et aliquando Haymonem ...'. 'Indeed, we have followed these authors in this exposition, namely Augustine of Hippo, Jerome, Bede, Gregory, Smaragdus and sometimes Haymo'.

19 Haymo is cited by name in Homilies VII and XXXIV of the First Series: The homilies of the Anglo-Saxon church, ed. Thorpe, I, 120, 510.


however, is why Haymo is separated out in the letter to Sigeric as being used 'aliquando', 'sometimes'. Obviously this means that Ælfric knew he used him less than the others. But why was this? I shall return to this and attempt to provide an answer later.

We also know that Ælfric used Smaragdus. Early source-studies, notably by Förster, found difficulty in identifying unequivocal exploitation of Smaragdus but, as I demonstrated in an article on 'Ælfric and Smaragdus', published in 1992, this was largely a result of inbuilt bias in favour of patristic authorities and a failure in scholarly methodology. I hope that my 1992 article and some further analyses shortly to be published satisfactorily vindicate Ælfric's claim. Smaragdus, it must be noted, stands in the letter to Sigeric as if he is on a par with Augustine, Jerome, Bede and Gregory, as if Ælfric found him just as useful.

The first four names in this list are, of course, all well known, and Förster, in 1894, provided extensive documentation of correspondences between their works and Ælfric's homilies. But in 1959 Smetana demonstrated that a very high proportion of this patristic material used by Ælfric and attributed by name to Augustine, Jerome, Bede and Gregory, was in fact available to him through the influential and popular homiliary of Paul the Deacon. Thus, in practice, what lies behind Ælfric's statement in the preface to the First Series of Catholic Homilies are three Carolingian homiliaries: those of Paul the Deacon, Smaragdus and Haymo.

In my article on Smaragdus I pointed out that, with the exception of the two references to Haymo by name within the homilies, the Carolingian authorities listed in the preface to confirm the validity of the tradition within which Ælfric was working are not mentioned in the Old English homilies, but that within the homilies validation is by citation of the names of the Fathers themselves. I explained this on functional grounds: within the homilies, that is to say, in a public forum which had other priests and - by dramatic projection - laity as the audience, validation could effectively be done only by reference to the great names, the Fathers themselves; in the preface, by contrast, written in the more restricted profes-

362–86]. I bring forward examples from Homily VII in the First Series, and Homilies XXIII and XXV in the Second Series (Godden numbering). In 'Ælfric and Smaragdus', Anglo-Saxon England, 21 (1992), 203–37, at 221 and 226, I identify two other instances where Smetana needs to be supplemented or revised.

23 Max Förster, 'Über die Quellen von Ælfrics exegetischen Homiliae Catholicae', Anglica, 16 (1894), 1–61.
24 See note 22 above.
sional language of Latin to an ecclesiastical superior, Ælfric sought to locate his work within a current tradition, which was rooted in patristic orthodoxy but which was also — as Sigeric would well understand and appreciate — part of the ‘new’ Benedictine Reform tradition, which in turn drew on the Carolingian transmitters of patristic exegesis. There was further support for this argument about the different principles of citation between the Latin preface and the Old English homilies in the fact that, as I was able to demonstrate, Ælfric could choose to cite the Fathers by name within the homilies, even when he was actually using Smaragdus, because his Smaragdus manuscript (in common with other extant Smaragdus manuscripts from this period) identified the patristic authors of borrowed passages by means of initials in the manuscript’s margin. It was evident also that Ælfric’s manuscript of Paul the Deacon agreed with extant manuscripts of this homiliary in having clear identifications of its patristic sources at the head of each homily, since material which Ælfric immediately derived from Paul the Deacon was validated by reference to the ultimate authority, such as Gregory or Bede.

These observations and deductions remain valid and contribute to our understanding of the manuscripts and models through which Ælfric had access to the tradition he wished to promote. Yet there is a question that still needs to be answered: if part of the purpose of the preface, beneath its veneer of modesty, was to establish Ælfric’s reformist position, in laying claim to patristic authority and the transmission of that authority through the ‘new’ Carolingian texts which came into England with the Reform, why was Paul the Deacon not named, alongside Smaragdus and Haymo, given that his homiliary was used extensively by Ælfric and that it had by far the widest circulation of the three?

