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## ‘Eall swylce þu cwæde’: Translation and Imitation in the Old English *Judgement Day II*

This essay posits a new explanation for the placement of a perplexing second-person address in the introduction to the Old English *Judgement Day II*. I argue that the poet deliberately highlights and problematizes the act of translation from Bede’s *De die iudicii*, providing the Old English speaker with a poetic identity of his own even as Bede’s authoritative voice is retained. Bede’s second-person address to Acca is therefore echoed with all its original intent, but is simultaneously directed at Bede himself. It is likely that this method finds its roots in an Augustinian mode of conversion narrative which has the polemical advantage of inserting its narrator into a broader Christian tradition. I also demonstrate that the approach to translation in *Judgement Day II*, while in many ways unique within the known corpus of Old English verse, finds stylistic parallels in Alfredian prose translations in which the translator imposes self-referential meaning upon the existing textual content.

The Old English poem known as *Judgement Day II* is, by vernacular standards, a remarkably close translation of its Latin source. The poem’s rubric in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201 (hereafter CCCC 201) is decisive in its attribution of authorship to Bede: ‘*Incipit versvs Bede Presbiter. De die iudicii*’ (‘Here begins Bede’s poem *On Judgement Day*’).<sup>1</sup> It would appear unsurprising, then, that the verse which follows is effectively a faithful rendering of Bede, insofar as the alliterative demands of Old English verse permit; as Caie explains, the typical approach throughout the poem is to ‘convey the sense of the [Latin] hexameter in the first half-lines of two alliterative lines and to fill in the second half-lines with intensifiers and synonyms’.<sup>2</sup> This reluctance to elaborate substantively upon the source is particularly notable within a poetic tradition that tends to favour a more innovative approach. The *Phoenix*-poet, for example, though citing Job as an authoritative source, asserts himself as the ultimate composer of the verse: ‘Ne wene þæs ænig ælda cynnes / þæt ic lyge-wordum leoð somnige / write woð-cræfte’ (‘Let no one believe that I am composing my poem and writing my verse with lying words’, ll. 546-8a)<sup>3</sup>—a claim to authorship which is justified as he proceeds to expand significantly and inventively upon his primary Latin source, Lactantius’ *De aue phoenix*.<sup>4</sup> The *Judgement Day II* poet’s comparably meticulous approach to translation has been frequently disparaged by critics; Steen, considering *Judgement*

*Day II* within the wider tradition of ‘Latinized’ Old English verse, describes the *Judgement Day II* poet’s technique as ‘unimaginatively faithful’,<sup>5</sup> while Malone concurs that the poem demonstrates ‘some expansion of the source but more commonly a mere effort to reproduce in full the thoughts there expressed’.<sup>6</sup> Caie’s response to the *Judgement Day II* poet’s effort is less reductive, but he nevertheless accords that ‘such faithfulness to the source [is] rather unusual in Old English poetry’.<sup>7</sup>

A substantial expansion of the introduction in the vernacular poem, nine lines to Bede’s three, is the greatest exception to this rule of accuracy, and as such has attracted particular critical attention. The general scene—a speaker, sitting alone and surrounded by nature, recalls his transgressions in life and anticipates Judgement Day—provides in essence a duplication of its source, but the poet also elaborates upon Bede’s natural scene, expanding the single ‘arboris’ (‘tree’)<sup>8</sup> into a ‘holte’ (‘wood’, l. 2b), and adding elements of his own, such as the theologically suggestive ‘wæterburnan’ (‘streams of water’, l. 3a). Caie suggests that these additions may have been intended to clarify the spiritual significance of the scene to a ‘lay audience’ on whom the symbolism might otherwise have been lost.<sup>9</sup> The expanded introduction, then, would serve primarily to augment what was already present in the original poem rather than to change its intrinsic meaning, if not for the presence of two half-lines which merit particular consideration on account of having no verbal or thematic parallels in the Latin introduction: ‘eal swa ic secge’ (‘just as I say’, l. 4b) and ‘eall swylce þu cwæde’ (‘just as you said’, l. 12a). The use in the latter phrase of the second-person address ‘þu’ has provoked considerable debate with regards to its ambiguous referent, but two theories dominate the discussion. The first is that ‘þu’ refers to Bede himself, the proclaimed author of the *Versus de die iudicii*.<sup>10</sup> This theory does much to account for the structure of the poem’s introduction, shaped by the parallelism of ‘eal swa ic secge’ and ‘eall swylce þu cwæde’. If ‘þu’ addresses the author of the poem’s source, the ‘ic secge’/‘þu cwæde’ dichotomy divides the poem between what the first-person speaker is ‘saying’ in the poem’s introduction, and what Bede ‘said’ in his original verse. In other words, while the contemplative verse (l. 26 onwards)

is Bede's, the introduction is the vernacular poet's own. The poem's introductory deviation from its source is therefore justified by the narration of self-experience (that which 'ic secge'), which is comparable to Bede's (that which Bede 'cwæde'), rather than being a direct translation of it. This likeness of experience incites him suddenly to recall Bede's verse and reflect on similar themes of apocalypse and reform:

Ða ic færinga, forht and unrot,  
 þas unhyrlican fers onhefde mid sange  
 (eall swylce þu cwæde) synna gemunde,  
 lifes leahtra ... (ll. 10-13a)

(Then, suddenly, afraid and despairing,  
 I raised up in song this frightening poem  
 (just as you said), remembered my sins,  
 The vices of my life ...)

