

William of Conches and the “New Aristotle”: A Reply to Peter Dronke

Lodi Nauta

William of Conches' commentary on Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae*, which was his first work (ca. 1120), has come down to us in at least 17 manuscripts, containing the entire text of his *Glosae super Boetium* in its characteristic continuous-lemmatic form.¹ The text, which is explicitly attributed to William in three manuscripts, has all the characteristic features of William's method, style and philosophical outlook, and contains references to his projected commentaries on Macrobius, Martianus Capella and Plato. The work proved to be a successful one: there is a great number of Boethian manuscripts which testify to its wide dissemination throughout the Middle Ages.² This rich material can be divided into several (not mutually exclusive) categories: glosses which (ultimately) go back to William's work, and which are to be found in dozens of manuscripts; commentaries in the form of compilations in which parts of William's work are mixed with other commentaries (e.g. that of Remigius of Auxerre from about 900 and his eleventh-century revisers); the marginal commentary that accompanies the Latin text of the *Consolatio* and Jean de Meun's translation, *Li Livres de Confort de Philosophie*; and several other commentaries which derive material from William.

Of special importance is a version, which, while keeping most of William's text intact, is much longer and also in a different format. I have found at least eleven manuscripts of this version, but without doubt there are more to be found.³ The author adds substantially to the text, rewrites a large number of passages, and omits passages and quotations from William's text. In addition, the author of this revision quotes from various works which were not available during William's lifetime: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, *De Caelo*, *Posterior Analytics*, Eustratius' commentary on the *Ethics*, the *Liber de Causis* (ascribed to Alfarabi by the reviser), and Algazel's *Metaphysics*. In a brief note in 1993, in which I published these quotations, as well as in my edition from 1999, I therefore concluded that this version must date from a later period, the brief quotation of Eustratius giving a terminus post quem of 1247, the year in which Grosseteste finished his translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* along with (parts of) the Eustratius commentary on it. Previous scholars, focusing on the passage on the world soul in III metre 9, had overlooked these quotations and references, and had suggested that William himself was responsible for this version. Thus Peter Dronke, referring to the omission of the identification of the Holy Spirit with the Platonic world soul in the revised text, spoke about 'crucial revisions in William's early commentary on Boethius'.⁴

¹ See my introduction to *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, ed. L. NAUTA, in *CCCM*, CLVIII, Turnhout, 1999, pp. xvii-cxlv. This edition is part of the *Opera Omnia* edition under the general editorship of Edouard Jeuneau.

² *Ibid.*, pp. lxxx-lxxxvi, and now especially R. BLACK & G. POMARO, *Boethius' 'Consolation of Philosophy' in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Education: Schoolbooks and their glosses in Florentine Manuscripts*, Florence, 2000 (with full descriptions of the manuscripts and transcriptions of the glosses); ROBERT BLACK, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy. Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century*, Cambridge, 2001, esp. pp. 236-238 and 327-329.

³ See my *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, pp. lxxxiii-lxxxiv and L. NAUTA, *The Thirteenth-Century Revision of William of Conches' Commentary on Boethius*, in *Chaucer's 'Boece' and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, ed. A. J. MINNIS, Cambridge-Woodbridge, 1993, pp. 189-191. This is an appendix to A. J. MINNIS & L. NAUTA, *More Platonic loquitur: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches*, in the same volume, pp. 1-33.

⁴ *Fabula. Explorations into the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism*, Leiden, 1974, p. 15. A more cautious formulation occurs in his *L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle*, *Studi Medievali* 3a ser., VI (1965), pp. 389-

In a recent brief article in this journal Peter Dronke criticises my argument that this version could not have been written by William of Conches and must date from at least the second half of the thirteenth century. He suggests that – with the exception of the Eustratius commentary – the texts of Aristotle, Algazel and the *Liber de Causis* ‘would probably have been accessible in northern France in the later years of William’s life’.⁵ While Dronke does not want to claim that William was indeed responsible for ‘all the passages relating to these works’,⁶ he ‘sees no reason why some revisions in the later redaction of his Boethius commentary may not also be his work’. After all, William had always been keen on new scientific texts: ‘He who, in the *Philosophia* of his youth, had added new scientific authorities – Constantine of Africa, Iohannitius, Theophilus Protospatharius – to the panoply of western Platonism, had he become incapable of assimilating a range of new Aristotelian texts in his later years?’⁷ He insists, therefore, that some quotations may well have been inserted by the aged William himself, but that this question ‘whether any of the additional material in this revision might be authentic William rather than Pseudo-William is a delicate one, that will one day have to be broached in detail, passage by passage’.⁸