The explanation which I offered in 1992 has to do with the nature of these three homiliaries. Smaragdus takes over verbatim passages from the Fathers and signals the original authority by marginal letter-abbreviations, but each homily is a compilatio in miniature and, taken as a whole, is unique to Smaragdus. Haymo is just as indebted to the patristic tradition conceptually and methodologically, but his is not a sequence of sustained verbatim dependences and so, even more clearly than Smaragdus, the author is Haymo, however derivative we regard him as being. Indeed, I am not aware of Haymo manuscripts which attempt patristic attributions and I have found no evidence in Ælfric’s work that his Haymo manuscript

provided him with any. Paul the Deacon’s homiliary, by contrast, is an anthology of whole homilies by different authors, whose names, in the manuscripts, are given at the head of each homily as part of the rubric. My conclusion therefore was that, whilst it would be necessary to refer to Smaragdus and Haymo by name in the letter to Sigeric, it would be quite reasonable when referring to Paul the Deacon’s homiliary to cite the names of the authors within it. However, I recognize that this is only a partial answer to the question I have posed, since Ælfric could presumably have chosen to name Paul the Deacon, perhaps in addition to the Fathers, if his purpose in writing to Sigeric had been in part to signal his position within a particular line of transmission. Why did he not do so? The explanation, I now think, is a very simple one. We are accustomed to identifying this homiletic collection (even in its subsequent modified and augmented forms) as the homiliary of Paul the Deacon, because modern scholarship recognizes it as such. But if we turn instead to the manuscript tradition as it was likely to have been available to Ælfric, we realise that, in all probability, Ælfric did not know that Paul the Deacon was the compiler.

The original homiliary of Paul the Deacon was issued with elaborate prefatory material, partly verse, partly prose, but the identity of Paul the Deacon as the compiler is not a distinctive feature of this material. The information only occurs once, where it is embedded as a passing reference about half to two-thirds of the way through an epistola generalis from Charlemagne to all his clergy, in which he explains that standards need to be improved and that the following homiliary is part of his campaign.27 So topical is this prefatory material that there is no reason why it should continue to be copied as manuscripts were produced in subsequent generations, indeed in the next century, and in other countries. Additionally, we may bear in mind the general point to which I alluded earlier in commenting on the manuscript traditions of Ælfric’s works, that prefatory material which gives circumstantial location to a particular work is often dropped when the text in question acquires a more widespread utility, or if the collection is modified or rearranged. Paul the Deacon’s homiliary was originally organized to begin with the fifth Sunday before Christmas,28 but the manuscript tradition

27 The prefatory material is given by Friedrich Wiegand, *Das Homiliarum Karls des Grossen auf seine ursprüngliche Gestalt hin untersucht*, Studium zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche, I.2 (Leipzig, 1897), 14-17. The reference to Paul the Deacon is on page 16, line 5.
28 For a convenient schedule of entries in the original homiliary as reconstructed by Wiegand, *Das Homiliarum Karl des Grossen*, see Smetana, ‘Ælfric and the early medieval homiliary’, 165–80. A schedule is also given in Réginald Grégoire, *Les homéliaires du moyen*
shows that it was commonly rearranged, either to start at a different point in the church's year, or to separate the large (and increasingly augmented) body of material more conveniently into a *temporale* and *sanctorale*, which might also involve a liturgical starting point which was not the original one. We do not have anything that can be assumed to be Ælfric's copy of Paul the Deacon, nor anything which is demonstrably close to it. But the evidence of manuscripts in England from before about 1100 suggests that copies were in circulation without the preface, and with a rearranged order, so it is a reasonable inference that Ælfric did not name Paul the Deacon in the letter to Sigeric for the simple reason that his manuscript, in common with others, did not record Paul the Deacon's name.²⁹ In medieval