The rubrication of 'Ða' in CCCC 201 would appear to lend weight to this argument, as, Steen notes, '[the] coloured capital ... indicate[s] the importance attached to the logically disconnected response'.<sup>11</sup> The 'logical disconnect' is the sudden recollection, prompted by similitude, of Bede's apocalyptic anxiety. It is possible to interpret the poet's repeated use of 'gemunde' (l. 12b, 21a) as polysemous, suggesting both the proclaimed recollection of his own transgressions ('synna gemunde')—an act of remembrance translated directly from the Latin verse ('utpote commemorans scelerum commissa meorum'; 'remembering, as it were, the sins of my evil deeds and the stains of my life', l. 6)—as well as the recollection of the aforesaid verse and its instruction. In any case, the speaker's reference to 'þas unhyrlican fers'—a parallel of Bede's 'carmina praetristi' ('doleful songs', l. 5)—immediately precedes the allusion to that which 'þu cwæde', all but confirming a Bedan address. From l. 26, the 'recitation' of Bede's verse commences ('Nu ic eow, æddran...'; 'Now I beg you all, tear ducts...') and, accordingly, the poem adopts a faithful mode of translation thenceforth. The interpretation of 'þu' as an address to Bede consequently does much to clarify the poem's 'ic secge'/'þu cwæde' dichotomy; what remains unclear, however, is the poet's justification for the use of an intimate *second-person* address to the venerable—and surely deceased—Bede.

The second theory as to the referent of ‘þu’ offers an explanation for this use of the second-person. Whitbread suggests that the *Judgement Day II* poet was keen to demonstrate his knowledge of the Latin source, and accordingly inserted an adaptation of a line from Bede’s epilogue—a line which also contains a second-person address, in this case directed at Bishop Acca of Hexham:<sup>12</sup>

En, tua iussa sequens, cecini tibi carmina flendi;  
tu tua fac promissa, precor, sermone fideli  
commendans precibus Christo modo meque canentem. (ll. 158-60)

(Look: following your requests I have sung these songs of weeping for you;  
you keep your promises, I beseech you, made in trustworthy speech,  
now commending me the poet in your prayers to Christ.)

Lapidge, in his study of the medieval transmission of the *De die iudicii*, asserts that this epilogue constitutes an ‘authentic part’ of Bede’s verse.<sup>13</sup> Interpreting l. 12a of *Judgement Day II* as a translation rather than an authorial insertion therefore does much to explain the poet’s choice of phrasing, yet it leaves unexplained the parallel of l. 4b and l. 12a in the Old English poem. Whitbread acknowledges but does not elaborate upon this parallel, and Steen, who appears to accept Whitbread’s theory as to the origin of ‘þu cwæde’, provides a rather reductive interpretation of ‘ic segce’, suggesting that it ‘recalls meaningless bywords found in sermons’.<sup>14</sup> It seems unwise to dismiss the significance of the ‘ic segce’/‘þu cwæde’ dichotomy, which appears too carefully constructed to be unintentional, and provides a great deal of clarity to the structure of the poem’s introduction. I propose, however, that the two theories are far from mutually exclusive; the poet may well be appropriating Bede’s words even as he uses them to directly address the priest.

## I: OLD ENGLISH MODES OF TRANSLATION

Problematically, the *Judgement Day II* poet’s assertion of his own presence comes after the poem has already been attributed to Bede in its manuscript rubric. The extent to which this rubric can be considered an integral part of the poem is not without question, but, as Caie notes, it appears in the manuscript in green ink, generally used in CCC 201 to signify the beginning of a new text.<sup>15</sup> The

incipit, moreover, is not only copied from Bede's manuscript rubric,<sup>16</sup> but also quotes directly from the first lines of his poem:

Incipit versvs Bede Presbiteri. De die iudicii: Inter florigeras fecvndi cespites herbas flamine ventorum resonantibvs vndique ramis.

(Here begins Bede's poem On Judgement Day: 'Among the flowering grasses of the fertile earth with the branches echoing on every side from the wind's breath')

This is not a translation, but a direct quotation; the poem which begins 'Inter florigeras' is, we are informed, unequivocally Bede's. By providing this quotation in the Latin, however, the incipit draws attention to *Judgement Day II*'s status as a translation, and the poet's role as a mediator between texts.

The language in the poem's framework as a whole, in fact, works to undermine its ostensibly Bedan authorship. The text in CCCC 201 concludes with the following colophon:

Her endað þeos boc þe hatte inter florigeras. ðæt is on englisc betwux blowende þe to godes rice farað and hu ða þrowiað þe to helle farað.

(Here ends the book that is called 'inter florigeras'; that is in English 'between the blossoming ones who go to God's kingdom and how those endure who go to hell'.)

This colophon further emphasizes the role of the translator, as it parades the very act of translation ('ðæt is on englisc'), thus foregrounding a level of removal from the original text 'versus Bede': that which is now 'on englisc' is, in some sense, not what it was before. The notion of translation as transformation is further accentuated by the quotation of choice. Bede's introduction—'inter florigeras' ('among flowers')<sup>17</sup>—is cited in both the rubric and the colophon, but *Judgement Day II* does *not* begin with flowers; the closest translation of Bede's opening line within the 'body' of the Old English poem appears in line 5 ('Eac þær wyn-wyrta weoxon and bleowon'; 'Pleasant plants also grew and blossomed there'). The mere dislocation of this line would be innocuous enough, if the poem's framing were not so insistent that *Bede's* poem begins with flowers. The vernacular poem's introductory line instead emphasizes the speaker's solitude: 'Hwæt! Ic ana sæt' ('Lo! I sat alone', l. 1a). The very concept of solitude establishes a decidedly individual presence—another

means, perhaps, by which the poet forges an identity outside of Bede's persona. The transformation of the flowers is not limited to their dislocation, however, as the Old English flora in line 5 translate more accurately as 'plants'. This discrepancy is highlighted by the colophon's translation—'ðæt is on englisc betwyx blowende'—which provides a considerably closer rendering of Bede's line, and one that accentuates the inaccuracy of the poem's earlier translation. The additional clarification ('þe to godes rice farað and hu ða þrowiað þe to helle farað') highlights an understanding of Bede's flowers not only in their literal sense, but also in their symbolic significance, as Huppé observes: 'The rubricator seems to understand [that] the flowers signify for [Bede] men on earth, going to eternal reward or punishment'.<sup>18</sup> This astute translation and interpretation of Bede's verse in the colophon draws attention to the fact that the poem itself does *not* do so in the same manner—an inconsistency which serves to undermine the rubric's decisive ascription to Bede, and the status of the entire work as an accurate representation of the Latin verse.

