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Finding Consolation at the End of the Millennium*

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Drawing a connection between a fire (at Fleury in 974), a letter (from Lantfred of Fleury to Dunstan of Canterbury), a poem (*Carmen de libero arbitrio*), and a manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 6401), this essay reconstructs two potential trajectories of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, as it crossed and re-crossed the Channel between Winchester, Fleury, and Ramsey in the decades on either side of the year 1000. The study of the early medieval English reception of Boethius's *Consolation* usually centers on its translation into Old English at the beginning of the tenth century. By turning instead to the end of the century and to the beginning of the next, this essay demonstrates the resiliency of Boethius's dialectical original—and claims another, more diffuse Boethian tradition for early medieval England. In short, Boethius's *Consolation* may have arrived in England from the Continent ca. 900, but it did not stop moving—its travels demonstrating not only the interconnectivity of late tenth-century monastic centers in England and on the Continent but also the enduring importance of Boethius's Latin text in the century after it was first translated into English, highlighting figures such as Lantfred and Abbo of Fleury, Æthelwold of Winchester, and Byrhtferth of Ramsey.

On August 10, 974, a group of craftsmen put aside the new bell they had been casting for the church tower at Fleury, finished their work for the day, and went to bed.¹ Over the door, they left a candle burning, giving in to their tired limbs and forgetting to extinguish the flame, which consumed the remaining wax, sputtered, and caught the nearby beds on fire. Soon, the monastery was ablaze, the wind threatening to spread the conflagration to the nearby granary. Monks hurried into the church of St. Benedict, wrapped

¹ A nearly-contemporary account is preserved in *Miracula Sancti Benedicti* [hereafter *MSB*] II.9, edited by Eugène de Certain in *Les miracles de Saint-Benoît écrits par Adrevald, Aimoin, André, Raoul Tortaire et Hugues de Sainte Marie* (Paris: Renouard, 1858), 110–12, from which I derive my summary of the night's events. All translations of the *MSB* are my own. Whereas Book I of the *MSB* had been written by Adrevald, Books II and III were written by Aimoin. Both were monks at Fleury. For a general overview of the text, see Alexandre Vidier, *L'historiographie à Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire et les Miracles de Saint Benoît* (Paris: Picard, 1965).

the relics in the altar cloth, and ran out again. And then the wind died. The ash settled. And the church, guesthouse, kitchen, and bakery emerged unsinged.

Other buildings had not been so lucky.² Aimoin, a monk of Fleury and chronicler of the *Miracula Sancti Benedicti*, recorded his horror at the massive destruction, describing how “totus ignium globus... cælum versus cacumen extendit” (“the entire ball of flames . . . stretched from the grass to the sky”).³ Throughout his account, he notes his subsequent wonder at the astonishing survival of certain monastic buildings, observing, “Non solum autem illa, quæ sexaginta et non multo amplius ab ipsa distabat passibus, verum universa intra ambitum castris admodum arctum constructa ædificia . . . horreo . . . incorrupta mansere ab ignibus” (“I tremble that . . . not only that one, which was standing no more than sixty paces from there, but truly all the buildings arranged in the exceedingly contracted orbit of the monastery, remained intact from the flames”).⁴ This miraculous intervention befits an account of Saint Benedict’s miracles, but Aimoin’s version of the fire elides the devastating reality of the events: certain key buildings left in rubble and the objects inside of them destroyed. In a more personal account in a letter to Dunstan (Archbishop of Canterbury, 970–78), Lantfred of Fleury describes “hoc coenobium Floriacense quo nunc degit—utpote igne consumptum” (“the monastery of Fleury where he now lives, having been destroyed by

² For further information about the fire, see Jean Mabillon, *Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1703–39), 3:632.

³ *MSB* II.9.

⁴ *MSB* II.9.

fire”), suggesting that the ravages of the fire were much more extensive than Aimoin let on.⁵ But what were these buildings, which had been reduced to ashes, and what was lost along with them?

Drawing from the accounts of various fires in the *Miracula*, Elizabeth Dachowski provides an overview of the layout of late tenth-century Fleury, which helps in reconstructing exactly what was lost when the monastery burned:

The monastic complex was enclosed by a wall and included two churches: Notre Dame, which held the relics of St. Benedict, and Saint-Pierre. Buildings serving the needs of the monks crowded together within the enclosure: a dormitory, a kitchen, a bake house, a guesthouse, and several granaries. Other passages in the *Miracula* mention a sacristy, a library, a treasury, an infirmary, and various other buildings.⁶

⁵ The letter is edited and translated by Michael Lapidge in his *The Cult of St Swithun*, Winchester Studies 4.ii (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 220–1.