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²⁹ On the manuscript evidence for the circulation of Paul the Deacon's homiliary in England, see Mary Clayton, 'Homiliaries and preaching in Anglo-Saxon England', *Peritia*, 4 (1985), 207-42, especially 217-20. I am indebted to the Librarian of Cambridge University Library for permission to consult Cambridge University Library MSS II.2.19 and KK.4.13, the Masters and Fellows of Pembroke College Cambridge for permission to consult Pembroke College MSS 23 and 24 (deposited in Cambridge University Library), the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral Library for permission to consult Worcester Cathedral MSS F 92, 93 and 94, and the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral for permission to consult Durham Cathedral Library MSS A.III.29 and B.II.2. In the comments which follow, the Gneuss numbers are from Helmut Gneuss, 'A preliminary list of manuscripts written or owned in England up to 1100', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 9 (1981), 1-60. C.U.L. II.2.19 [Gneuss no. 16] and KK.4.13 [Gneuss no. 24] are from the end of the eleventh century with a Norwich provenance. CUL II.2.19 begins with Easter, thus putting the *pars aestiva* first. It is somewhat augmented, but follows the order of Paul the Deacon and at the end of the Sundays after Pentecost moves directly on to the Advent sequence without any indication that this was the original starting point. The order of the *pars hiemalis* of Paul the Deacon is then followed quite closely, although with augmentations. Paul the Deacon's *sanctorale* material is omitted throughout, whereas in the original it had been interwoven with the *temporale* homilies, an arrangement which, in its relative positioning of fixed and movable feasts, would be applicable only in a given year. CUL KK.4.13 begins with Septuagesima and continues through to Easter Eve (with augmentations and omissions), including in this part only *temporale* items. On fo. 37r there then begins a *sanctorale* sequence, starting with Stephen (feast day December 26) and without any intervening material signalling this change of date or homiletic type. Pembroke 23 [Gneuss no. 129] and Pembroke 24 [Gneuss no. 130] form a companion pair, being *temporale* and *sanctorale* respectively. They are of the second half of the eleventh century from Bury. Pembroke 23 is similar to CUL II.2.19, beginning with the *pars aestiva* and continuing without any intervening matter with Advent (homily 1 in Paul the Deacon). Although the rearrangement and the absence of the material which preceded Paul the Deacon's first (Advent) homily is clearly attested, the evident plan for the manuscript was not carried through: two homilies on Old Testament subjects follow the Advent homily, without a liturgical rubric but identifiable as homilies 56 and 59 from Paul the Deacon's *pars aestiva*, and there is then a final homily (= homily 81 from Paul the Deacon's *pars aestiva*), after which the remainder of the final recto is blank, although ruled up. Pembroke 24 follows the order of Paul the Deacon's *sanctorale* material fairly closely, but with augmentations and omissions. The liturgical sequence begins with Philip (May 3) and ends with Andrew (November 30). The nature of Pembroke 23 and 24 is self-evident, but neither has information about the identity of their main source (Paul the Deacon), which must in any case be at some remove. The siting of an Augustinian homily on John XV.1, identical with homily 100 from the *pars*
terms this would, of course, be perfectly satisfactory, because in its original form and in all subsequent derivatives which I have seen, the rubric to each exegesis names the author responsible, and since these are almost invariably the great names of the patristic tradition, that would amply satisfy any medieval user; they would not be particularly curious about the name of the compiler. By contrast, the homiliaries of Smaragdus and Haymo did circulate with their names attached and their names were evidently present in Ælfric's copies, or he would not have been able to cite them in his First Series letter to Sigeric.

I have dealt with the naming – or rather the not-naming – of Paul the Deacon in some detail because it illustrates several basic points: we should not assume that a medieval writer knew what we know about a text he was using; that interpretations of why an author makes various kinds of statements may be given a plausible conceptual explanation by a modern scholar, when in fact the explanation is a practical one; and that issues such as these may well resolve themselves when one investigates manuscripts rather than printed editions.

There are other puzzles that can be solved by looking at the manuscript tradition of Paul the Deacon, but since one of them is a complicated and rather technical liturgical issue, I propose to deal with it elsewhere and to bring forward here just one example concerned with the naming of the Sundays in ordinary time, that is to say, the Sundays after Pentecost. In Wiegand's reconstruction

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of Paul the Deacon's original homiliary, which is reproduced by Smetana, most of the Sundays for the period after Pentecost are given liturgical designations which are no longer used, being anchored to various saints' days, rather than deploying the more flexible modern method of counting Sundays in relation to the major feasts, which are, of course, mostly variable in date because of the movement of Easter. In my study of Ælfric and Smaragdus I noted that, although Ælfric apparently moved freely between his source-homiliaries in order to draw on various elements in the interpretation of a common lection, it would sometimes have been awkward for him to do so, given the different systems of identifying Sundays, Ælfric himself using the flexible 'modern' system found in Smaragdus and Haymo, rather than the system used in Paul the Deacon, which is in fact tied to a particular calendar year. However, if we look at manuscripts surviving in England from before 1100 which are based on Paul the Deacon's homiliary, we can see that I was probably creating a problem where none existed because, in the course of transmission, the method of designating Sundays – especially in the second half of the liturgical year – was changed in manuscripts of Paul's homiliary from the old system to the system used by Smaragdus, Haymo and Ælfric, as in Cambridge University Library MS Ii.2.19, Cambridge Pembroke College MS 23, and Worcester Cathedral Library F 93. Admittedly these post-date Ælfric, but if we consider their evidence alongside the fact that the 'new' method of designating the Sundays after Pentecost was in use in Carolingian homiliaries very soon after Paul the Deacon's homiliary began to circulate, it seems reasonable to suppose that Ælfric had a Paul the Deacon manuscript with updated liturgical designations. It follows from this that there would have been no practical barrier to cross-referring from one homiliary to another,

31 See note 28 above.
32 It would appear that the old arrangement was superseded early in the ninth century, very soon after Paul the Deacon's homiliary was compiled, when Benedict of Aniane introduced what became the standard sequence of twenty-four or twenty-five Sundays counted sequentially from Pentecost. It was not easy to cross-refer from one method to another because the old method was based on the solar calendar (the fixed feasts of the sanctorale), while the new method was based on the lunar calendar (being ultimately tied to the moveable feast of Easter). Paul the Deacon's original homiliary, in interweaving the temporale and sanctorale, was specific to a particular year. It is not surprising that the manuscript tradition shows that the collection was soon separated into temporale and sanctorale because this made it much more flexible and easier to use. For a brief explanation of the old system of designating Sundays and a convenient table, see Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval liturgy: an introduction to the sources*, revised and translated by William G. Story and Niels Krogh Rasmussen (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1986), 311–14, and 409 (table).
33 'Ælfric and Smaragdus', 211, note 29. This note was written before I had examined a range of Paul the Deacon manuscripts.
and that Ælfric's use of the 'modern' method of designating the day was not an exercise of judgement on his part, choosing between two methods in front of him, as we might have supposed if we looked simply at printed material, but was a straightforward reflection of the single system presented by his three source manuscripts.