As we have already seen, *Judgement Day II*'s relatively faithful approach to translation is unusual within the context of Old English verse tradition; we have also established, however, that this very accuracy also serves to draw attention to that which is *not* faithful to the Latin source, namely the speaker's distinction between his own voice and that of Bede. The precision with which the *Judgement Day II* poet distinguishes between that which 'ic secge' and that which Bede 'cwæde' is, to the best of my knowledge, unique in many respects within the known corpus of Old English verse. The *Phoenix*-poet, as seen above, asserts himself as the ultimate composer of his own verse, but while the *Judgement Day II* speaker's distinction between himself and Bede provides something closer to a comparison with *The Phoenix* than their respective approaches to translation would at first appear to suggest, at no point does the *Phoenix*-poet address or even directly acknowledge Lactantius in the manner of *Judgement Day II*'s address to Bede. Authorial asides also appear in Cynewulf's poetry, often comprising another kind of self-insertion:

Þus ic frod ond fus	þurh þæt fæcne hus
word-cræftum wæf	ond wundrum læs,



þragum þreodude      ond gebanc reodode ...

(Matured thus and inspired by this house of fakery  
have I composed and wonders have gathered,  
at times deliberated and sifted my thoughts...)¹⁹

Cynewulf's poetry, however, relies but loosely upon his Latin sources;<sup>20</sup> he therefore inserts his author-figure into a poem that is already very much his own, providing scant comparison with the *Judgement Day II* poet's authorial penetration of Bede's verse. On the other end of the scale, *Riddles* 35 and 40 of the Exeter Book provide the closest Old English verse equivalent to *Judgement Day II*'s particular translative methodology, presenting fairly literal translations of their respective sources, and utilizing a very similar technique of two alliterative lines for each Latin hexameter.<sup>21</sup> Their translation, however, is silent; their audience is given no suggestion of their respective Latin sources, let alone given any reason to consider their relationship with the source.

Though prosaic, the Old English translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* provides something more analogous to the *Judgement Day II* poet's particular method. For the most part, the Old English *Bede* provides the illusion of continuity, perhaps even more so than *Judgement Day II*; its audience is 'given no real reason to think of the text as a translation at all ... to all appearances, Bede speaks to the reader directly in Old English, with no translator mediating between the monk and his audience'.<sup>22</sup> Much like *Judgement Day II*, however, the acknowledgement of removal from the source is embedded in the text's self-commentary. The apologia of Bede's original preface reads:

Lectoremque suppliciter obsecro ut, siqua in his quae scripsimus aliter quam se ueritas habet posita reppererit, non hoc nobis inputet, qui, quod uera lex historiae est, simpliciter ea quae fama uulgante collegimus ad instructionem posteritatis litteris mandare studuimus.

(I humbly beg the reader, if he finds anything other than the truth set down in what I have written, not to impute it to me. For, in accordance with the principles of true history, I have simply sought to commit to writing what I have collected from common report, for the instruction of posterity.)<sup>23</sup>

The Old English apologia reads rather differently: '[and] þone leornere ic nu eadmodlice bidde [and] halsige, gif he hwæt ymbe ðis on oðre wisan gemete oððe gehyre, þæt he me þæt ne otwite'

(‘and now I humbly pray and ask, if the reader meet or hear anything from this work in a different way, that he not blame me’).<sup>24</sup> As Discenza notes, while the Latin version suggests that something ‘contrary to truth’ may be found in the text, the Old English version rather suggests that the reader might discover something that differs from other versions of the text; in other words, it is unclear whether the reader is ‘not to blame Bede for any mistakes he made, or not to blame Bede because differing reports do not indicate that *Bede* made a mistake’.<sup>25</sup> If this apologia was intended as the translator’s comment on *his* work, rather than Bede’s comment on *Bede’s* work, it ruptures the persona of Bede which the whole work assumes. Like *Judgement Day II*, it also highlights a level of removal from the work it ostensibly represents. The difference here is that the translator wishes—somewhat ironically, perhaps, as in providing his own disclaimer he deviates from the source—to provide an accurate representation of the text, but he admits the possibility of unlikeness, which is, to him, undesirable. In *Judgement Day II*, the poet insists that the texts are in essence the same (‘eall swylce þu cwæde’), even as he intentionally reworks the poem’s introduction.

