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*PSALMYNO ATGARSIAI
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4-OJOJE BOETIJIAUS POEMOJE*
Giving Voice to the *Psalms* in the Alfredian
Metre 4 of Boethius

SUMMARY

This article will read the Alfredian *Metre 4 of Boethius* as a lamentation, spoken in the voice of *Mod* (Mind) and recited by the inner voice of the reader. The voice of *Mod* is mingled with the Alfredian voice, which is given a further authority by the voices of king David and the *Psalter* itself. The aim of this article is to highlight the echoes of *Old English Psalms* in the thought and rhetoric of the Alfredian *Metre 4 of Boethius*. The Old English translation of the Psalms embraces the Old English *Prose Psalms* (represented by *Psalms* 1–50) and the Old English *Metrical Psalms* (represented by *Psalms* 51–150). The Old English translation of the *Prose Psalms* traditionally ascribed to King Alfred the Great of Wessex (c. 871–899) is of particular interest for the present study. Yet, the inner space of *Metre 4* is redolent of the vernacular voice of the selected *Old English Psalms* both in prose and verse.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje sutelkiamas dėmesys į *Mod* (Proto) atgailos maldą, atkartojamą skaitytojo vidiniu balsu, Karaliaus Alfredo 4-ojoje *Boetijaus* (angl. the Alfredian *Boethius*) *poemoje*. Kita vertus, *Mod* balsą atliepia Alfredo, Dovydo ir paties *Psalmyno* balsai, įmantriai susipinantys poetinio teksto gelmėje. Straipsnio tikslas – įsiklausyti į senovės anglų *Psalmių knygos* (angl. *Old English Psalms*) atgarsius, analizuojant Karaliaus Alfredo 4-osios *Boetijaus* *poemos* minties ir formos raišką. Tarp lotyniškojo *Psalmyno* vertimų į senovės anglų kalbą – neeiluotųjų *Psalmių* (angl. the *Prose Psalms*) ir eiluotųjų *Psalmių* (angl. the *Metrical Psalms*) – būtent neeiluotųjų *Psalmių* autorystė priskiriama Vesekso karaliui Alfredui Didžiajam (c. 849–899). Straipsnyje išsamiai aptariami savitų senovės anglų *Psalmių* bruožų atspindžiai 4-osios *poemos* poetinėje erdvėje.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: balsas, 4-oji poema, *Psalmynas*, *Mod*, nuolankumas.

KEY WORDS: Voice, *Metre 4*, *Psalms*, *Mod*, obedience.

‘Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi voce mea ad Deum et intendit me.’¹

INTRODUCTION

The *Book of Psalms* belongs to the genre of Wisdom poetry. To ‘inhabit’ the voicing of the Psalms, whether through the private prayer or poem, in Latin, Old English or both, was ‘to speak with God in the words used first by David and then by Christ Himself’ (Leneghan 2017: 2). As the preeminent text of the Divine Office, the Psalms were recited ‘seven times a day’ in the Liturgy of the Hours, in what was the salient ritual of Christian liturgy after the Mass (O’Neill 2016: vii).² The psalms ‘must have resonated in the ideas, the patterns and the rhetorical usages of Old English poems’ (Toswell 2017: 232). The Alfredian *Metre 4 of Boethius* is no exception. The aim of this article is to highlight the voice of Psalms in the thought and rhetoric of the Alfredian *Metre 4 of Boethius*.³ This article will read the Alfredian *Metre 4 of Boethius* as a lament, going beyond the human language to the silence of God and recited by the inner voice of the reader (cf. Lawton 2017: 62).

Previously scholars have identified the Alfredian *Boethius* prosimetrum as a precursor to the English meditative tradition (Lenz 2012), oral formulaic tradition (Moninn 2008), the Carolingian scholarly tradition (Szarmach 2000; Hobson 2017); others have related it to the thought of Plato (Szarmach 2001) as well as classical, late antique, and Anglo-Saxon lore (Discenza 2014). But the Alfredian *Boethius* prosimetrum has yet to be considered in the light of the Davidic imitation.