If we add this common rubrication to our image of Ælfric's source-manuscripts, we reinforce the sense of their apparent similarity: they were rubricated and organized alike; they were similar in their lections; they stood within the same tradition of patristic exegetical authority, Paul the Deacon and Smaragdus visibly so in their designations of patristic authors; and they came into existence within a relatively short period, as products and promulgators of the Carolingian renovatio, entering England at much the same time, within the restricted context of the Benedictine Reform. There is no doubt that Ælfric was exploiting, or 'translating' a clearly defined, homogeneous tradition. But why, given this degree of homogeneity, did he choose to employ three homiliaries? Why did he not simply use one to stand for the tradition he wished to transmit? To put the question in more positive terms: how did his source-homiliaries differ from each other, and what did any one of them offer that the others could not?

Paul the Deacon's homiliary, as I have already explained, was an anthology of whole homilies by patristic authors, authenticated by their authors' names in the rubrics. It, therefore, gave direct access to a good selection of material conveniently brought together for the very purpose which Ælfric wished to reduplicate in an Anglo-Saxon cultural and linguistic context. But there was more to it than that. Source-studies suggest that Ælfric's copy was augmented or modified in certain ways, but what has not been commented on in connection with his work is that in the early stages of transmission - as evidenced by the manuscripts surviving in England from before 1100 - the Gospel Homilies of Gregory the Great were a popular source of augmentation. Thirty-two out of the total of forty were in the original homiliary, where Gregory has a prominent position in

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34 Paul the Deacon's homiliary had a wider circulation than the other two: for the evidence of its use in late Anglo-Saxon England and the immediate post-Conquest period, see note 29 above. For Smaragdus, see 'Ælfric and Smaragdus', especially 206–7, and Appendices 1 and 2, 233–6. Haymo is less well attested in England, but his firm association with the Carolingian reform and his use by Ælfric in association with the others in a reformist context puts him in the same context. For the Anglo-Saxon manuscript evidence, see Clayton, 'Homiliaries and preaching', 217–19.

35 This was already apparent in 'Ælfric and the early medieval homiliary', in which Smetana identified a number of source-homilies in augmented versions of the homiliary but not in Wiegand's reconstructed original.
being used for the major feasts (Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and the three Sundays before the beginning of Lent). But Gregory's presence was soon strengthened. Both Pembroke 23 and CUL II.2.19 include homilies 22, 28, 33, 38, 39 and 40, and since these were not in Paul the Deacon's original, this points to an established tradition of augmentation. Ælfric used material from homilies 22, 38, 39 and 40 in the Catholic Homilies, as well as several Gregorian homilies associated with Paul's original homiliary, which seems to indicate that Ælfric's manuscript was already augmented in this way. If it were, this would have increased his access to what for him were particularly attractive models, because Gregory, much more than Augustine or Jerome, used a method of exegesis organized on the phrase-by-phrase principle, which Ælfric clearly felt was appropriate for his purposes. In conjunction with this it is instructive to note what Ælfric does not use from Paul the Deacon, and when we take this evidence into account, his bias in favour of Gregory is a marked feature. Smetana surmised that Ælfric's avoidance of Paul the Deacon's thirty-five homilies attributed to Leo and fifty-three attributed to Maximus meant that he had a homiliary abbreviated for monastic use, but if that were so, we would have to see the omission of these items in his source manuscript as being counterbalanced by the addition of others. Such a situation would require us to modify our understanding of the model offered by Paul the Deacon because the omission of Leo and Maximus (as well as other minor contributors whose work Ælfric did not use) would have given Ælfric an even more homogeneous set of exegetical source-homiliaries than he would have had if his copy of Paul the Deacon had included these items. It seems to me to be just as likely, however, although it cannot be proved either


37 Förster, 'Über die Quellen von Ælfrics exegetischen Homiliae Catholicae', identifies Ælfric's use of these homilies as follows: Gregory 22, CH II, xv (Förster § 62, p. 12); Gregory 38, CH I, xxxv (Förster § 51, p.5); Gregory 39 and 40, CH I, xxiii (Förster § 45, p.3).