While welcoming the opinion of such an eminent authority as Professor Dronke, I am disappointed that he has not tried to find evidence in the text of the revision itself that would corroborate or invalidate his suggestion. The commentary contains much more than just the quotations which I had discovered, but Dronke does not discuss the text or quote from it. Apart from the quotations I gave, I also briefly mentioned other features of the revision which clearly point to a later period of composition, and it would have been a logical step for him to have checked these findings to see how they would fit in with this entirely new hypothesis.⁹ Moreover, Dronke’s suggestion immediately raises a number of questions about William’s scholarship. How, for example, does William – if he is indeed the author of the revision – use these new sources? Is this use in line with what we know of William’s handling of other new sources? How plausible is it that William had all these sources at his disposal? Since Dronke does not test his hypothesis by raising such questions, I shall therefore do so briefly, but only after first relating some facts about the revision.

The manuscripts of this revision are all from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (one dates perhaps from the late thirteenth century).¹⁰ I have found it in at least eleven manuscripts. A remarkable difference between William’s work and this revision concerns the format. Unlike William’s lemmatic-continuous format, which he used for all his commentaries, this revision alternates sections of Boethius’ text, provided with interlinear glosses, with sections

422, repr. in ID., *The Medieval Poet and his World*, Rome, 1984, pp. 439-475, esp. 463-466; see 464 n. 81: ‘this clearly cannot be established with certainty until there is a complete critical edition’.

⁵ *William of Conches and the “New Aristotle”*, *Studi Medievali* XLIII-1 (2002), pp. 157-163, at p. 160.

⁶ *Ibidem*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁹ *Thirteenth-Century Revision of William of Conches’s Commentary on Boethius*, 189. Though I had read the entire text of the revision, comparing it with William’s own *Glosae*, I only briefly mentioned these other features because my main project was the establishment of the text of William’s *Glosae* for which the revision could not be used because of the great number of differences.

¹⁰ The dating of the manuscripts is an indication (but no argument, let alone proof) that the text is a thirteenth-century piece of work. In this article I quote from London, BL Royal 15.B.III, but have found and studied the text in Paris, BN lat. 6406; Tours, Bibl. mun. 699; Pelplin, Biblioteka Seminarium Duchownego, MS 128 (253); Dijon, Bibl. mun. 254 (202) (late 13th-c.?); Cambridge, Jesus College Q.G.22; Vaticano, Bibl. Apost. Vat., MS Ottoboni lat. 612 (with some different readings, for example in the gloss on III m. 12); Paris, BN lat. 16094 (written as a marginal commentary). In at least two other manuscripts this version is added to the Latin text of the *Consolatio* and the Pseudo-de Meun’s medieval French translation, *Le Livre de Boece de Consolacion*: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales 5039D; New York, Pierpont Morgan, M222. I collated some passages from the revised text at an early stage of my research into the Boethian tradition.

of the commentary. The entire lay-out suggests that one and the same commentator is responsible for the commentary and the marginal glosses which are inserted between the lines of the text of the *Consolatio*: the commentator often refers to the marginal glosses.¹¹ Thus, the revision reads as a well-organised piece of work.