It is very likely that the Alfredian *Boethius* prosimetrum and Old English *Prose Psalms* belong to the same hand – King Alfred the Great of Wessex.⁴ The devotion of King Alfred (r. 871–899) to the Psalter is certified by his biographer Asser, who writes that after earning a book of *Saxonicum poematae* (‘English songs’) from his royal mother by learning and rehearsing its contents, the junior Alfred also ‘internalised (at least part of) the Psalter, in the manner expected of a monk’ (Stevenson 1959: 21).

Meanwhile, *Old English Psalms* – the *Prose Psalms* (represented by Psalms 1 to 50) and the *Metrical Psalms* (represented by Psalms 51 to 150) – come as an endeavour at re-interpreting the Latin *Psalter* in Old English.⁵ The *Prose Psalms* and the *Metrical Psalms* have survived in a single manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Fonds latin MS 8824. The compilation of the Latin text of the *Romanum Psalter* and the Old English translation, both in prose and verse, into a single manuscript is characteristic of other Psalters as well, yet ‘the prominent position of the vernacular translations, which enjoy equal visual status with the Latin, suggests a lay audience of pious readers and reciters of the psalms’ (O’Neill 2016: viii–ix).

Yet, it is the voice of the penitential *Psalms* 50 that resonates deeply within the poetic space of the Alfredian *Metre 4 of Boethius*.

'MISERERE MEI, DEUS'⁶

Metre 4 manifests itself as a vernacular meditation on the penitential *Psalm 50*, expressed by the lamenting *Mod* (Mind). *Psalm 50* is 'among the best-known of all the Psalms in the Middle Ages, and numerous translations, paraphrases and adaptations of the Psalm survive in Old and Middle English prose and verse' (Leneghan 2017: 3).⁷

Consider the *Miserere mei* motif in the opening verse of *Psalm 50: 1*, as found in the *Romanum Psalter: Miserere mei deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam*. – 'Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity.'⁸ The Old English rendering of *Psalm 50: 1* is from the *Prose Psalter: Miltsa me, Drihten, æfter þinre mycelan mildheortnesse. And æfter þære menigu þinra mildheortnessa, adilega mine unrihtwisnessa*. – 'Have mercy on me, Lord, according to the greatness of your mercy. And after the multitude of your mercies, blot out my iniquity.'⁹

Compare *Mod's* lament in imitation of *Psalm 50*, as expressed in *Metre 4*:¹⁰

Wella, ðu eca and ðu ælmihtiga
ealra gesceafta sceppend and reccend,
ara ðinum earmum eorðan tudre,
monna cynne, ðurh ðinra mehta sped. (ll.
29–32)

(Oh, you eternal and almighty creator and ruler of all creatures, *pity your wretched earthly offspring*, the human race, *through the workings of your powers*.) (Emphasis added)

Eala, min dryhten, ðu þe ealle ofersihst
worulde gesceafta, wlit nu on moncyn
mildum eagum, nu hi on monegum her
worulde yðum wynnað and swincað,
earme eorðwaran. *Ara him nu ða*. (ll. 53–57)

(Oh, my lord, you who watch over all the creatures of the world, look now at the human race *with merciful eyes* since they, wretched earth-dwellers, struggle and toil in the many adversities of the world. *Therefore, pity them now*.) (Emphasis added)

The substitution of Boethius' persona for *Mod* (Mind) in the Old English rendering of the Latin *Consolatio* suggests personal involvement of the reader into the lament of *Mod*, for 'we each have our own *mod*' (see Discenza 2015: 208). In *Metre 4*, the substitution of the personal pronoun 'me' in the psalmic formula 'Have mercy on me, God' (*Miserere mei, Deus; Miltsa me, Drihten*) for 'the human race' suggests *Mod's* plea for the fallen humanity.