38 Smetana, 'Ælfric and the early medieval homiliary', 203–4. Smetana draws attention to a tenth-century manuscript, believed by Wiegand to have been for monastic use, which omits Leo and Maximus and includes certain variant pericopes for the Sundays after Pentecost which were used by Ælfric. However, Smetana admits that this manuscript omits the major feasts of the liturgical cycle and some of the other patristic sources which Ælfric used. He goes on to note that there is another version, represented by Durham Cathedral Library A.III.29, which includes the major liturgical feasts, the homilies of Maximus and Leo and the same variations in the post-Pentecostal sequence which Ælfric exploited. Thus, the manuscript evidence, rather than supporting Smetana's own conclusion (repeated in 'Paul the Deacon's patristic anthology, 88), actually supports conclusions I put forward in the next few sentences.
way, that Ælfric had an augmented copy with no systematic omissions, and that he simply chose not to use homilies of a style and purpose that did not suit his own. Smetana’s judgement that ‘both Leo and Maximus . . . offer topical, brief and orthodox sermons, which would seem to be much more suited to Ælfric’s purpose than the long, involved allegorical exegesis of the materials which he used’ is beside the point: it was the exegesis that Ælfric wanted, and it was this that he worked with across three homiliaries, it being this, and this alone, which he found in Smaragdus and Haymo, the harmonisation between Paul and Smaragdus in particular being achieved through precisely the patristic authorities Ælfric lists in his explanatory letter to Sigeric. Of these authorities, it was Bede which dominated in the original Paul the Deacon homiliary, providing fifty-seven items out of a total of 244. Bede and Gregory together are far more important as source-authorities for Ælfric than either Augustine or Jerome, and this may well be a reflection of their representation in Paul the Deacon, reinforced by the frequency of their use by Smaragdus and thus the recurrence of attributions to Bede and Gregory in the margin of that manuscript. In the original homiliary of Paul the Deacon, by contrast, there are only twelve items from Augustine and eight from Jerome, although both were drawn upon in subsequent augmentations, Augustine most of all, if we count the spurious items as well as those that are authentic. Some of these Augustinian and Hieronimian augmentations are found in the English manuscripts I have already referred to, and it may be that some were already present in Ælfric’s copy. In the letter to Sigeric, Augustine and Jerome stand first in the list. Ælfric’s sense of their practical importance may have been increased by the recurrence of attributions in his Smaragdus manuscript, but in this context we must also allow for the fact that, in writing to Sigeric, Ælfric was claiming a position within a patristic tradition, in which Augustine and Jerome were names to be conjured with, even if, in practice, they were used less than the others. Bede, however, was demonstrably important for him, again, I suspect, because of his common use of the phrase by phrase exegetical method. It is worth

39 ‘Ælfric and the early medieval homiliary’, 203.
40 Smetana, ‘Paul the Deacon’s patristic anthology’. 79–80. The grand total of 244, given by Smetana on p. 78, is a count of the temporale and sanctorale items together.
41 Smetana, ‘Paul the Deacon’s patristic anthology’, 82–4, 88.
42 Compare the reference in Byrhtferth’s Epilogus to ‘those inhabitants of flowering Paradise, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory’ whose names are invoked ‘in tones of hushed reverence’: Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion, eds Peter S. Baker and Michael Lapidge, Early English Text Society, SS 15 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 375 (Baker and Lapidge translation). Bede is given a special mention as their successor a few sentences later (376).
noting, in this regard, that Bede himself draws very heavily on Gregory, and that Bede's gospel commentaries, which proceed verse by verse and phrase by phrase rather more systematically than some of his homilies do, were a major source of augmentation in the earlier stage of the development of Paul the Deacon's homiliary, as witnessed by extant manuscripts known to have been available in England before 1100. We need to take this kind of information into account in considering the models available to Ælfric and the nature of the influences in operation.

Smaragdus, like Gregory and Bede, proceeds verse by verse, and so was a compatible and congenial source for Ælfric and, as we have noted before, his manuscript had the great attraction – as did that of Paul the Deacon – of identifying patristic authorities, so providing the names for Ælfric to use in laying claim to a particular tradition and in validating his interpretations. In the manuscript of Paul the Deacon one name validated the whole homily; in the case of Smaragdus, there were usually several marginal identifications for each, signalling the various authorities which had been drawn together in building up the *catena* or *compilatio* which interpreted each lection. Thus, both Paul the Deacon and Smaragdus provided visible confirmation of the patristic tradition and models for Ælfric’s validation process. Additionally, Smaragdus was important, through his very obvious use of the *catena*, in providing models for conflation, modification and abbreviation of a kind not available to Ælfric though Paul the Deacon or Haymo. As modern source-study has demonstrated, it is often the case that a given homily by Ælfric is a *compilatio* or *catena* in miniature. In some cases, as I have argued, this may substantially be a reflection of the *catena* already before him in Smaragdus; alternatively, it may be a *catena* achieved by Ælfric moving between the three source-homiliaries open before him, a method of composition facilitated by the homogeneity of the tradition and, in the case of Paul the Deacon and Smaragdus, by verbal correspondences and thus easily visible moments of difference.