Further, the tradition in which the text stands is clearly distinct from that of William's *Glosae super Boetium*. All the manuscripts of the revision, for example, have the quotations from Eustratius, Aristotle, *Liber de causis* etc., while not a single copy of the seventeen manuscripts of William's own *Glosae* has any of these quotations. Moreover, I have found no copy among the many Boethian manuscripts I have studied that could be regarded as representing an intermediate stage between the two texts (e.g. a copy which has some of the quotations but not all).¹² If William had indeed inserted quotations from Algazel, *Liber de causis* etc. at such a late stage in his life, one would have expected to find traces of them in the textual tradition of the *Glosae super Boetium*.¹³

The reference to the name of Eustratius alone is enough to date the work after 1247. Before Grosseteste's translation of Eustratius, the name of this Greek Aristotelian commentator was unknown to the Latin West. Dronke therefore has to assume that some of the quotations are later interpolations, while others may go back to William himself ('I see no reason why some revisions...'). Unfortunately, he does not say which quotations he thinks belong to which group. There is however nothing in the text, or in the textual tradition, which could support such a distinction between possibly authentic and possibly inauthentic quotations. It is therefore not a question of 'broaching' the additional material, 'passage by passage',¹⁴ for the additional material is not in the form of separate glosses at all, which one may trace back to William or a later commentator. The quotations are fully integrated in the text, and the entire text has all the features of the work of one commentator. If one wants to see traces of William's own hand in the quotations from the *Liber de causis*, the new Aristotle etc., one cannot leave the nature of the many revisions unexplained (see below).

Let us now take a closer look at the quotations themselves. I was perhaps a trifle careless in stating that texts such as the *Liber de causis*, Algazel's *Metaphysics* and the new Aristotle 'entered the medieval West long after William's death' (thinking especially of the Eustratius text), for having used Minio-Paluello's findings elsewhere in my work¹⁵ I had long been acquainted with his tentative conclusions that 'the oldest copies preserved derive from manuscripts which reached Normandy about 1160' and that 'there was a centre of interest in the "new" Aristotle in northern France, which produced the first known attempt at Latin exegesis and at propagation of these works'.¹⁶ But having read the revision in its entirety, I saw no reason – either in the text or in the textual tradition – which could justify singling out some quotations as 'later interpolations' and some as possibly authentic quotations, as Dronke has to assume. The contents and format of the revised text, as well as its textual tradition, made it extremely unlikely that William was responsible for it, and the discovery of the quotations only sealed that question. Moreover, especially in view of the widely-held belief that he was born around 1085 (as given for instance in *A History of Twelfth-Century Western*

¹¹ E.g. London, BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 118r: 'littera patet per glosam interlinearem'; f. 120v: 'nota interlinearis'; f. 131r: '(...) et plana erit littera per interlineare'; f. 139r: 'quid autem velit dicere in littera patebit super textum'; f. 141r: '(...) et planum est quod dicit in interlineari supra litteram'.

¹² See my discussion of the interpolations in *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, pp. cxii-cxxi.

¹³ Many of the manuscripts of William's *Glosae* contain interpolations, some of which may go back to William himself, but not a single manuscript contains any of the additions found in the text of the revisor. For the interpolations see my edition, *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, pp. cxiv-cxxi.

¹⁴ DRONKE, *William of Conches and the "New Aristotle"*, p. 158.

¹⁵ E.g. *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, pp. lxix-lxx.

¹⁶ *Iacobus Veneticus Grecus: Canonist and Translator*, in ID., *Opuscula: The Latin Aristotle*, Amsterdam, 1972, pp. 189-228 at 218 (originally published in *Traditio* 8 [1952]).

Philosophy, edited by Dronke himself), it is highly implausible that William, almost ninety years old by then, would have been the first reader of all this new material, some of which may have become available even later than the 1160s.