⁶ Elizabeth Dachowski, *First Among Abbots: The Career of Abbo of Fleury* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 42. For more on the layout of the monastery at this time, see Robert-Henri Bautier, “Le monastère et les églises de Fleury-sur-Loire sous les abbatiats d’Abbon, de Gauzlin et d’Arnaud (988–1032),” *Mémoires de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France* 9.4 (1968): 71–156, at 87–8. The treasury, at least, largely postdates the 974 fire. In fact, a fireproof treasury chamber was built by Abbo’s treasurer, Gauzfred, towards the end of the century, as recorded by Aimoinus of Fleury in his *Vita sancti Abbonis*, ed. and trans. Robert-Henri Bautier and Gillette Labory, in *L’Abbaye de Fleury en l’an mil* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 2004), ch. 15. For an in-depth discussion of Carolingian monastic architecture and the famous Plan of St. Gall, see Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St-Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of, and Life in, a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); and Werner Jacobsen, *Der Klosterplan von St. Gallen und die Karolingische Architektur: Entwicklung und Wandel von Form und Bedeutung im fränkischen Kirchenbau zwischen 751 und 840* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1992).

These were cramped quarters, connected by narrow passageways that made fires both quick to spread and difficult to stop in the “ambitum castrum admodum arctum” (“exceedingly contracted orbit of the monastery”), as Aimoin described the arrangement of the buildings. Indeed, flames would also ravage Fleury in 1002, 1005, and 1026.⁷ In 974, the church of Saint-Pierre was incinerated, along with at least a part of Fleury’s prized monastic library.

Founded ca. 640, Fleury—or Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, as it is sometimes called—flourished in the ninth and tenth centuries, exerting a strong influence on Anglo-Saxon England.⁸ As Marco Mostert has rightly observed, “the intellectual riches of the abbey, its library and scriptorium were bound to attract almost as much as the treasure which rested in its crypt,” the translated bones of Saint Benedict himself, the father of Western monasticism, brought to Fleury from the ruins of Monte Cassino.⁹ Fleury

⁷ Thomas Head outlines the successive responses in his *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 158–60.

⁸ For a general history, see G. Chenesseau, *L'abbaye de Fleury à Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire: Son histoire – ses institutions – ses églises* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1931) and J. Laporte, “Fleury,” in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques* 17 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1969), cols. 441–76. On the cross-Channel culture, see Marco Mostert, “Relations between Fleury and England,” in *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honor of Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 185–208; and Stéphane Lebecq and Alban Gautier, “Routeways Between England and the Continent in the Tenth Century,” in the same volume, pages 17–34.

⁹ Marco Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury: A Study of the Ideas about Society and Law of the Tenth-Century Monastic Reform Movement* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1987), 23. In his survey of the extant manuscripts, Mostert has noted that 634 manuscripts still survive from Fleury—currently housed in over sixty-one libraries in nine countries. For the full catalog, see his *The Library of Fleury: A Provisional List of*

became a hotbed of intellectual activity during the Carolingian Renaissance, and D. A. Bullough notes that “[e]nough books, orthodox or unusual, survived the sacking of the monastery by Northmen in 865 or were acquired in the next seventy years to give it an enviable reputation as a centre of learning” during the tenth-century Benedictine revival movements, which sought to renew—and standardize—monastic life in England and on the Continent.¹⁰

In deference to Fleury’s importance as a Benedictine monastery, books were sent as gifts from English houses. As Adrian Papahagi has noted, these bookish tributes included the Winchester Benedictional (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. MS. 987), the Winchcombe Sacramentary (Orléans, Bibliothèque Municipale MS. 127 (105)), and an elaborate copy of Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. MS. 6401), which

Manuscripts (Hilversum: Verloren Publishers, 1989). For an account of the later fates of the books in Fleury’s library, see Frère Denis, “Les anciens manuscrits de Fleury,” *Bulletin trimestriel de la Société archéologique et historique de l’Orléanais* 2 (1962): 266–81, esp. 267–70. See also Bernhard Bischoff, *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, trans. Michael M. Gorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Élisabeth Pellegrin, “La tradition des textes classiques latins à l’abbaye de Fleury-sur-Loire,” *Revue d’histoire des textes* 14 (1986): 155–67.

¹⁰ D. A. Bullough, “The Continental Background of the Reform,” in *Tenth-Century Studies: Essays in Commemoration of the Millennium of the Council of Winchester and Regularis Concordia*, ed. David Parsons (London: Phillimore & Co., Ltd., 1975), 20–36. Fleury had been reformed by Odo of Cluny ca. 930 and forged close ties with Winchester in the following decades, influencing certain customs in the *Regularis concordia*. Indeed, monks from Fleury were present when the *Regularis concordia* was drafted at the Council of Winchester (ca. 970). For an overview of what the Council of Winchester and related efforts sought to accomplish, see Christopher A. Jones, “Ælfric and the Limits of ‘Benedictine Reform,’” in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 67–108.

was produced at the very end of the tenth century at Christ Church, Canterbury.¹¹ These books and other productions and acquisitions enlarged Fleury's library, increasing its renown as an expansive collection, stocked with classical and contemporary texts alike. Unfortunately, however, when the bell-makers left their candle burning in 974, some of those holdings were lost to the flames.