The *Miserere mei* penitential genre addressed in *Metre 4* is rendered by a typical psalmic pattern of repetition, apposition and parallelism (cf. Toswell 2017: 221). Thus, the precatory *Miserere* statement (*ara ðinum earmum eorðan tudre* – 'pity your wretched earthly offspring', l. 31) in the first half of the *Metre* is repeated with a minor variation of the formula (*ara him nu ða* – 'therefore, pity them now', l. 57) after the membrum on the humility of the Creation.¹¹ The *Miserere* statement is further reinforced by the apposition (*ðurh ðinra mehta sped* – 'through the workings of your powers', l. 32b) and paraphrase (*wlit nu on moncyn mildum eagum* – 'look now at the human race with merciful

eyes', l. 54–55), followed by the membrum on the misery of the *homo terrestris*. The *Miserere* (*Ara* – 'pity') formula is intensified by the adverbs *ða* ('therefore') and *nu* ('now') and repeated verbatim (cf. l. 31a and l. 57b) before the end-stop.

'COR CONTRITUM ET HUMILIATUM'¹²

The poet evokes the motif of the humility of the Creation, personified as the celestial bodies, alongside the motif of the Omnipotence of the Creator:

Eala, ðu scippend, scirra tungla,
hefones and eorðan, ðu on heahsetle,
ecum ricsast, and ðu ealne hræðe
hefon ymbhwearfest, and *ðurh ðine halige
miht*

tungu genedest þæt hi ðe to herað.

Swylce seo sunne swearta nihta
ðiostro adwæsceð *ðurh ðine meht*.

Blacum leohte beorhte steorran
mona gemetgað *ðurh ðinra meahta sped*
(ll. 1–9)

(Oh, creator of the bright stars, of heaven and earth, you reign on an eternal high throne, and you revolve the whole heaven quickly around, and *through your holy power* compel the stars to *obey* you. Likewise, the sun quenches the darkness of black nights *through your power*. The moon with its pale light moderates the bright stars *through the workings of your powers*.) (Emphasis added)

The triple repetition of the *B-verse* formula – *ðurh ðine miht* ('through your power', l. 7b), with the variations *ðurh ðine halige miht* ('through your holy power', l. 4b) and *ðurh ðinra meahta sped* ('through the workings of your powers', l. 9b) – evinces the image of the Holy Trinity as the still centre, 'revolving the whole heav-

The inner frame of the *Metre* reveals a pattern of syntactic repetition and variation of the formula *ðurh ðine miht* ('through your holy power'), with a shift in emphasis – from the Omnipotence of the Lord to His enduring *misericordia*.

en quickly around' (*ðu ealne hræðe hefon ymbhwearfest*, ll. 3b–4a). The poet is accurate to emphasise that the heavenly realm – the sun, the moon, and the stars – obey the holy power of the Creator ([*and ðu*] *tungu genedest þæt hi ðe to herað* – '[and you] compel the stars to obey you', l. 5). Such obedience declares the perfect, undistorted harmony of the First Creation.¹³

Further in the *Metre*, the humility of the angelic orders and the earthly creatures is juxtaposed to the arrogance of man, who 'acts more often against [the Creator's] will' (*se wið ðinum willan wyrceð*, l. 28):

Eala hwæt, on eorðan ealla gesceafta
hyrað ðinre hæse, doð on heofonum swa
some
mode and mægne, butan men anum,
se wið ðinum willan wyrceð oftost. (ll. 25–28)

(Behold, on earth all creatures *obey* your command, likewise in heaven they do with might and mind, except for man alone, who acts more often *against your will*.) (Emphasis added)

A paronomasia between the senses of 'hearing' and 'obeying' in *hyran* (*ealla gesceafta hyrað ðinre hæse butan men anum* – 'all creatures *obey* [hear, listen to] your command except for man alone', ll. 25b–27b)¹⁴ brings forth an interplay between *auditui* 'hearing' and *humilitata*

'humbled', as found in the *Romanum Psalter*, Psalm 50: 10: *auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam et exultabunt ossa humiliata* – 'to my hearing thou shalt give joy and gladness: and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice'. It follows that those who are 'gentle and lowly in heart' shall rejoice, for they give ear to the Voice of God.¹⁵

In the Old English exposition (paraphrase) of Psalm 50: 9, the image of the *ossa humiliata* is rendered as the *unrote mod* ('troubled heart/ mind'). Such modification of the Psalm in the vernacular voice gains special prominence in evoking the image of the sorrowful *Mod* in *Metre 4*. Moreover, the vernacular voice of Psalm 50: 9 amplifies the Latin original with the overtones of *desire*, thus enhancing the doctrine of free will:

(9) Syle minre gehyrnesse gefean and blisse, þæt ic gehyre þæt ic wylle, and eac oðre gehyron be me þæt þæt ic wilnige, swa swa hy ær gehyrdon þæt þæt ic nolde, þæt þonne mæge unrote mod blissian ...