The *Judgement Day II* poet’s awareness of his role as a translator, along with his willingness actively to exploit it, finds perhaps a closer analogue in Alfredian texts. Alfred’s method, famously described in the Preface to the *Pastoral Care*, was to translate his sources ‘hwilum word be worde, hwilum andgit of andgiete’ (‘sometimes word for word, sometimes sense for sense’).<sup>26</sup> It is not at all unlikely that the compiler of CCCC 201 was familiar with Alfred’s preface to the *Pastoral Care*. While the manuscript’s provenance is uncertain, the possibility of a Worcester origin has been suggested by many critics on account of its Wulfstanian content. It is notable, then, that the late ninth-century copy of Alfred’s preface in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 20 was sent to Worcester, and in the early eleventh century—around the time to which the earliest section of CCCC 201 has generally, albeit tentatively, been dated—Archbishop Wulfstan himself annotated the Hatton copy. As the text of *Judgement Day II* in CCCC 201 seems to have been copied from an exemplar, we cannot ascertain whether the original poet was familiar with Alfredian translations.<sup>27</sup>

Certainly, however, a similarly acute awareness of the translator's role as a mediator of texts pervades the Alfredian translations, including the Old English *Orosius*, for which there also exists manuscript evidence of production in Worcester.<sup>28</sup> This text is particularly notable in that it foregrounds the act of translation by making changes from its Latin source which—like the 'þu' of *Judgement Day II*, insofar as it is intended to *address* Bede in addition to citing him—are incongruous with the persona which the text assumes. So much is clear from the opening lines of *Orosius*: 'Ure ieldran ealne þisne ymbhwyrft þises middangeardes, cwæþ Orosius, swa swa Oceanus utan ymbligeþ, þone [mon] garsæcg hateð, on þreo todældon' ('our ancestors divided into three parts all of Middle Earth, said Orosius, around which Oceanus—which is called *garsecg*—lies outside').<sup>29</sup> Here, as Hurley observes, the poem openly translates the Latin *Oceanus* into the Old English 'garsecg'—the very same technique employed in *Judgement Day II*'s closing, 'ðæt is on englisc'. Unlike the 'florigeras' of the Old English poem, the translation here is unproblematic to the extent that it is accurate; however, much like 'þu', it places words into the mouth of the text's Latin persona that they would not—or could not—have 'cwæð', as the Latin *Orosius* would not have provided an Old English equivalent for *Oceanus*. It is significant that both texts use a similar 'cwæð'-construction to distinguish between the voice of the translator and the Latin persona he assumes—the moment, in other words, where the text 'draws the most attention to itself as a translation.'<sup>30</sup>

Of course, the incongruity of l. 12a of *Judgement Day II* does not stem solely from the impossibility of Bede's speech; on the contrary, it *is* his speech, but it has been appropriated by the poem's translator to mean something more than it originally did. This kind of composite meaning also has its parallels in *Orosius*, for example in Book III: 'For þon ic wolde geseccan, cwæð Orosius, hu Creca gewinn [angan], þe of Læcedemonia ðære byrg ærest onsteled wæs, and mid spellcwidum gemearcian' ('Therefore, I wish to say and mark in historical narratives, said Orosius,

how the war of the Greeks began, which was first raised from the city of Lacedemonia’).<sup>31</sup> Hurley’s observations are, once again, enlightening:

The most important words in this particular instance of the construction mark what the translator of the *Orosius* sees himself doing: in this history, he “wish[es] to say” (*wolde geseccan*) and also “mark with historical narratives” (*mid spellcwidum gemearcian*) the events of the past.<sup>32</sup>

The translator of *Orosius*, like our Old English poet, employs the very words of his text to comment on the text itself. A comparison with l. 4b of *Judgement Day II* is admittedly imperfect, as the *Orosius* translator does not go so far as to *address* his source, but it does suggest a motive for the self-referential nature of the former text. The translator’s appropriation of the *Orosius*-text serves to assert his identification with its purpose, as he sees his own intentions—the creation and transmission of historical narrative—mirrored in the speech of his Latin character.

In what manner, then, might the *Judgement Day II* poet see his own intentions mirrored in Bede’s address to Acca? The Latin dedication heralds the fact that the poem was written at Acca’s request, but it also had another function, as Darby elucidates: ‘It is significant that Bede chose to address his judgement day poem to Acca, a figure who had a high profile within Northumbria and [was] in a position to influence the behaviour of others.’<sup>33</sup> The *Judgement Day II* poet therefore has good reason to summon the figure of Bede with this very same purpose—to evoke a figure of authority and influence, and thereby supplement the text’s exemplary force. The ‘þu cwæde’ construction subsequently encompasses multiple layers of meaning. Firstly, as a direct quotation from Bede, it represents his direct address to Acca; secondly, its position within the introduction’s ‘ic segce’/‘þu cwæde’ structure also allows the Old English speaker to address Bede, thereby asserting his own presence within the poem. In its third purpose, the invocation of a sanctioned authority, the words belong to *both* speakers: their original purpose is reasserted in the direction of Bede, even as the text’s status as a translation allows Bede’s possession of the words to remain intact.

## II: IMITATION AND THE AUGUSTINIAN MODE

The *Judgement Day II* poet recognizes Bede's purpose as his own, and appropriates the address to Acca accordingly. However, it is also the shared *experience* of repentance and contemplative ascent that strengthens the Old English text's exemplary force. The depiction in both texts of the soul's address to the sinful body ('Hwæt ligst þu on horwe leahtrum afylled, / flæsc, mid synnum?'; 'Why, flesh, do you lie in filth, / filled with vices and sins?', ll. 77-8a) echoes an Augustinian conception of the divided self, with which Augustine himself struggles in Book VIII of his *Confessions* before his ultimate conversion to an ascetic life:

ita duae voluntates meae, una vetus, alia nova, illa carnalis, illa spiritalis, confligebant inter se atque discordando dissipabant animam meam.

(And so my two wills, one old, the other new, one physical, the other spiritual, were in conflict with one another and by their strife were shattering my soul.)<sup>34</sup>

Book VIII consciously and repeatedly depicts the act of conversion as imitative. Authoritative example is established from the outset as a powerful influential force:

deinde quod multis noti, multis sunt auctoritati ad salutem et multis praeceunt secuturis... (8.4.9)

(Furthermore, because they are known to many, they can influence many toward salvation and they lead the way for many to follow...)