This essay explores the possibility that one of the burned books was a copy of Boethius's *Consolation*. In the previous centuries, Fleury's famed library and scriptorium had served as a fount of Boethian knowledge. Four early manuscripts of the *Consolation* have been ascribed to the Fleury scriptorium.¹² Moreover, Papahagi has demonstrated that the *Consolation* seems to have been completely unknown or, at least, unread until the late eighth or early ninth century, when it resurfaced, likely at Fleury.¹³ Indeed,

¹¹ Papahagi, "An Anglo-Saxon Palimpsest from Fleury: Orléans, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 342 (290)," in *Palimpsests and the Literary Imagination of Medieval England: Collected Essays*, ed. Leo Carruthers, Raeleen Chai-Elsholz, and Tatjana Silec (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 21–34, at 24.

¹² These manuscripts are Orleans, Bibliothèque Municipale (Médiathèque), MS. 270; Vatican, Vat. Lat. MS. 3363; Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS. 179; and Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana Medicea, MS. Pluteo XIV.15. All date to the late ninth or early tenth century. For further details, see Fabio Troncarelli, *Boethiana Aetas: Modelli grafici e fortuna manoscritta della "Consolatio philosophiae" tra IX e XII secolo* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1987); and Mostert, *The Library of Fleury*. By the ninth century, Pluteo XIV.15 had traveled to Fulda, where it was in the possession of Lupus of Ferrières. MS. Vat. Lat. 3363 had made its way to England by the late ninth or early tenth century.

¹³ Adrian Papahagi, "The Transmission of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in the Carolingian Age," *Medium Ævum* 78.1 (2009): 1–15, repr. in his *Boethiana Medievala: A Collection of Studies on the Early Medieval Fortune of Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy* (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2010), 15–36. Papahagi has also proposed Fleury as a potential point of

Papahagi argues that Theodulf of Orléans (c. 750/60–821), rather than Alcuin of York, revived and disseminated the *Consolation* in the Carolingian era, shifting the initial center of interest from Aachen to Orléans, roughly eighty-five miles south of Paris.¹⁴ From the Loire valley—and specifically Fleury—Papahagi speculates that the text “may have been transmitted first to the other monastic centres in the area (Tours, Ferrières, Auxerre), then to other continental centres (Laon, Reims, Corbie, Aachen, Cologne, and especially St Gall and Reichenau). Some time around 900, the *Consolation* reached Anglo-Saxon England.”¹⁵ Papahagi has suggested that Fleury remains an essential starting-point for understanding the reception of Boethius in England. In this essay, I suggest that England, too, could have offered Boethius back to Fleury.

origin for Christianizing commentary on the *Consolation* in “Destin et providence (*Consolatio Philosophiae* IV.pr.6): la réception du néoplatonisme Boécien à l’époque carolingienne,” *Académie des Inscriptions de Belles-lettres: Comptes rendus des séances de l’année* (2006): 671–711, at 700–2.

¹⁴ The rediscovery of the *Consolation* has been traditionally attributed to Alcuin of York, who became a leading scholar in the Carolingian Renaissance. See, for instance, Pierre Courcelle, *La Consolation de Philosophie dans la tradition littéraire: Antécédents et postérité de Boèce* (Paris, 1967), 335: “A la fin du VIII^e siècle, Alcuin semble avoir découvert la *Consolation*” (“At the end of the eighth century, Alcuin seems to have discovered the *Consolation*”). See also: Diane Bolton, “The study of the *Consolation of Philosophy* in Anglo-Saxon England,” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 44 (1977): 22–78, at 34; M. T. Gibson, “Boethius in the Carolingian schools,” *TRHS* (1982): 43–56, at 45; Malcolm Godden, “Alfred, Asser, and Boethius,” in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe and Andy Orchard (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2005), 326–48, at 327. See also M. Godden, ‘King Alfred and the Boethius Industry’, *Making Sense: Constructing Meaning in Early English*, ed. Antonette diPaulo Healey and Kevin Kiernan, *Publications of the Dictionary of Old English* 7 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2007), 116–38.

¹⁵ Adrian Papahagi, *Boethiana Medievala*, 36.

Tracing a path between the *Carmen de libero arbitrio* [Poem about free will] (a Boethian poem written at Winchester in 971–2) and a copy of the *Consolation* produced at Fleury in the last quarter of the tenth century (now known as MS. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 6401), this essay proposes that a manuscript of Boethius’s *Consolation* made the return journey from England to Fleury at the end of the millennium. Boethius’s Anglo-Saxon reception usually centers on the translation of the *Consolation* into English in the beginning of the tenth century.¹⁶ In turning instead to the end of the century and to the beginning of the next, this essay demonstrates the resiliency of Boethius’s dialectical original—and claims another, more diffuse Boethian tradition for later Anglo-Saxon England.