(9 (10) Grant to my hearing joy and gladness so that I may hear what I desire, and also others may hear about me what I desire, just as they previously heard what I did not desire to hear, so that my troubled heart can then rejoice...) (Emphasis added)

Mod's desire to hear (ic gehyre þæt ic wylle – 'I may hear what I desire') is akin to desiring God, clinging to the

Lord through love – the state reminiscent of the First Grace, *blisse* (blessedness, *beatitas, gratia*). To paraphrase the Psalmist, 'Let the ear of my troubled heart (*unrote mod*) be imbued with the joy of Thy grace'.

Because the translation of the *Prose Psalter* is incomplete and ends with Psalm 50: 9 (*þæt þonne mæge unrote mod blissian* – 'so that my troubled heart can then rejoice'), the translator might have borrowed the image of *cor contritum et humiliatum* 'a contrite and humbled heart' from the *Romanum Psalter*, Psalm 50: 19, with the substitution of the Latin *cor* 'heart' for the Old English *mod* 'mind': *Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non spernet*. – 'A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise'. In view of Amy Faulkner (2019: 597):

One overlooked aspect of the Old English adaptation [of the *Romanum Psalter*] is the translator's concern with the workings of the mind, demonstrated by the tendency to introduce the word *mod* ('mind') when there is no mention of a faculty of thought or feeling in the *Romanum* source, and the use of *mod* to translate the words *cor* ('heart') or *anima* ('soul').

Further in the *Metre*, an interplay between the senses of 'hearing' and 'obeying' is paralleled by a metaphoric rendering of the verbs of perception ('looking', 'gazing' and 'hearing') as 'having mercy'.

'QUONIAM EXAUDIVIT DOMINUS VOCEM FLETUS MEI'¹⁶

Mod is resolute in his demand to be heard. In *Metre 4*, an acclamation of praise – *Eala, min dryhten* ('Oh, my

lord') – is followed by a hortatory plea 'to look at a fallen mankind with merciful eyes' (*wlit nu on moncyn mildum*

eagum, ll. 54b–55a)). This appeal can be read alongside the *Prose Psalm 37: 22*, wherein salvation by grace is metaphorically rendered through the image of ‘the eyes of God’, looking with favour upon the lowly in spirit: ‘look favourably on me with help’ (*beseoh me to fultume*), a modification of the Latin ‘attend unto my help’ (*intende in adiutorium*), as found in the *Romanum Psalter*, Psalm 37: 22–23:

(22) Non derelinquas me Domine Deus meus ne discesseris a me (23) intende in adiutorium meum Domine salutis meae. – ‘For sake me not, O Lord my God: do not thou depart from me. Attend unto my help, O Lord, the God of my salvation.’

Compare the *Prose Psalter*, Psalm 37: 22–23:

(22) Ne forlæt me, Drihten, min God, ne ne gewit fram me, ac *beseoh me to fultume*, Drihten God, min hælend. ‘Lord, my God, do not abandon me, or depart from me, (23) but *look favourably on me* with help, Lord God, my saviour.’ (Emphasis added)

The psalmic pattern of parallelism: ‘*Look now at the human race with merciful eyes*’ versus ‘*Pity them now*’, as appears in *Metre 4* echoes a similar pattern in the *Metrical Psalm 85* lines 1 and 3: ‘*Hear me*’ versus ‘*Have mercy on me*’.