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43 See above, 50–1.
45 Examples of Ælfric’s various uses of Smaragdus, which are outlined in the rest of this paragraph, are to be found in Ælfric and Smaragdus as follows: 211–15, CH I xxxiii, Ælfric uses some of Smaragdus’s juxtapositions but also develops some of his own, depending in part on memorial associations which led him to items elsewhere in the homiliaries he had open before him; 215–16, CH I xl, Ælfric claims Gregory as his source, but uses him via Paul the Deacon and uses Smaragdus for a detail from Bede which Smaragdus had already incorporated into his homily for the same day, this homily itself being substantially dependent
Memorial association also played a part in some homilies, as Cross has demonstrated, either as a free-standing act of recall (described by Cross as 'associative memory') or, as I have argued in particular cases, an association which led him to consult a homily or homilies elsewhere in one of his source collections. The catena in Smaragdus may either be Smaragdus's own, or derived, in whole or in part, from a previously constructed catena by an earlier intermediary, such as Alcuin or Bede, both of whom Smaragdus used extensively. In either case, where the earlier intermediary attributes a passage to a patristic authority, it is that authority which Smaragdus acknowledges in the marginal letter-abbreviation. In his Old English homilies Ælfric does exactly the same: wherever possible, it is the patristic (i.e. ultimate) authority which is cited for the purpose of validating the interpretation, not the intermediary. Smaragdus also modifies and abbreviates, sometimes apparently independently, sometimes in a succession of modifications and abbreviations, as when Alcuin adapts Gregory, and Smaragdus adapts Alcuin, although still attributing the material to Gregory in the margin of the manuscript, or when Bede modifies Gregory and provides an attribution to Gregory in the margin of his manuscript, which is then taken over by Smaragdus, even though he adopts Bede's text. Ælfric likewise modifies and abbreviates, sometimes using selective omission and sometimes extensive summary or compression, as he acknowledges in the letter to Sigeric. Modifications, abbreviations and omissions, which would seem to be Ælfric's own if we compare the Old English text with

on Gregory: 216–25, CH II iv, modifications to and 'corruptions' of the Bedan source which are already present in Smaragdus (who himself was using Bede, Augustine, Alcuin and Jerome); 225–8, CH II vi, showing that, although Ælfric's catena exploits Haymo and Paul the Deacon, he excludes material from Gregory (his declared source) already excluded by Smaragdus, who was in turn following Bede's modifications; 228–32, CH II xvi [final part] (= Thorpe II xvii), Ælfric follows Smaragdus's modification of Gregory (the declared source) and includes no detail from Gregory which is not in Smaragdus. There are further examples in two forthcoming articles: 'Ælfric's sources reconsidered: some case studies from the Catholic Homilies' [subsequently published: see note 22 above], and 'Ælfric's Homily on the Holy Innocents: the sources reviewed' [subsequently published in Alfred the Wise: studies in honour of Janet Bately on the occasion of her sixty-fifth birthday, eds Jane Roberts and Janet L. Nelson with Malcolm Godden (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 89–98]. Similar examples are also identified by Susan Irvine in the Ælfrician homilies in MS Bodley 343: Old English homilies from MS Bodley 343, ed. Susan Irvine, Early English Text Society, OS 302 (Oxford: University Press, 1993). Irvine's examples include instances where Smaragdus's attributed use of a patristic source such as Gregory is in fact mediated through Bede, Pseudo-Bede, or another Carolingian writer.


47 'Ælfric and Smaragdus', 230–1 and 226 respectively. See also Irvine's edition of homilies in Bodley 343, note 45 above.
the full patristic source in Paul the Deacon, are sometimes already present in Smaragdus (and possibly even in Smaragdus's own immediate source), so we must assume that at these points Smaragdus is Ælfric's immediate source. On other occasions an abbreviation in Smaragdus is taken a stage further by Ælfric. Correspondences of this kind are too consistent and too frequent to have arisen solely by chance, and so I suggest that, whereas Ælfric's copy of Paul the Deacon was useful for its patristic identifications, its basic content, and the numerous models it provided for Ælfric's favoured style of exegesis, Smaragdus was useful for all of these things, but that he was additionally valuable as a conflater, modifier and abbreviator, providing Ælfric with ready-made conflations, modifications and abbreviations which also served as models for Ælfric's own independent adaptations.