Accounts of Boethius’s *Consolation* at the end of the millenium are often no more than passing references to Ælfric of Eynsham’s perusal of the all-prose *Boethius* or to his patron, the nobleman Æthelweard (“the Fat”), who ascribed the Old English translation to King Alfred in his *Chronicon*, a dense Latin rendition of the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle*. Even here, Æthelweard’s allusion to the *Consolation* consists of only three words, as he slips “Boetii lachrymosus . . . motus” [the tearful passion of Boethius] into a speedy commendation of Alfred’s broader translation program.¹⁷ However, Rosalind

¹⁶ For an overview of this translation project, see the first five essays in this volume.

The translation project is usually dated to 890-930. For further details, see Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine, ed. and trans., *The Old English Boethius*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1:146.

¹⁷ Æthelweard, *Chronicon*, iv. 3, in *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), p. 50.

C. Love notes that “[f]ourteen complete or fragmentary copies of the *Consolation* survive which were certainly written or annotated in southern England in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries,” testifying to the scholarly energy dedicated to Boethius’s original long after it had been translated into English.¹⁸ Moreover, ties between England and Francia remained strong, with manuscripts and readers crisscrossing the Channel.

There has been a lot of recent interest in the Continental background to the English monastic reforms of the tenth century, but comparatively little work has been done on the cross-Channel exchanges of the following decades. Scholars lament the incursions of ransacking Norsemen throughout the period and the devastating arrival of the Normans in 1066, but Anglo-Saxon literary culture is typically understood to be almost entirely Insular. It may and frequently *does* incorporate Norse elements, but only in those places where Vikings had settled or when a Danish king ascended to the throne—or so the usual narrative goes. And yet, letters, books, and readers moved back and forth between England and greater Europe, not only in the international circles of Boniface (ca. 675–754) and Alcuin (ca. 735–804) but also to and from Alfred’s court (r. 871–899) and the courts of his successors. Elizabeth Tyler and Thomas O’Donnell have begun to trace some of the networks tying regional centers in southern England to those in Lotharingia and Francia in the first half of the eleventh century, but the broader field is

¹⁸ Rosalind C. Love, “Latin Commentaries on Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*,” in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. Paul Szarmach and Nicole Guenther Discenza (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 83–111, at 95.

only just emerging and remains a promising area for further inquiry.¹⁹ I retrace one speculative cross-Channel network here.

Though other English scribes seem to have been active in the Loire valley,²⁰ this story begins and ends with one Lantfred, a Frankish monk, who trained at and later returned to Fleury, but who acquired English scribal skills during a stint at Old Minster, Winchester.²¹ Michael Lapidge summarizes his career as follows:

As a monk of Fleury he was probably invited to Winchester by Æthelwold. While at Winchester he advised Æthelwold on the monastic customs of Fleury (advice which Æthelwold incorporated in the *Regularis Concordia*), composed his *Translatio et miracula S. Swithuni*, and composed a small corpus of Latin poetry as well. He was on intimate terms with Archbishop Dunstan as well as with Osgar [Abbot of Abingdon], whom he had perhaps met on an earlier occasion while Osgar

¹⁹ Thomas O'Donnell, "Some Unexamined Geographies and Social Networks of English Literary Culture," paper co-authored with Elizabeth M. Tyler and delivered at the Harvard University English Medieval Colloquium (Cambridge, MA, Feb. 2015). See also Tyler's *England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c. 1000-c. 1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017). I have begun mapping similarly trans-national networks of exchange in a social network analysis of late Anglo-Saxon letters. Early iterations of this project, provisionally entitled *Mapping Anglo-Saxon Letters*, have been presented at Digital Britain: New Approaches to the Early Middle Ages (Harvard University, March 2016) and Seafaring: An Early Medieval Conference on the Islands of the North Atlantic (University of Denver, Nov. 2016).

²⁰ Jean Vezin has identified an English scribe named Leofnoth who was active at Fleury during the later tenth century in "Leofnoth: un scribe anglais à Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire," in *Codices Manuscripti* 4 (1977): 109–20. Malcolm Parkes has also proposed an Anglo-Saxon scribe active at Fleury at this time in "An Anglo-Saxon Text at Fleury: The Manuscript of the Leiden Riddle," in his *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation, and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 263–74.