Dronke now argues for later dates of William's birth and death: ca. 1098 and ca. 1165/70 respectively.¹⁷ Because his entire argument rests on the late date of William's death (for a death in, let us say 1156, would render it impossible to make the argument at all), let me briefly review it. The only evidence we have is a report in the thirteenth-century *Chronica* of Albéric des Trois Fontaines that William is still living in 1154, the year in which Henry II was crowned king: 'he is held in high renown in this time' ('Et factus est rex comes Andegavensis et dux Normannie Henricus... Huius tempore magister Guilelmus de Conchis philosophus magni nominis habitus est').¹⁸ Dronke argues that the phrase 'huius tempore' must mean 'during the reign of Henry II' (1154-1189), and suggests that William flourished 'with at least a substantial part of Henry's reign', giving '1165/1170' as the possible time of his death, for in the chronicle there is 'no hint that William's death is near. If William had in fact died soon after Henry's accession to the throne, it would have been amazing if Albéric had not added something like *sed in tertio anno regni Henrici obiit*'.¹⁹ But on the contrary, if we continue to read in the chronicle there is the following entry: 'Anno 1155. Florebat hoc tempore Theobaldus Cantuariensis archiepiscopus uir per omnia experientissimus (...)'.²⁰ Theobald, moreover, died only six years later, in 1161, and Albéric does *not* choose to add that fact. Of course, it is difficult to draw general conclusions from this, but it does seem likely that the phrase 'huius tempore' refers to the time of Henry II's *accession*, not only because this has just been mentioned by Albéric but also because the next sentence, which Dronke does not cite, reads: 'Rex autem Anglie Henricus apud Sanctum Eadmundum fuit coronatus'. In any case, it remains pure speculation, how long William continued to live after 1154. Perhaps two, three, four, five, six, seven, ten or, according to Dronke, ten to fifteen years? The best one can say about this argument is that, in the absence of any further evidence, it provides a decidedly shaky foundation on which to build such a novel case.

Even if we assume, for the sake of argument, that William had lived far into the 1160s, and forget about the Eustratius quotation (for which, however, the text offers no justification), it would strain one's imagination to picture William as having available all these texts on his desk – *Liber de causis*, Algazel's *Metaphysics*, and the works of Aristotle. Some of them, such as the *Liber de causis* (see below), are unlikely to have circulated before the 1170s. But in addition, it would be extremely odd, especially for someone like William, *not* to have used this material in any more profitable way than for drawing only a few, general quotations from it. The way the titles and names of these authorities are presented by the reviser is significant:²¹

- On I pr. 1, 32 (London, BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 9r): 'Cognitio enim facit scientem, bona autem operatio et frequens uirtuosum. Dicit enim Aristoteles in Ethicis quod ex frequenti bene agere relinquitur uirtus' (cf. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a31)

¹⁷ I had already given a later date of birth than '1185' in my edition. Based on William's own assertion in the *Dragmaticon*, securely dated 1144-1149, that he had taught in the schools 'for 20 years and more' ('per uiginti annos et eo amplius', ed. I. RONCA, in *CCCM*, CLII, Turnhout, 1997, p. 179), I assumed that this gives a date for the start of his career at about 1120, and a date of birth 'at the end of the eleventh century' (*Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, p. xxii).

¹⁸ *Chronica aevi Suevici*, ed. G. H. PERTZ et al., in *MGH, Scriptores* (in Folio), XXIII (1874), p. 842.

¹⁹ *William of Conches and the "New Aristotle"*, pp. 160-162; 161.

²⁰ *Chronica aevi Suevici*, ed. G. H. PERTZ et al., p. 842.

²¹ I gave these quotations with references in my *The Thirteenth-Century Revision of William of Conches*. For one or two quotations an anthology as source is not to be excluded (though I have not found them in the one edited by J. HAMESSE, *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis. Un Florilège médiéval étude historique et édition critique*, Paris, 1974).