Haymo is different again. His collection of homilies was augmented early on, mainly with material from Bede and Alcuin, as well as an anonymous Carolingian commentary on Matthew and four homilies taken from Smaragdus, and source study indicates that Ælfric's copy was an augmented one, at least to some degree. It would have been unusual if it had not been. But there is no evidence that Ælfric used Haymo as systematically or as constantly as he used Paul the Deacon or Smaragdus. As Pope noted, Haymo is seldom the primary source for an exegetical interpretation of a lection, although he is frequently drawn upon for supplementary details. The reason for this lies in the nature of Haymo's approach, which is rather different from that of Paul the Deacon and Smaragdus. Ælfric moves easily between Paul the Deacon and Smaragdus because they are parallel in their approach, with innumerable overlaps and verbal correspondences, but Haymo cannot so easily be used in this sustained way, since he employs a much more associative method, juxtaposing biblical quotations as a means of textual elucidation; furthermore, he does not generally use extended verbatim passages from the Fathers, even though he is steeped in their traditions and phraseology. Haymo was thus an altogether different kind of resource, although within the acceptable interpretative tradition. He was not available for systematic, sentence by sentence cross-referral, as Paul the Deacon and Smaragdus were, but he was

49 *Homilies of Ælfric* I, 160.
an excellent source for associated biblical quotations, as well as for the odd interpretative detail not found in the other two. If one looks closely, this is precisely how Ælfric can be seen to use him: he is frequently the source of additional biblical quotations and allusions not in the Paul the Deacon or Smaragdus main source, he is used less often than they are, in a less sustained and systematic way, and for a rather different purpose. This is the significance of the examples brought forward by Smetana, which are quite different in kind from Smetana’s earlier examples of Ælfric’s use of the material collected in Paul the Deacon’s homiliary. My own additional examples likewise confirm that this is how Ælfric exploited him. Here, then, is the explanation which I promised earlier for Ælfric’s statement that Haymo is used ‘aliquando’, ‘sometimes’, which separates him from the others in the letter to Sigeric. Ælfric kept a close eye on Haymo’s homiliary as he was working, but the use he made of it differed markedly from the use he made of Paul the Deacon and Smaragdus, because the text was constructed differently and its lack of verbal correspondences and attributions meant that it could not be woven into the Ælfrician catena in the same way.

What Ælfric was doing in the Catholic Homilies, and what his source-manuscripts showed him he was doing, was participating in a ‘chain of authority’ on the same terms as his Carolingian source-texts had done, and as patristic writers had done before them. The difference was that, in Ælfric’s case, it involved a translation into a different language and a different intellectual context, a transference, a ‘carrying over’, which went beyond the rendering of word for word. When, in the Old English prefaces to the Catholic Homilies, Ælfric referred to his ‘translation’ he used the verb awendan, literally ‘to turn from’ or ‘turn away’, as he did in similar statements in other works. Toller’s Supplement to Bosworth’s Dictionary admits the

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50 See the examples in ‘Ælfric and the homiliary of Haymo of Halberstadt’, by contrast with those in ‘Ælfric and the early medieval homiliary’.

51 See ‘Ælfric and Smaragdus’, 226, where Haymo seems to provide a biblical reference. There are also several examples in my forthcoming article ‘Ælfric’s sources reconsidered: some case studies from the Catholic Homilies’ [subsequently published: see note 22, above].


contextual meaning ‘to translate from one language to another’, citing Ælfric, though not the Catholic Homilies, but it is evident from the Supplement and from the first volume of Bosworth-Toller (which does not specify the meaning ‘to translate’), and now from the Dictionary of Old English, that the word has a wide and general use, with a broad semantic range. In this respect it parallels transferre and interpretari and it is equally suitable to designate the complex activity which Ælfric so skilfully performed.

In the field of biblical exegesis, the Carolingian renovatio, to which the English Benedictine Reform was heir, sought to establish a ‘dossier of patristic authority’. It was this tradition to which Ælfric laid claim in his letter to Sigeric and, in a rather different way, in the homilies themselves. But if it was a reassertion of past authority, a reclaiming of an orthodox and scholarly tradition, it was also, for Ælfric as for his Carolingian models, a polemical and reformist position, through which monastic-trained scholars attempted to improve the standards of ecclesiastical life within a movement which was given royal support, and in which political manoeuvrings played their part. Ælfric’s self-definition, which is present in the letters to Sigeric, in the Old English prefaces to the Catholic Homilies and in the homilies themselves, is a device to assert and maintain the tradition: the comments on his relationship to his patristic authorities, his anxieties about what he regarded as non-authoritative material, and his attempts to ensure the accuracy and purity of manuscript transmission are, of course, expressions of an essentially scholarly frame of mind, but they are also polemical positions designed to define and protect the tradition he translates.