²¹ For more on the localization of Lantfred to Fleury, see Lapidge, *Cult of St Swithun*, 218–24.

was studying at Fleury. He was in the habit of making periodic trips to the Continent, and on one of these trips he decided to remain at Fleury. Whether he ever returned to England, or when or where he died, is unknown.²²

Just as Fleury had been a Carolingian center of learning and monastic reform, so was Winchester “the supreme intellectual center in late Anglo-Saxon England,” as Mechthild Gretsch has observed—and a likely site of Boethian interest.²³

The city had provided a sort of headquarters for King Alfred’s program of translation and textual transmission at the end of the ninth century, and, as a leading center of book production, remained at the heart of political and intellectual life into the eleventh.²⁴ Unsurprisingly, Winchester and Fleury maintained close ties throughout the period.²⁵ Æthelwold himself had wished to study there, but King Edgar (r. 959–75) prevented him from going abroad, prompting the future Bishop of Winchester to send his pupil Osgar to the Continent in his stead. Fueled in part by the subsequent influx of books and scholars from Fleury and from Corbie, whence Æthelwold invited monks to

²² Lapdige, *Cult of St Swithun*, 224.

²³ Mechthild Gretsch, “Late Old English (899–1066),” in *A Companion to the History of the English Language*, ed. Haruko Momma and Michael Matto (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 165–71, at 169.

²⁴ A copy of *Bald’s Leechbook* remained in Winchester as well as the Old English *Orosius*; the *Pastoral Care*; and, potentially, both the *Boethius* and the *Bede*.

²⁵ For further information on the close ties between reformed monasteries in England and Fleury, see Dachowski, *First Among Abbots*, 39; Papahagi, *Boethiana Medievalia*, 28; Jean-Marie Berland, “L’influence de l’abbaye de Fleury-sur-Loire en Bretagne et dans les Îles Britanniques du X^e au XII^e siècle,” in *Questions d’histoire de Bretagne, Actes du 107^e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes: Brest, 1982, Section de Philologie et d’Histoire jusqu’à 1610* (Brest: C.T.H.S., 1984), 2:275–99; and Mostert, “Relations between Fleury and England.”

teach plainchant, under Æthelwold's bishopric (963–84) Winchester boasted a famous cathedral school—one that would give rise to two of late Anglo-Saxon England's most important authors: Ælfric of Eynsham in prose and Wulfstan Cantor in poetry.²⁶

In the midst of this vibrant textual community, at Winchester in 972–4, Lantfred wrote the *Translatio et miracula Sancti Swithuni*, the first account of Saint Swithun's life and miracles, which would be subsequently reworked as the cult grew around Winchester's new patron saint, a theretofore little-known ninth-century bishop.²⁷ Sometime between 975 and 984 (after the death of Edgar and before the death of Æthelwold), Lantfred then penned a Latin poem in elegiac couplets, which Michael Lapidge has titled the *Carmen de libero arbitrio*.²⁸ This poem comprises a philosophical exploration of free

²⁶ By some estimates, one-sixth of all surviving Old English literature may be ascribed to Ælfric. Though less prolific than his partner in prose, Wulfstan Cantor penned some shorter works along with the *Narratio metrica de Sancti Swithuno*, which is itself the longest surviving Anglo-Latin poem from before the Conquest and a *tour de force* of poetic virtuosity and political negotiation. It may be found in Lapidge, *Cult of St Swithun*, 335–549. For further background on Wulfstan's career and surviving works, see the introduction in Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom, ed. and trans., *Wulfstan of Winchester: The Life of St. Aethelwold* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

²⁷ Lantfred of Winchester, *Translatio et miracula S. Swithuni*, in *The Cult of St Swithun*, 252–333. Together, the early lives of Swithun constitute an *opus geminatum*. For a reading of these lives as a possible parallel to the two versions of the Old English *Boethius*, see my "Hybrid Forms: Translating Boethius in Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Saxon England* 45 (2016): 213–38, esp. 227–28. On the *opus geminatum*, see also Susan Irvine's essay in this volume. For a new account of the later development of the Winchester Lives of Swithun, see Jennifer A. Lorden, "Landscapes of Devotion: The Settings of St Swithun's Early *Vitae*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 45 (2016): 285–309.

²⁸ For further details and an edition and translation of the poem, see Michael Lapidge, "Three Latin Poems from Æthelwold's School at Winchester," *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972): 85–137; repr. in his *Anglo-Latin Literature, 900–*

will and divine foreknowledge, providence and predestination.²⁹ At the center is Boethius's famous image of the man on the watchtower: "rex sapiens residet specula sublimis in alta / providus ac pugnax, praepete mente sagax" ("A wise king sits elevated on a high watch-tower, / provident and militant, sagacious because of his alert mind," ll. 69–70).³⁰ This vision of God looking down from above as a spectator who assigns rewards and punishments according to our merits closely resembles Boethius's king on a watchtower