- On I pr. vi, 15 (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 31v): ‘Alii dicebant quod mundus postquam factus est se ipso regebatur nec indiget suo factore. Et istam opinionem reprobatur Agazel in sua *Methaphysica*’ (*Metaphysica* i.8; cf. *Algazel’s Metaphysics: A Medieval Translation*, ed. J. T. Muckle, Toronto 1933, pp. 47-48).
- On II pr. iv, 89 (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 47r): ‘Alia ratio que talis est. Si possit homo amittere ista bona caduca, ponatur quod amiserit quia secundum Aristotelem possibile est quo posito in esse nullum accidit inconueniens. Amiserit ergo illud negliget quia bonum quod potest amitti negligendum est’ (cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1152b32 ff.).
- On III pr. v, 5 (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 71v): ‘quia contrariorum contrarii sunt effectus secundum quod dicit Aristoteles in quarto Methaphysicorum’ (1018aff; cf. 1057a18ff.)
- On III m. ix, 12 (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 77r): ‘Vnde in libro Celi et mundi scribitur quod unum elementum est locus alterius. Ignis enim est locus aeris, aer est locus aque, aqua terre’ (cf. 310b8-16).
- On III m. xi, 5-16 (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 83r): ‘Scienciis et uirtutibus possibilis tamen perfici sicut uult Aristoteles qui dicit quod anima creata est sicut tabula rasa in qua nichil depingitur. Possibilis tamen ad hoc est quod in ea imprimantur omnes forme rerum siue depingantur. Similiter huic concordat Eustracius qui dicit quod anima creata est sicut cartula breuis in qua nichil depictum est. Possibilis tamen ad hoc quod in ea depingantur omnes forme tam necessariorum quam contingencium’ (cf. *De anima* 430a1-2. I have not found the Eustracius’ quotation, but see below n. 000).
- On III m. xi, 15-16 (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 83v): ‘Qualiter autem anima sciat quodam modo illud quod addiscit, habes plane determinatum in principio posteriorum in illa parte “ante autem quam sit inducere”.’ (71a24 in James of Venice’s translation)
- On IV pr. vi, 60 (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 111v): ‘[Diuini species] sunt enim supra tempus quod possumus probare per illam propositionem Libri de causis: “omne esse aut est superius eternitate aut cum eternitate aut post eternitatem et supra tempus”. Et sicut exponit ibi in commento Alpharabius [quod est superius eternitate est]²² esse cause prime tale est immutabile sine primo sine fine, esse uero quod est cum eternitate est esse intelligenciarum et corporum celestium que non mesurantur a tempore sed ab euo uel eternitate creata; quare iste substantie mutationem temporalem non participant cum a tempore non mesurentur. (...) Si autem queras de anima intellectiva (...) liquet tibi solutio. Dicitur enim in commento supra illam propositionem quod creata fuit in orizonte eternitatis i.e. in confinio eternitatis et temporis (...)’ (*Liber de causis*, prop. 2, ed. A. Pattin, Louvain 1966, pp. 50-51)
- On V m. iv, 30 (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 137v): ‘Vnde scribitur ab Aristotele quod passiones anime actiones sunt. Et hoc est quia anima non patitur nisi ut ulterius agat’ (cf. *De anima* 403a15-25; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b21 ff. and 1098a14).

Would William have limited his appropriation of all this new material to just a few quotations? Scholars were looking for these texts, and there was an urgent need for clarification, as John of Salisbury’s letter to Richard Bishop, archdeacon of Coutances, shows.²³ When we consider the quotations, however, we notice that the reviser drops the names of the authorities and the titles very casually, as if they did not need any introduction (which indeed they would not need in the thirteenth century). There is no sign at all here that exciting, novel works are being introduced. How unlike William’s approach, who was so proud to introduce the medical writings of Constantine of Africa, Iohannitius and Theophilus

²² “quod est superius eternitate est” is added in Dijon, Bibl. mun. 253, f. 114r and Paris, BN 6406.

²³ See *Iacobus Veneticus Grecus*, p. 216. For a modern ed. see *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, II, ed. tr. W. J. MILLER, C. N. L. BROOKE, Oxford, 1979, n. 201 (p. 295): ‘I ask again as I have often asked before over a long period, that you will have a copy made for me of the books of Aristotle which you have... And once again I ask you to provide glosses on the more difficult points in Aristotle’s works, since I do not altogether trust the translator’.

in the *Philosophia*: ‘There are some who have never read the writings of Constantine or any other physician’, William scornfully writes, himself dropping the name of Constantine six times as if it is a treasure.²⁴ In the revised Boethian commentary, however, there is nothing comparable to William’s critical dialogue with the Constantinian corpus, as is witnessed by his authentic works. If William had these texts at his disposal, he would surely have discussed more of it, using it for instance to qualify or change his own passages on natural philosophy or to confront the new text of Aristotle’s *Ethics* with the moral statements of Boethius, etc. These quotations hardly count as ‘assimilating a range of new Aristotelian texts’.²⁵ Further, Algazel’s *Metaphysics* is only mentioned as containing a refutation of the idea that the world, after having been created, did not need a governor. Would William, if he had this text at his disposal as one of the first scholars in the West, rest the case at that, not proceeding to *give* that refutation?