Consider the *Romanum Psalter*, Psalm 85: 1 and 3:

(1) Inclina, Domine, aurem tuam et *exaudi* me, quoniam inops et pauper sum ego. – ‘Incline thy ear, O Lord, and *hear me*: for I am needy and poor.’ (Emphasis added)

(3) *Miserere mei*, Domine, quoniam ad te clamavi tota die. – ‘*Have mercy on me*, O Lord, for I have cried to thee all the day.’ (Emphasis added)

Compare the *Metrical Psalm 85: 1* and 3:

(1) Ahyld me þin eare, halig Drihten, for ðon ic eom wædla, þu me wel gehyr, and ic sylfa eom sorhfull þearfa.

(Holy God, incline your ear to me, because I am needy, listen to me carefully, seeing that I myself am an anxious, needy person.) (Emphasis added)

(3) *Miltsa me Drihten*, þonne ic *mægene to ðe* þurh ealne dæg elne cleopade.

(Lord, *have mercy on me*, seeing that I invoked you *forcefully* all through the day.) (Emphasis added)

The *Metrical Psalm 85* amplifies the pattern of parallelism with the formula ‘incline your ear to me’ (*ahyld me þin eare*), intensifying the invocation by the adverbs *wel* ‘carefully’ and *mægene* ‘forcefully’: ‘listen to me *carefully*’ (*þu me wel gehyr*), ‘I invoked you *forcefully*’ (*ic mægene to ðe cleopade*).

In the voice of the *Prose Psalm 6: 9–10*, the Lord ‘gave ear’ to the supplications of *Mod: þe Drihten hyrde mine wependan stefne, and God gehyrde mine healsunge, and Drihten onfeng min gebed.* – ‘The Lord has heard my weeping, and God has listened to my appeal, and the Lord accepted my prayer’. Likewise, *Wisdom (Wisdom)* and *Reason (Gesceadwisnes)* gazed on *Mod* with cheerful eyes (*bliðum eagum*), as found in the *Prose* section (*Prose 4*)¹⁷ of the Alfredian *Boethius* prosimetrum, immediately following the end-stop line of *Metre 4 (Ara him [moncyn] nu ða.* – ‘Therefore, pity them now’, l. 57b):

þa þæt mod þa þillic sar cweðende wæs and þis leoð singende wæs, se wisdom þa and seo gesceadwisnes him *bliðum*

eagum on locude. – ‘When the Mind was uttering such sorrow and singing this song, Wisdom and Reason gazed on him with cheerful eyes.’ (ll. 1–2)

Further in *Prose* 4, the voices of King Alfred, Heavenly *Wisdom* and Reason interlace in the discourse on the ‘citizenry of the Heavenly Jerusalem’ (*heofencundan Ierusalem burgware*), urging *Mod* to recall (*gemunan*) his true self:

Ne gebrohte þe eac nan oðer man on þam gedwolan butan þe sylfum þurh þine agene giemelieste. Ne sceolde þe eac nan man swelces to gefefan, þær þu *gemunan*... hwilces geferscipes þu wære on þinum mode and on ðinre gesceadwisnesse; þæt is þæt þu eart an þara rihtwisena and þara *ryhtwillendra*. Ða beoð þære heofencundan Ierusalem burgware. Of ðære næfre nan, buton he self wolde, ne wearð adrifan, þæt is of his godan willa. (ll. 11–19)

No-one else brought you into that folly but you yourself through your own carelessness. No-one should have expected such a thing of you either, if you were willing to *recall*... of what community you were in your mind and in your reason; that is that you are one of the righteous and *well-intentioned* (those are the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem). From that, that is, from his own good intention, no-one was ever exiled unless he himself wished it. (Emphasis added)

In this passage, the voice of Reason stands apart from the dialogue between *Mod* and Wisdom. The presence of a

separate voice of Reason within the inner space of the text shows *Mod*’s alienation from the lore of Heavenly Wisdom. Contrary, when *Mod* assents to Wisdom’s teaching, Reason exits a conversation, for it will continue to speak in *Mod* (cf. Lenz 2012: 22).