1066 (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 225–78, from which I quote here. The poem is contained in a late-tenth-century Winchester manuscript (Cambridge, University Library, MS. Kk. 5. 34, fols. 75v–80r) along with two other poems, all headed by an intriguing rubric: "versus .L. de quodam superbo" ("verses of Lantfred about a certain proud person"), which speaks more to the content of the first poem, a lively debate between a schoolmaster and his student. Building on a suggestion made by Henry Bradshaw, Michael Lapidge, "Three Latin Poems," has demonstrated that this "L" may be reasonably identified with Lantfred. Lantfred likewise signs himself as ".L." in a letter to Archbishop Dunstan, discussed below. For a more recent treatment of the poem, see Aaron J. Kleist's chapter on "Lantfred of Winchester and the *Carmen de libero arbitrio*," in his *Striving with Grace: Views of Free Will in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2008), 121–44. See also James P. Carley, "Two Pre-Conquest Manuscripts from Glastonbury Abbey," *Anglo-Saxon England* 16 (1987): 197–212, esp. 204–12. For further discussion of the manuscript, see Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 41–42, at 28.

²⁹ Though Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe does not treat the *Carmen de libero arbitrio* specifically, her masterful discussion of the tensions inherent in expressions of individual agency in late Anglo-Saxon monastic contexts provides a helpful backdrop for Lantfred's Boethian verses. See her *Stealing Obedience: Narratives of Agency and Identity in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012). See also Hilary Fox's essay in this volume on free will and self-formation in the Old English *Boethius*.

³⁰ *Carmen de libero arbitrio*, ed. Lapidge, "Three Latin Poems," 266–77, at 270.

from Book 4, Prose 6 (4p6).³¹ Indeed, as Lapidge argues, “a reading of the *de consolatione philosophiae* was the inspiration of the questioning of the *de libero arbitrio*,” and “much of the vocabulary used in Boethius’s discussion of providence is also found in the Anglo-Latin poem.”³² Soon after completing this work, Lantfred re-crossed the Channel and returned to Fleury.

Feeling the lack of some books destroyed in the 974 fire, Lantfred then wrote to Dunstan, requesting that some manuscripts previously in his possession at Winchester might be returned to him at Fleury:

Dein vestrum flagitat benivolentiam ut commentum Flori quod
habet domnus abbas Oscarus, et alios libellos qui habentur
Wintonie quique condam sui fuerunt, nunc pro Christi nomine illi
reddere faciatis, quoniam quidem hoc coenobium Floriacense
quo nunc degit—utpote igne consumptum—his caret codicellis.

[Furthermore, he entreats your good will in asking that you arrange to have returned to him the commentary of Florus which Abbot Osgar now has, as well as other books which are at Winchester and which formerly belonged to him, since in fact the monastery of Fleury where he now lives, having been destroyed by fire, lacks these manuscripts.]³³

Though it now survives only in London, British Library, MS. Cotton Tiberius A. xv (s. xi¹), the letter has been dated to 974 x 984—and thus to roughly the same window as the *Carmen de libero arbitrio*.³⁴ This was clearly a period of

³¹ Lapidge even notes a possible verbal echo of Boethius’s God “qui cum ex alta providentiae specula respexit, quid unicuique conveniat agnoscit et quod convenire novit accomodat” (who looks forth from the high watchtower of providence, recognizes what is suited to each, and assigns what he knows to be fitting, 4p6) in Lantfred’s metaphor of “quos novit iustos convocat ad superos” (“[God] summons those whom he knows to be just to him on high,” l. 18). Lapidge, “Three Latin Poems,” 244.

³² Lapidge, “Three Latin Poems,” 243.

³³ Lapidge, *Cult of St Swithun*, 220–1.

³⁴ For more details, see Lapidge, *Cult of St Swithun*, 220–22. Likely copied at Canterbury, this manuscript preserves a notable collection of early

Boethian interest for Lantfred, but why should we presume that one of the books he entreated Dunstan to send might have been a copy of Boethius's *Consolation*?

Other copies may have been closer at hand, but Lantfred and Dunstan were friends, and he may have regretted leaving his personal copy behind. Both the *Carmen de libero arbitrio* and *Translatio et miracula* had testified to his intense interest in and strong familiarity with Boethius's prosimetrum. In the *Translatio et miracula*, for instance, Lantfred quotes from 2p1, 3p9, 5p3, and 5p6.³⁵ I propose that Lantfred had brought a favored copy of the *Consolation* with him to Winchester, left it there on the assumption that the text would be available to him at Fleury, and then requested its return after the 974 fire destroyed the Fleurisian copy—or copies—of Boethius's work.

A potential candidate survives for this Wintonian *Consolation*: MS. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 6401, produced in the last quarter of the tenth century.³⁶ Its provenance has not previously been wholly understood. Rosalind C. Love notes that the manuscript was either “taken from England to Fleury, or more likely written at Fleury by an English scribe.”³⁷ Both

correspondence, including many of Alcuin's letters. See Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, 293–94 (MS 368).