Augustine further explains how he himself was moved by the influential power of conversion narratives: 'Sed ubi mihi homo tuus Simplicianus de Victorino ista narravit, exarsi ad imitandum' ('But when your servant Simplicianus recounted all this to me about Victorinus, I was on fire with enthusiasm to follow his example', 8.5.10). Later, Augustine's final 'conversion' closely resembles that of Ponticianus, which was relayed in great detail to Augustine by Ponticianus himself earlier in Book VIII. Perhaps most notably, Augustine's exposure to Paul's *Letter to the Romans*—the text by which he is ultimately converted—also occurs after he recalls how *Antony's* reading of a gospel text provided him with instruction, and Augustine, in his time of need, is inspired to follow suit

(8.12.29). Conversion, then, follows conversion: one account can resemble another, can be inspired by another, can lead to another.

Augustine's literary relationship with the *Romans* provides a particularly interesting parallel with the *Judgement Day II* poet's appropriation of Bede's speech. In 8.12.29, Augustine quotes candidly from the Pauline text as he recalls the exact words which incited his conversion:

"non in comessationibus et ebrietatibus, non in cubilibus et impudiciis, non in contentione et aemulatione, sed induite dominum Iesum Christum et carnis providentiam ne feceritis in concupiscentiis." nec ultra volui legere nec opus erat ...

("Not in partying and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and shamelessness, not in fighting and jealousy, but clothe yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh concerning its physical desires." I neither wanted nor needed to read further.)

The quotation is direct, and the words are attributed to their author, as here Augustine wishes to demonstrate the effect of reading from an exemplar. Elsewhere in the text, however, as Augustine reflects on his own bodily sins, he states: 'ego quidem in utroque, sed magis ego in eo quod in me approbavam quam in eo quod in me improbavam' ('I was enmeshed in both but more in the form of desire that I approved of in myself than in the one I disapproved of', 8.5.11). The sentiment, which Augustine evokes on several occasions throughout Book VIII, is drawn directly from Rom 7: 16-17.<sup>35</sup> The words, as much as those which moved Augustine to conversion, belong originally to Paul; here, however, Augustine makes the words his own. Seeing his own personal struggle mirrored in the writings of Paul, Augustine wishes to depict himself in the same position.<sup>36</sup> The words can therefore be his *as much as* they are Paul's on the basis of his identification with them. The implications of this appropriation extend far beyond the personal; by placing himself in Paul's position, Augustine integrates himself within a broader Christian tradition, as Fredriksen notes:

[Augustine] self-consciously presents his personal history as a model for his theology in the *Confessions*, and interprets his history in light of Paul's ... [He] thus places himself within the Pauline theological tradition ... Not incidentally, this has the added polemical advantage of affirming that the tradition of Paul, of the Church, and of Augustine are all one.<sup>37</sup>

The consolidation of conversion narratives throughout Book VIII serves to affirm and reaffirm a deeper truth; their accounts add up to more than the sum of their parts. Augustine's goal in creating

his own narrative is not simply to relay the events of his life and his conversion, but to portray conversion *itself*, and in order to do so he must integrate himself into a much larger tradition. The effect of Augustine's integration with these exemplary texts, of course, is that the *Confessions* itself becomes an exemplary narrative.

Augustine's identification with the Pauline text, and his subsequent appropriation of its content, exemplify a traditional model for the *Judgement Day II* poet's repossession of Bede's address to Acca. Like Augustine, the *Judgement Day II* poet shares a common purpose with his source in evoking an authoritative figure, but he also emulates Bede—and, indeed, Augustine—in *becoming* an authoritative figure, by virtue of shared experience and subsequent reiteration. This very act is embodied in the poem's development, as the perspective moves from the individual speaker, lamenting his own sins ('Ic ondræde me eac dom þone miclan / for man-dædum minum on eorþan'; 'I also dread the great judgement, / because of my sins on earth', ll. 15-6), to a universal catechisation of mankind ('Ic bidde, man, þæt þu gemune hu micel bið se broga ...'; 'I beg you, man, that you remember how great the terror will be ...', l. 123). Even so, the poem is constructed from the outset as an edifying resource: the narrator's sins remain unspecified, inviting an 'emotional identification' with the narrator designed to inspire imitation.<sup>38</sup> This invitation to analogous contemplation is, of course, drawn directly from Bede's poem. Having imitated Bede's contemplative ascent, the *Judgement Day II* poet has become, as it were, the next link in the chain of conversion.

It is surely no coincidence that encouragement of virtuous imitation forms the thematic premise of several of *De die iudicii*'s literary sources. Notably, the object of recommendation is frequently Augustine himself. Robert Getz observes that a section of the dedication to Acca from which the *Judgement Day II* poet draws 'eall swylce þu cwæde' is itself indebted to a poem contained in a letter from Paulinus of Nola to a young Licentius.<sup>39</sup> Paulinus, afraid that Licentius is concerning himself too much with worldly things, encourages him to instead follow the exemplary