Mod’s inward recollection of the *uita angelica* of ‘the days of old’ remains intact in *sacred memory* during the turmoil of life in exile from Paradise (ibid, 85). In the voice of Psalm 142: 5–6, as found in the *Romanum Psalter: Memor fui dierum antiquorum meditatus sum in omnibus operibus tuis in factis manuum tuarum meditabar*. – ‘I remembered the days of old, I meditated on all thy works: I meditated upon the works of thy hands’. The *Metrical Psalm* 142: 5 amplifies the Latin source by bringing forth the image of the mind as ‘a treasure chest’ of *sacred memory* (*on mode gemyndgade, metegade on mode*):

(5) Ponne ic *on mode gemyndgade*,
hu me æran dagas oft alumpān,
metegade on mode ealle þinr mæran weorc
and ymbe þine hand-geweorc hogode
georne.

(Then I *recalled in my mind* how former times had often played out for me, *meditated inwardly* on all your *famous works*, and actively pondered on the works of your hand.) (Emphasis added)

Meanwhile, it is by free will that *Mod* wished to make ‘the vale of tears’ his dwelling place.

‘IN VALLE LACRIMARUM’¹⁸

The return to the Heavenly Jerusalem is through the path of repentance – ‘in

the midst of the shadow of death’.¹⁹ The motif of the earthly hardships of the

fallen mankind is apt to be sung in the voice of David. Consider the *Romanum Psalter*, Psalm 83: 6–7:

(6) *Beatus vir cui est auxilium abs te ascensiones in corde suo disposuit* (7) *in valle lacrimarum in loco quem posuit*. – (6) Blessed is the man whose help is from thee: in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps, (7) in the vale of tears, in the place which he hath set. (Emphasis added)

Compare the *Metrical Psalm* 83: 5–6:

(5) Pæt byð eadig wer se þe him oðerne fultum ne seceð nymþe færne God, and pæt on *heortan hige* healdeð fæste,

(6) geseteð him pæt sylfe on ðisse *sargan dene*,
þær hi teara teonan cnyssað,
on þam sylfan stede þe þu settest her.

5 (6) He is a happy man who does not seek any other help for himself except a trustworthy God, and firmly maintains that trust in the recesses of his heart, 6 (7) proposing the like for those in this sorrowful valley, when the grief of tears oppresses them, in that same place which you established for them on this earth. (Emphasis added)

In the Latin source, the blessed man ‘has a disposition to ascend to God in his heart’ (*abs te ascensiones in corde suo disposuit*). The exegesis of the Old English rendering is deeper, for it highlights

‘the recesses of the [blessed] heart’ (*heortan hige*), an allusion to Luke 17: 21 (*Behold, the kingdom of God is within you*). An antithesis between the blessed and the sorrowful maintains the truth that the right disposition makes *Mod bliðe* (‘joyful’). Likewise, in *Metre 4* it is the blessed few (*fea ane*, l. 52b) who put their trust in God, whereas the wretched question His trustworthiness:

Gif þu nu, waldend, ne wilt wirde steoran,
ac on selfwille sigan lættest,
þonne ic wat þætte *wile woruldmen tweogan*
geond foldan sceat *buton fea ane*. (ll. 49–52)

(If you, ruler, do not wish now to control fate, but leave it to take its own course, then I know that throughout the earth’s regions *people, except for a few, will have doubts.*) (emphasis added)

The transformation of the image of *ðisse sargan dene* ‘the sorrowful valley’ into *worulde yþe* (‘the waves of the world’, l. 56a) in *Metre 4*: *Nu hi on monegum herl worulde yðum wynnað and swincað/ earme eorðwaran* – ‘Since they, wretched earth-dwellers, struggle and toil in the many adversities [lit. waves] of the world’ further evinces the epistemological metaphor *scip modes* ‘ship of the mind’ and an ascetic journey of *Mod* through the waves of life (cf. Wilcox 2006: 179). It is by free will that *Mod* wished to find the path back to the heavenly abode.

CONCLUSION

The moaning *Mod* speaks to God ‘with psalms’, so that it is the voice of Psalms that enhances the thought and rhetoric of the Alfredian *Boethius* prosimetrum from within. The *Miserere mei, Deus*, cried out in the voice of David

resonates in the poetic space of the *Metre* and is echoed by the voices of Alfred, *Mod*, and the reader. Meanwhile, *Mod*’s lament is logophatic, for it is Christ personified as Heavenly Wisdom, who speaks for *Mod* and in *Mod*.