³⁵ For verbal echoes, see Lapidge, *Cult of St Swithun*, 252–333, notes 17, 140, 180, 203, and 268.

³⁶ This manuscript is Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, 639–40 (MS 886). In addition to Boethius's *Consolation* and *De institutione arithmetica*, it also includes copies of Radulf of Liège and Ragimbold of Cologne's letters on geometry, the *Epitaphium Gauzlini*, and an incomplete copy of *Oratio animae poenitentis*.

³⁷ Rosalind C. Love, “The Latin Commentaries on Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae* from the 9th to the 11th Centuries,” in *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, ed. Noel Harold Kaylor and Philip Edward Phillips

possibilities seem tenable here. Lat. 6401 could be one of the missing books Lantfred wanted back—either after he himself had brought it to England from Fleury ca. 970 or after he had copied or else newly acquired it during his stay in Winchester. It could similarly be a copy, which Lantfred made soon after his return from England and the subsequent return of his books. Either way, MS lat. 6401 was at Fleury by the beginning of the eleventh century.

The manuscript has puzzled art historians, since it seems to have been produced by one person who was both Frankish and English.

Paleographically, it must have been copied by someone trained on the Continent. Nevertheless, MS Lat. 6401 contains three miniatures in the same hand, which must have been drawn by an Englishman—and, in particular, an Englishman trained at one of the early Benedictine Reform monasteries that practiced the bold style of drawing now known as the trademark mode of the Winchester School.³⁸ Lantfred himself provides a likely contender: a French monk who first took orders at Fleury, later studied under Æthelwold at Winchester, and finally returned to his own monastery, bringing with him the

(Leiden: Brill, 2012), 75–134, at 93.

³⁸ See, for instance, Francis Wormald, *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), 70, 73–4, and plates 13 and 14; and her “The ‘Winchester School’ Before St. Æthelwold” in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. Peter Clemons and Katherine Hughes (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 305–13, at 311–12. The heavy borders and rich ornamentation of Æthelwold’s *Benedictional* (London, British Library, Add. MS 49598) are striking examples of the Winchester style. For further details, see Robert Desman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); and *The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold: A Masterpiece of Anglo-Saxon Art, A Facsimile*, ed. Andrew Prescott (London: British Library, 2002).

Winchester style, and demonstrating just how wide-reaching Winchester's style of artistic production really was. Furthermore, MS lat. 6401 was copied (possibly at Fleury) in the last quarter of the tenth century—either just before Lantfred left for England, during his time at Winchester, or just when he would have completed his stint with Æthelwold's *familia* and returned to his home monastery.

There are other surviving manuscripts of mixed Fleurisian and English provenance. To provide but one example with striking similarities to MS lat. 6401, Michael Lapidge notes that London, British Library, MS. Harley 2506 “was evidently written at Fleury, but . . . was decorated by a late tenth-century English illustrator, either at Fleury or in England”—perhaps providing another example of a Lantfredian cross-Channel production.³⁹ In his illuminating study of Fleurisian palimpsests, Papahagi notes that “the exchanges of books and the circulation of scribes and illuminators between English centers and Fleury were so multifarious that it is not uncommon to find drawings by English masters in books copied at Fleury by local monks,”⁴⁰ but Lantfred himself bears witness to at least one scribe-cum-illustrator who was *both* English master and local monk, suggesting a cross-Channel intelligentsia who deftly blended English and Frankish styles in their pursuit of beautiful books.

³⁹ Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 51. See also Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature*, 2:399; and Fritz Saxl and Hans Meier, *Catalogue of Astronomical and Mythological Illuminated Manuscripts*, III: *Manuscripts in English Libraries*, ed. Harry Bober (London: Warburg Institute, 1953), 1:157–60.

⁴⁰ Papahagi, “Anglo-Saxon Palimpsest,” 24.

Furthermore, Lantfred had written the *Carmen de libero arbitrio* between 975 and 984, so the poem and the letter requesting the return of his books were likely written in close succession, as noted above. Aaron J. Kleist has narrowed the window for the composition of the poem even further, concluding that “the *Carmen* may be dated to the term of Æthelwold’s bishopric and perhaps specifically to Lantfred’s residence at Winchester around the years 970–3.”⁴¹ In speculating that one of the books Lantfred most desired the return of was Boethius’s *Consolation*, this essay offers a slightly more linear order of events, all presumably taking place sometime between 970 and 985, with ca. 1000 as the *terminus ante quem*. First, Lantfred wrote his Boethian verses in Winchester; he then returned to Fleury shortly thereafter, either arriving just before the fire or shortly thereafter and learning of its destruction only upon his arrival; noting the absence of consolatory reading matter, he quickly dashed off the letter, requesting the return of his copy of the *Consolation*; and, finally, he may have made an additional copy shortly thereafter, with Lat. 6401 preserving either the returned book or the new copy.