path of his most venerable mentor, Augustine.<sup>40</sup> It seems unlikely that the thematic parallel—a warning against placing worldly things before the spiritual—was lost on Bede, and we may assume that he drew upon this particular source deliberately; it is unclear, however, whether the *Judgement Day II* poet was also aware of this source, as he does not cite the relevant line from Bede’s dedication. Bede may also have drawn upon Licentius’ self-explanatory composition, *Carmen ad Augustinum*, with which Getz finds verbal echoes in lines 15 and 98 of the *De die iudicii*.<sup>41</sup> It would appear that Bede also borrowed the preceding image of beating one’s breast (*De die iudicii*, l. 14) from the *Carmen ad Augustinum*, but he amends Licentius’ ‘palmis’ (‘palms’) to ‘pugnis’ (‘fists’); once again, it is unfortunately unclear whether or not the *Judgement Day II* poet had unmediated exposure to this text, as here he maintains Bede’s alteration: ‘mid fyste’ (‘my fist’).<sup>42</sup> That the *Judgement Day II* poet was capable of recognizing and even expanding upon Bede’s sources is, however, evident: Steen notes, for example, that the vernacular poet, having identified Virgilian echoes in Bede’s depiction of Hell, intensifies the allusion by personifying ‘Sleep’ (‘and se earma flyhð uncræftiga slæp / sleac mid sluman slincan on hinder’; ‘And miserable, weak sleep, / slack with slumber, will flee, slinking away’, ll. 241-2).<sup>43</sup> Regardless, direct influence need not be established to assert that both of the Judgement Day poems are inherently Augustinian. The conception of the ‘divided self’ is of course readily apparent in the texts, and Bede’s thoughts on Doomsday certainly relied heavily upon Augustinian doctrine.<sup>44</sup> The texts draw from the same patristic stock imagery: the floods of tears which precede Augustine’s conversion (8.12.28) epitomize the very act of penitence that is so desperately desired by the Doomsday poets: ‘Nu ic eow, æddran, ealle bidde / þæt ge wyl-springas wel ontynan’ (‘Now I beg you all, tear ducts, quickly open your springs completely’, ll. 26-8). These thematic parallels reaffirm the very traditions upon which the exemplary force of the texts depend.

Manuscript evidence suggests that English knowledge of the *Confessions* was severely limited—or perhaps even lost—from early in the ninth century, and only began to witness a



resurgence in the second half of the eleventh century.<sup>45</sup> While the exact date of *Judgement Day II* is uncertain, Caie suggests that the poem may have been composed shortly before the earliest section of CCCC 201, for which he posits an early eleventh century date; other suggestions range roughly between 950 and 1050.<sup>46</sup> A date anywhere within this period makes the possibility of the *Judgement Day II* poet having drawn unmediated inspiration from the *Confessions* slight. It does, however, place the poem firmly within the context of the Benedictine Reform, and indeed *Judgement Day II* was preceded in CCCC 201 by a copy of the *Regularis Concordia*, a code of monastic observance which expounds the Rule of Saint Benedict. The poet, then, may well have been familiar with Benedictine practices of reading, which uphold much of Augustine's teaching on the matter.<sup>47</sup> The Rule of Saint Benedict outlines the practice of monastic *meditatio* and advises that 'reading properly so-called ... is prolonged during the other occupations by the exercise of "meditation"'.<sup>48</sup> There is some variance in medieval writings regarding precisely what was entailed in the practice of *meditatio*, but, as Robertson explains, both classical and early monastic *meditatio* involved the memorization of text through repetition and recitation, as well as rumination upon the text away from the book ('submoto libro').<sup>49</sup> Having undergone these processes, the reader may familiarize himself with the text to the point of 'ethical internalization', integrating its teachings into his own experience much as Augustine does with the *Romans*. By committing the texts to his memory, and subsequently 'plac[ing] them in the context of one's own experience', the reader 're-authors' the text, Robertson explains, making it his own.<sup>50</sup> The faculty of memory, or *memoria*, was therefore understood to be the agent in the activity of *meditatio*, and as such the importance of committing text to memory is emphasized not only in the Benedictine codes of monastic observance, but indeed throughout medieval literature; as Carruthers observes, 'perhaps no advice is as common in medieval writing on the subject'.<sup>51</sup> The *Judgement Day II* poet appears to understand the importance attached to *memoria* in the processes of reading, as he expands upon Bede's patterns of repetition on the subject of memory.<sup>52</sup> As noted previously, the poet's repeated use of 'gemunde'

can therefore be interpreted both as the speaker remembering his sins, as translated from Bede's verse, and as the recollection of the aforementioned verse and its teachings. Within its Benedictine context, the emphasis on 'remembering' in the poem therefore models a long-established tradition in the medieval activity of reading.

### III - CONCLUSIONS

Reflecting on the practice of good Christian reading, Gregory I advises that 'we ought to transform what we read into our very selves, so that when our mind is stirred by what it hears, our life may concur by practising what has been heard'.<sup>53</sup> The adoption of a literary persona, such as that of the Venerable Bede, implies by its very nature a transformation of the (literary) self into the text, as the text must to some extent assume the form of that which has preceded it. As we have seen, however, the *Judgement Day II* poet simultaneously succeeds in his Gregorian duty of transforming his Latin source into his 'very self'. The exegetical advantage of a reader immersing his own self within a text is further expounded in a favourite metaphor of Gregory's:

A man who surveys a forest from above cannot see how deep are the valleys or how extensive are the plains within it; but if he begins to walk through it, he quickly realizes that there is much he had not previously seen.<sup>54</sup>

It is incidentally rather apt that the *Judgement Day II* poet chooses to fashion himself a 'holte' ('wood', l. 2b) from Bede's singular 'arboris' ('tree'). The speaker therefore resides, as it were, both within the Gregorian 'forest' of Bede's verse, where he finds valuable instruction, and in a woodland of his own creation, from which he can provide others with the same.