Moreover, it would also be extremely odd if William, who took the opportunity of updating his Boethius commentary by inserting quotations from Aristotle, *Liber de causis* etc., did *not* take the trouble to revise his own passages on natural philosophy in the light of his later opinions, based, for instance, on his reading the Constantinian corpus. As I have shown elsewhere, William’s Boethius commentary contains long passages on natural philosophical themes, which he rewrote in his slightly later *De philosophia*, adding discussions of Constantine’s work.²⁶ And this continuous process of revising his ideas can be followed through William’s mature works.²⁷ Would he then have left, for instance, the passage on the elements in his Boethius commentary unaltered, and not have taken into account all his life-long thinking on this matter, as is testified by the different accounts in the *Philosophia*, the Plato commentary and the *Dragmaticon*? In general, the revised commentary does not show any sign at all of the new learning which William employed in the *Philosophia*, the Plato commentary and the *Dragmaticon*. The natural philosophical passages, which William had changed and rewritten several times over the years, are here taken over almost unaltered as if they were William’s last word. Apart from the natural philosophical passages, there are various other places in the *Glosae* where William would surely have liked to make emendations, if the “new Aristotle” had been at his disposal, for instance the reference by Boethius to Aristotle’s *Physics* in *Consolatio V* prose 1, where Aristotle is said to refute the Stoics’ position on chance.²⁸

A closer look at the quotations themselves is also instructive. Dronke writes that ‘it is well known that his version of the *Liber de causis* was used by Alan de Lille, especially in his Parisian period [i.e. before 1179]’.²⁹ This, however, is still too late for William, even if we assume that he lived far into the 1160s. Dronke admits that the direct quotations occur only in Alan’s late *De fide catholica* (1185-1195). More importantly, however, he ignores the fact that the *Liber de causis* entered the West under the title of *De expositione bonitatis purae* (the title used by the translator Gerard of Cremona) and that Alan himself refers to the work as

²⁴ *Philosophia*, ed. G. MAURACH, Pretoria, 1980, p. 28 (‘Sunt quidam, qui neque Constantini scripta neque alterius physici unquam legerint’); pp. 26-30 (name of Constantine and Iohannitius).

²⁵ DRONKE, *William of Conches and the “New Aristotle”*, p. 163.

²⁶ See my ed. *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, pp. xlv-lxii, based on my *The Glosa as Instrument for the Development of Natural Philosophy: William of Conches’ Commentary on Boethius*, in *Boethius in the Middle Ages. Latin and Vernacular Traditions of the ‘Consolatio Philosophiae’*, eds. M. HOENEN AND L. NAUTA, Leiden, 1997, pp. 3-39.

²⁷ The best study is D. ELFORD, *Developments in the Natural Philosophy of William of Conches: A Study of the Dragmaticon and a Consideration of its Relationship to the Philosophia*, unpublished diss., Cambridge, 1983.

²⁸ *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, ed. NAUTA, p. 292.

²⁹ DRONKE, *William of Conches and the “New Aristotle”*, p. 160.

Aphorismi de essentia summae bonitatis.³⁰ In another treatise from about 1200, the anonymous author refers to the work as ‘Aristoteles in *Bonitate pura*’. The Boethius commentator, however, refers to the work under the title which it only later received, ‘*Liber de causis*’. He distinguishes between the *propositiones* and the *commentum*, ascribing the *commentum* to Alfarabi, as was quite common in the thirteenth century. To the best of my knowledge, the title ‘*Liber de causis*’ is not to be found in the twelfth century.³¹

As for the Eustratius citation, Dronke expresses surprise that I did not give the place in Grosseteste’s version.³² The reason is simply that I could not find it in the partial edition of Eustratius’ comments. (We still lack the edition of Eustratius on *Ethics* book VI.) But the occurrence of the name itself, in combination with the name of Aristotle, already gives us the terminus post quem of 1247, for, as was said above, the name of this Greek commentator was unknown to the Latin West before the time Grosseteste translated the *Ethics*.³³