The recollection of the angelic community *Mod* wished to exile himself from kindles his desire for God, whose grace is poured out *per Christum* personified as Heavenly Wisdom, and in the Holy Spirit personified as Reason (*Gescead-wisnes*).²⁰ *Mod* is invited to listen to the

lore of Heavenly Wisdom with the 'ears of his heart', in so far as *hearing* the Voice of God implies *obeying* His Word by virtue of a well-directed will (*riht-willend*).²¹ A well-directed will is the essence of Joy in the Lord, yet 'few there be' (*buton fea ane*, l. 52a) that find It.

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Endnotes

¹ 'I cried to the Lord with my voice; to God with my voice, and he gave ear to me.' (Ps. 76: 1).

² It is St. Jerome's second revision of the Psalms – the *Gallicanum Psalter* – that became the liturgical standard in the West. St. Jerome's first revision of the Psalms, the *Romanum Psalter*, endured to be in use in Britain, next to the Gallicanum, later than on the continent (Leneghan 2017: 4).

³ Manuscript C (London, bl, Cotton Otho A.vi) contains a tenth-century copy of a prosimetrical version of the Alfredian *Boethius* (Discenza 2015: 201).

⁴ The Latin source for an Old English translation is the *Romanum Psalter*.

⁵ The rendering of the *Prose Psalms* 'transcends the close translation of the Anglo-Saxon Psalter-glossing tradition in its sometimes substantial adaptation of the Latin text' (Faulkner 2019: 600).

⁶ 'Have mercy on me, O God' (Ps. 50: 1).

⁷ The essay of Francis Leneghan 'Introduction: A Case Study of Psalm 50.1–3 in Old and Middle English' encouraged my research on the Alfredian *Boethius* prosimetrum in the light of the Davidic imitation.

- ⁸ Subsequent referencing is from the *Romanum Psalter*, with the Catholic Douay-Rheims translation presented underneath. See Weber, *The Romanum Psalter*: <http://www.liberpsalmorum.info/Psalterium%20Romanum.html>
- ⁹ Subsequent referencing is from O'Neill, *Old English Psalms*.
- ¹⁰ All quotations are from *The C text* (the prose-and-verse version) of Godden and Irvine, *The Old English Boethius* (hereafter *OEB*): *OEB*, Vol. I, 4: 389–390; *OEB*, Vol. II, 4: 100–101.
- ¹¹ *Membrum* is part of a verse of a poem.
- ¹² 'a contrite and humbled heart' (Ps. 50:19).
- ¹³ *mæran gesceaft* ('the illustrious creation', *Genesis A*, l. 93b): https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/ascp/a01_01.htm
- ¹⁴ *hyran* (v.) – I. to hear, hear of; to listen to, follow, serve, obey, be subject to, belong to: <https://bosworthtoller.com/search?q=hyrað>
- ¹⁵ *Ahyldað eowre earan, þæt ge holdice mines muðes word* – 'Incline your ears to the words of my mouth', *Metrical Psalm 77*: 1.
- ¹⁶ 'For the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping' (Ps. 6: 9).
- ¹⁷ *OEB*, Vol. I, 4: 391–392; *OEB*, Vol. II, 4: 101–102.
- ¹⁸ 'In the vale of tears' (Ps. 83: 7).
- ¹⁹ *In medio umbrae mortis / On midde þa sceade deaðes* – 'into the middle of death's shadow' (Ps. 22: 4).
- ²⁰ *Se wisdom þa and seo gesceadwisnes him [mod] bliðum eagum on locude.* – 'Wisdom and Reason gazed on him [Mod] with cheerful eyes.' (*Prose 4*, ll. 1–2).
- ²¹ *Me lyst on þe rihtes willan* – 'I [Heavenly Wisdom] want a well-directed will in you [Mod]' (*Prose 4*, l. 28–29).