While critics have consistently seemed reluctant to praise the poem as a whole, *Judgement Day II*'s introductory scene at least has received a certain degree of credit for the poet's address to Bede, and for the luxury this affords him in allowing him to clarify the symbolic import of the scene to an unschooled audience, if this was indeed his intention. A select few have taken this praise a step further: J. S. Westlake rather controversially asserts the 'imaginative gift of the translator'.<sup>55</sup>

This, I think, overstates the case—or rather misinterprets it. The introduction, as we have seen, represents little thematic deviation from the source, but even if its expansion aids in providing clarity, the very possibility of this expansion only arises as a consequence of the speaker’s self-assertion. Without the appropriation of his source content and the ‘ic secge’/‘þu cwæde’ dichotomy which results, the speaker-poet, trapped within his Bedan persona, would possess little justification for elaborating upon his source.

The poet’s real, innovative ‘gift’ lies not in the act of translation *itself*—the linguistic adaptation of the Latin into Old English, in which the poet is so unusually meticulous—but rather in his vision of what it means for him to *be* a translator, and how he can use it to his literary advantage. The appearance of that ambiguous line, ‘eall swylce þu cwæde’—the moment at which, just as in the Old English *Orosius*, the division between the translator and the translated is most clearly delineated—is the very same moment at which the poet’s words are most conspicuously lifted from his source. The advantage that this repossession of text lends to the poem’s status as an exemplary narrative attests to a level of literary sophistication with which the poet has never, until now, been ascribed.

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<sup>1</sup> Graham D. Caie, *The Old English Poem ‘Judgement Day II’* (Cambridge, 2000), 84-5. All further references to the Old English *Judgement Day II* are from this edition and line numbers are provided parenthetically within the text. I do not wish to elide the critical debate as to whether Bede is the true author of the *Versus de die iudicii*, as the suggestion of Alcuinian authorship is not without evidence (see Patrizia Lendinara, ‘Alcuino e il De die iudicii’, *Pan*, 18-19 (2001), 303-24 for Alcuin’s literary reliance on the poem). Robert Getz has also defended the case for Alcuin’s authorship persuasively, based on a close analysis of the text’s style and sources (Robert Getz, ‘The Style, Sources, and Authorship of De die iudicii’ (unpublished paper, The University of Toronto)). I am extremely grateful to Dr Getz for granting me permission to cite his paper in this essay. Nevertheless, as CCC 201 attributes the verse to Bede, and in concordance with general scholarly consensus, I will throughout this essay assume Bedan authorship. As Michael Lapidge (ed.), *Bede’s Latin Poetry (Oxford Medieval Texts)* (Oxford, 2019), 41, has recently noted, the dedication of

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the *Versus de die iudicii* to Bishop Acca of Hexham, found in no fewer than twenty-three of the manuscripts which contain the poem, would indeed suggest that Bede—a close friend of Acca—was the poem’s author.

<sup>2</sup> Caie, *The Old English Poem*, 42

<sup>3</sup> Janie Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity: The Adaptation of Latin Rhetoric in Old English Poetry* (Toronto, 2008), 39

<sup>4</sup> C. A. Jones (ed.), *Old English Shorter Poems, Volume I, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 43

<sup>5</sup> Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity*, 140

<sup>6</sup> Kemp Malone, ‘The Old English Period’, in A. C. Baugh (ed.), *A Literary History of England* (New York, 1948), 81

<sup>7</sup> Caie, *The Old English Poem*, 42

<sup>8</sup> Lapidge, *Bede’s Latin Poetry*, 158-9. All further quotations from Bede’s *De die iudicii* are from this edition and line numbers are provided parenthetically.

<sup>9</sup> Caie, *The Old English Poem*, 58

<sup>10</sup> See Caie, *The Old English Poem*, 109. Caie defends the theory that ‘þu’ addresses Bede but also provides a critical summary of some less popular theories, including the identification of the referent of ‘þu’ as God, and the idea that the ‘I’ and ‘you’ represent soul and body, as ‘[the] sinful body could be recalling an earlier experience when his soul begged him to repent and tell others of his conversion’.

<sup>11</sup> Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity*, 97

<sup>12</sup> Leslie Whitbread, ‘The Old English Poem Judgement Day II and its Latin Source’, *Philological Quarterly*, 45 (1966), 635-56 (648)

<sup>13</sup> Michael Lapidge, ‘Bede and the *Versus de die iudicii*’, in Paul Gerhard Schmidt (ed.), *Nova de Veteribus* (Berlin, 2004), 103-11

<sup>14</sup> Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity*, 78

<sup>15</sup> Caie, *The Old English Poem*, 8

<sup>16</sup> See Lapidge, *Bede’s Latin Poetry*, 158, for a list of rubrics of the *Versus de die iudicii* which allude to Bede’s authorship in the same manner.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Felix Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine’s Influence on Old English Poetry* (New York, 1959), 88

<sup>18</sup> Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry*, 88

<sup>19</sup> Richard North, Joe Allard, and Patricia Gillies (eds), *Longman Anthology of Old English, Old Icelandic, and Anglo-Norman Literatures* (London, 2014), 331

<sup>20</sup> See Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity*, 185, for a list of Cynewulf’s likely Latin sources for his poetry.