If this entire series of events were completed by the close of the 970s, then a Lantfredian *Consolation*—that is, a later manuscript modeled on MS lat. 6401, if not MS lat. 6401 itself—could have returned to England in the possession of Abbo, who sojourned to Ramsey Abbey in 985–7 before

⁴¹ Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, 127.

becoming abbot of Fleury upon his return to the Continent.⁴² At Ramsey, Abbo served as a mentor to Byrhtferth (ca. 970–ca. 1020), who himself became an important figure in late Anglo-Saxon letters. Moreover, while teaching and pursuing his own studies there, Abbo must have imported a large number of his own books to supplement the small fenland library, since Ramsey Abbey had only recently been established.⁴³ Lapidge has demonstrated that one of these books was likely a copy of the *Consolation*, from which Abbo quotes in his *Explanatio in calculo Victorii*, written in those years.⁴⁴ In those works produced just before and during his time at Ramsey, Abbo draws from a wide range of Boethius’s writings, including, of course, the *Consolation* as well as the *Commentarii in Ciceronis Topica*, *De institutione arithmetica*, *De institutione musica*, *De syllogismo hypothetico*,

⁴² Oswald, Archbishop of York (971–2), had only founded Ramsey Abbey in 966, using Fleury, where he had previously spent two years, as a model. Abbo’s stay there further cemented the relationship between the two monasteries. For further background on the connections between Fleury and England at this time, see L. Gougaud, “Les relations de l’abbaye de Fleury-sur-Loire avec la Bretagne armoricaine et les îles Britanniques (X et XI siècles),” *Mémoires de la Société d’Histoire et d’Archéologie de Bretagne* 3 (1992): 3–30; and L. Donnat, “Recherches sur l’influence de Fleury au Xe siècle,” in *Études ligériennes d’histoire et d’archéologie médiévales: Mémoires et exposés présentés à la Semaine d’études médiévales de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire du 3 au 10 juillet 1969*, ed. R. Loui (Auxerre: 1975), 165–74. For background on Abbo’s time at Ramsey, see A.M. Pedan’s introduction to his *Abbo of Fleury and Ramsey: Commentary on the Calculus of Victorius of Aquitaine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. xi–xv. For a near-contemporary biography, see *Aimoinus Floriacensis, Vita s. Abbonis*, in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, 139 (Paris, 1880).

⁴³ For an overview of Abbo’s trip to Ramsey, see Mostert, “Le séjour d’Abbon de Fleury à Ramsey,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartres* 144 (1986): 199–208.

⁴⁴ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 242–3.

*In librum Aristotelis Perihermeneias commentarii editio duplex, In Porphyrii Isagogen commentorum editio duplex, and the Opuscula sacra.*⁴⁵

Abbo was evidently devoted to Boethius's oeuvre, shared some of it with his students, and would have felt the lack of Boethian works in the library at Fleury. Indeed, he likely introduced both his English students, including Byrhtferth, and his Frankish students and subordinates (perhaps including Lantfred, whom he may have taught as a young monk) to the *Consolation*.⁴⁶ Lapidge has demonstrated that Byrhtferth himself "shows comprehensive knowledge of Boethius, *De consolazione Philosophiae*, which he quotes throughout his hagiographical and historical writings"—an interest perhaps cultivated by his early teacher, Abbo.⁴⁷ Of course, Lantfred was heavily invested in the text as well and likely returned to it throughout his life.

In short, Boethius's *Consolation* may have arrived in England from the Continent ca. 900, but it did not stop moving—its travels demonstrating not only the interconnectivity of late tenth-century monastic centers in England

⁴⁵ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 242–3.

⁴⁶ Pierre Riché includes Lantfred in a list of Abbo's students in his *Abbon de Fleury: Un moine savant et combatif (vers 950–1004)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 74–6. For an analysis of Boethian influence on an additional student-teacher monastic network, see Ann W. Astell's essay in this volume.

⁴⁷ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 125. Lapidge argues that "as authors of the later Anglo-Saxon period such as Byrhtferth begin to attract more scholarly attention, the role played by Abbo of Fleury in the establishment and redirection of scientific learning will come into clearer focus." Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 126.

Warmest thanks to Christopher Baswell, who first introduced me to Boethius's *Consolation*; to Roberta Frank, who taught me that there were two Old English versions; and to Patricia Dailey, who showed me how to read them all.

and on the Continent but also the enduring importance of Boethius's Latin text in the century after it was first translated into English. This brief essay has mapped two potential trajectories of manuscripts crossing and re-crossing the Channel between the sibling houses of Fleury and Winchester, but much of the circulation history remains to be written. Amidst fires and floods, new foundations and moldering old libraries, Boethius's masterpiece continued to circulate and inspire, whether at Winchester, at Fleury, at Ramsey, or beyond.