At the end of the Second Series of Catholic Homilies there is a prayer in which Ælfric says that he will never henceforth turn (awende) gospel or gospel-expositions from Latin into English, and he attempts to preserve the purity of the tradition which he has revealed (onwreah) to the English race in his two books by asking,

for the love of God, that his work be kept apart from the work of others. 57 It is symptomatic of two kinds of anxiety which Ælfric was to express throughout his career: anxiety about textual accuracy and purity, which if broached would jeopardize the tradition he was repeatedly asked to translate into the vernacular, and an underlying anxiety about the appropriateness of engaging in such translation at all. The former was something he could do very little about. Ælfric knew full well that authorial control was lost as soon as a manuscript was in circulation, and since he could not trust his contemporaries to hold the ‘eventfulness’ of the Catholic Homilies within the boundaries of a particular intellectual tradition, his only possible solution was to attempt to exclude ‘eventfulness’ altogether. 58 The manuscript tradition shows that his plea was ignored – and indeed was not even transmitted, since we know of it only in CUL Gg.3.28. Anxiety about translation as such was a more general matter, not peculiar to Ælfric. It was expressed in classical and patristic times, and at much the same time as Ælfric by Notker of St Gall, the reason for it being that the translation into the vernacular (Greek or Hebrew into Latin, and Latin into English or German) rendered visible the disjunction in culture and language which the translation paradoxically sought to eliminate, or at the very least to minimize. 59 It was recognized as a problem in Carolingian times when, in 813, the famous canon 17 of the Council of Tours specified that preachers should ‘openly endeavour to translate sermons into the Latin of the illiterate’ (‘aperte transferre studeat in rusticam romanam linguam’) so that ‘all might the more easily understand’

57 Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies, ed. Godden, 345. For other expressions of these anxieties, see the references in note 53 above.

58 I discuss this in detail in ‘Reform and resistance’. For the concept of the ‘eventful’ text, see Hans Robert Jauss, Toward an aesthetic of reception, translated by Timothy Bahti, with an introduction by Paul de Man (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 32–6 (Thesis 5).

59 Copeland, Rhetoric, hermeneutics, and translation in the Middle Ages, especially chapters 1, 2, and 4. Notker’s unease, expressed in a letter to Bishop Hugo von Sitten (c. 1015), is discussed, 97–9. As Copeland makes clear, the anxiety of classical writers centred on the inferiority of Roman culture and the Latin language in comparison with Greek; their interlingual translation as such, whilst it emphasized disjunction, was motivated by the aggressive purpose of ‘displacement, substitution, and cultural or canonical appropriation’ (36). In patristic and medieval times the focus was rather different because the special status of the primary languages (Hebrew and Greek in the divinely-inspired Bible, and Greek and Latin as the languages of theological authority and liturgical ritual) in a context of restricted and increasingly ecclesiastically-controlled literacy meant that there were fundamental questions about the suitability of translation at all. On the one hand, it was necessary as an act of communication, but on the other the vernaculars lacked status as well as finesse, and there was the underlying problem of weighing the risk of making complex material available to those who, by definition, had not had the education which would allow them to understand it properly.
The linguistic changes within the old Latin-speaking parts of western Europe had reached such a point in the popular language that there was a disabling disjunction, which the eruditi needed to address, although the repeated insistence in successive Councils suggests that this met with some resistance. On the other hand, as Banniard has pointed out, 'the linguistic proximity of the “grammatical” language and of the non-standard language was emphasised, since lingua romana meant “Latin” and rustica meant “illiterate” '. What these various Councils demonstrate is that a growing bi-dialectalism had emerged into the consciousness of literate Carolingians. To quote Banniard again: 'they were witnesses to what was, from their point of view, a linguistic catastrophe: they watched impotently as the vernacular was irrevocably separated from the traditional ensemble of different kinds and levels of Latin. Hitherto, there had existed, and could officially be authorised, only traditio (explanation); translation had now been sanctioned.'

Anglo-Saxon England was necessarily ahead of the game; Latin had been a learnt language from the start, and grammar books had been devised to address this specialized need. But for those accomplished in Latin, for whom Latin was the first language of their adult daily lives and the language which had primary status, the unavoidable demand for translation gave rise to an inevitable tension. Ælfric did not resolve this tension in his own mind, but his success as a writer in general and as author of the Catholic Homilies in particular is measurable in terms of his ability to translate his orthodox, scholarly and reformist tradition in the broadest sense of the term – interlingually, of course (he was, after all, a good Latinist), but also stylistically and conceptually, translating his Carolingian models into a vernacular environment in such a way that the chain of authority was unbroken.

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62 Banniard, 'Language and communication in Carolingian Europe', 700.

63 Ibid., 701. For a fuller discussion, including analysis of the usage of uertere, transferre, interpretari and tradere, see Banniard, Vita voce, 402–5 and 411–13.

64 Viven Law, The insular Latin grammarians (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1982).

65 My thanks are due to the Master and Fellows of Emmanuel College Cambridge, who elected me to a Quatercentenary Fellowship in 1993, when much of the work for this lecture was done.