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- <sup>21</sup> Whitbread, 'The Old English Poem', 642
- <sup>22</sup> Nicole Guenther Discenza, 'The Old English Bede and the construction of Anglo-Saxon authority', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 31 (2002), 69-80 (72)
- <sup>23</sup> B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), 6-7
- <sup>24</sup> Discenza, 'The Old English Bede', 74
- <sup>25</sup> Discenza, 'The Old English Bede', 74
- <sup>26</sup> Discenza, 'The Old English Bede', 70.
- <sup>27</sup> On CCCC 201 and its text, see M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912), 485; C. H. Turner, *Early Worcester Manuscripts* (Oxford, 1916), lvii; E. V. K. Dobbie (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems* (New York, 1942), lxix-lxxx; and Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), 279. See also Caie, *The Old English Poem*, 7-9; Caie, *The Old English Poem*, 6, 10. On MS Hatton 20 at Worcester, see Malcolm Godden, 'The Alfredian Project and its Aftermath: Rethinking the Literary History of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 162 (2008), 93-122 (93).
- <sup>28</sup> London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. I, which contains an eleventh century copy of the Old English *Orosius*, has also been linked to Worcester: see Mary Swan, 'London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. I', in Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne (eds), *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220* (pubd online November 2010) <<https://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.BL.Tibe.B.i.htm>> accessed 20 December 2019
- <sup>29</sup> Mary Kate Hurley, 'Alfredian Temporalities: Time and Translation in the Old English *Orosius*', *JEGP*, 112 (2013), 405-32 (412)
- <sup>30</sup> Hurley, 'Alfredian Temporalities', 409.
- <sup>31</sup> Hurley, 'Alfredian Temporalities', 421
- <sup>32</sup> Hurley, 'Alfredian Temporalities', 421
- <sup>33</sup> Peter Darby, 'Apocalypse and Reform in Bede's *De die iudicii*', in Matthew Gabriele and James T. Palmer (eds), *Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London, 2018), 100
- <sup>34</sup> Carolyn J. B. Hammond (ed.), *Augustine Confessions I: Books 1-8* (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 374-5. All further references to this text are from this edition.
- <sup>35</sup> *Douay-Rheims* (pubd online March 2006) <[www.drbo.org](http://www.drbo.org)> accessed 20 February 2020: 'si autem, quod nolo, illud facio, consentio legi quoniam bona. nunc autem iam non ego operor illud, sed, quod habitat in me peccatum' ('If then I

do that which I will not, I consent to the law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.’).

<sup>36</sup> See James J. O’Donnell, *Augustine Confessions: Commentary on Books 8-13* (Oxford, 1992), 34. O’Donnell notes that Augustine uses this passage for a similar purpose at 8.5.10 and 8.10.22.

<sup>37</sup> Paula Fredriksen, ‘Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective Self’, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 37 (1986), 3-34 (24-5)

<sup>38</sup> Darby, ‘Apocalypse and Reform’, 103

<sup>39</sup> Getz, ‘Style, Sources, and Authorship’, 11-12. Getz points out the parallel between ‘Incolumem mihi te Christus, carissime frater, / protegat ...’ (*De die iudicii*, ll. 156-7) and ‘Incolumem mihi te, fili carissime, Christus / annuat ...’ (Paulinus of Nola, *Carmen epist. 8 insertum*, ll. 105-6).

<sup>40</sup> W. Hartel (ed.), *Sancti Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani Epistulae* (Vienna, 1999). On this point, it is worth noting that Paulinus was introduced to Augustine’s works by Alpius, who plays an important role in Augustine’s conversion in Book VIII of the *Confessions*. It even possible that Paulinus and Augustine’s mutual friendship with Alypius played a role in the inception of Augustine’s *Confessions*; see Kim Paffenroth and Robert Peter Kennedy, eds., *A Reader’s Companion to Augustine’s Confessions* (KY: Westminster Knox Press, 2003), p. 97.

<sup>41</sup> Getz, ‘Style, Sources, and Authorship’, 14; cf., for example, ‘Membra solo sternam meritosque ciebo dolores’ (l. 15, *De die iudicii*), and ‘Sternite membra solo meritosque ciete dolores’ (l. 49, Licentius, *Carmen ad Augustinum*).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. ‘contundite pectora palmis, / sternite membra solo meritosque ciete dolores’ (‘beat your breast with your palms, prostrate yourselves on the ground, recall the deserved pains you have suffered’; see Maximilian Zelzner (ed.), *De carmine Licentii ad Augustinum* (Arnsberg, 1915), p. 60); ‘pugnis rea pectora, uel dum / membra solo sternam, meritos que ciebo dolores’ (‘strike my guilty breast with my fists, or while I shall prostrate my limbs on the ground and produce my well-deserved laments’, *De die iudicii*, ll. 14-5); and ‘swiðe mid fyste / breost mine beate on gebedstowe, / and minne lichaman lecge on eorðan / and gearnade sar ealle ic gecige’ (‘strike severely with my fist beat my breast in the place of prayer and lay my body down on the earth, invoking all my deserved pains’, *Judgement Day II*, ll. 29b-32).

<sup>43</sup> Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity*, 81

<sup>44</sup> Darby, ‘Apocalypse and Reform’, p. 100

<sup>45</sup> Teresa Webber, ‘The Diffusion of Augustine’s Confessions in England during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries’, in John Blair and Brian Golding (eds), *The Cloisters and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey* (Oxford, 1996), 31

<sup>46</sup> Caie, *The Old English Poem*, 9-10 and 118

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<sup>47</sup> L. Kornexl, 'The Regularis Concordia and its Old English gloss', *Anglo-Saxon England* 24 (1995), 95-130 (103). See also Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (MN, 2011), 50 ff. and 88 ff. for a discussion of Augustinian and Benedictine reading practices.

<sup>48</sup> Adalbert de Vogüé, *The Rule of Saint Benedict: A Doctrinal and Spiritual Commentary*, tr. John Baptist Hasbrouck, CS 54 (Kalamazoo, MI: 1971), 241-2

<sup>49</sup> Robertson, *Lectio Divina*, xiv-xv

<sup>50</sup> Robertson, *Lectio Divina*, xv

<sup>51</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 2008), 204-6

<sup>52</sup> Steen, *Verse and Vertuosity*, 80

<sup>53</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 205

<sup>54</sup> Robertson, *Lectio Divina*, 57

<sup>55</sup> J. S. Westlake, *Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1907), 146-7