Apart from these quotations and the format, the commentary contains a number of features which are either untypical of William or cannot be found in his other works. The reviser shows a marked tendency to christianise the text. He has a long gloss on Christian martyrs, referring to ‘in passione beati Iuliani’, which he probably took over from the Remigian tradition. He relates events about ‘beatus Benedictus’ (111v), ‘beatus Laurentius’ (115r), ‘beatus Iohannis euangelista’ (115r), ‘Thomas apostolus’ (115r); he incorporates the story of Joseph and his brothers (117r); cites ‘Gregorius Nazareus [sic]’ (136v, taken over from the Remigian tradition); has a christianising gloss on Jupiter’s two jars (f. 39v), and so forth.³⁴ In general he focuses more closely on the Christian character of the *Consolatio*, especially in books III and IV, than William does.

The commenting technique used by the reviser also differs from that of William. In his commentaries William almost invariably starts with a lemma, often followed by ‘Hucusque’ or a form of ‘ostendere’ (e.g. ‘Ostendo conquestione..., ostendit...’). He then focuses on the ‘continuity’ of the passage, that is, its relationship with the previous and next sections. This second step is marked by such formulas as ‘Modo’, ‘Continuatio’ and ‘Et hoc est (quod sequitur)’. The third and last stage is the explanation of individual words, and is often introduced by formulas such as ‘Et hoc est (quod ait)’. In those passages which do not have an equivalent in William’s commentary, we see the reviser using a looser format. He often employs a kind of ‘divisio textus’, using phrases such as ‘ostendit tria: in prima..., secunda...,

³⁰ C. H. LOHR, *The Pseudo-Aristotelian Liber de Causis and Latin Theories of Science in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. KRAYE et al., London, 1986, pp. 53-62, at 55-57 referring also to Alan’s *Contra haereticos* in *P.L.* 220, col. 332C and 334B.

³¹ See e.g. THOMAS RICKLIN, *Die ‘Physica’ und der ‘Liber de causis’ im 12. Jahrhundert*, Freiburg (Schweiz), 1995, esp. pp. 99-121, discussing the anonymous tracts *Liber de causis primis et secundis* and *Homo cum in honore esset*. The author of the latter treatise refers to the work as ‘Aristoteles in *Bonitate pura*’. Both treatises date from the late twelfth century or from the turn of the thirteenth century. Cf. DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, *Avicenna’s De anima in the Latin West*, London-Turin, 2000, pp. 208-211, 216, 221. I have also checked the databases *CETEDOC* and *P.L.*, but did not find any twelfth-century reference to the work except for Alan of Lille’s *Aphorismi de essentia summae bonitatis*.

³² DRONKE, *William of Conches and the “New Aristotle”*, p. 158 n. 8. He is wrong to say that I did not give the quotation itself. At that place in the introduction to my edition, I referred the reader to my *The Thirteenth-Century Revision*, where all the relevant passages are to be found. (cf. n. 000 above).

³³ The editor of Grosseteste’s translation and Eustratius’ commentary, H. L. F. MERCKEN, tells me that he cannot remember having encountered the phrase ‘cartula brevis’ in Eustratius. He is no longer working on the text, but he suggests to me that the phrase may come from Albert the Great, who refers frequently to Eustratius (as ‘commentator’). I have, however, not found it in Albert’s writings.

³⁴ BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 114v: ‘in passione beati Iuliani (...)’ – a gloss which he probably took over from the Remigian tradition (see e.g. Paris, BN 6401A, f. 74r). On Jupiter’s two jars (II pr. 2), he writes: ‘Poteris etiam sic exponere et melius: per iouem deus creator omnium accipitur (...)’ (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 139v). The gloss with the reference to ‘Nazareus’ is also taken over from the Remigian tradition: see Paris, BN 6401A, f. 88r (‘Gregorius Nazanzenus...’).

tercia...’ – an enumeration which is not used by William.³⁵ He frequently uses ‘supple’ – a phrase which does not occur in William’s *Glosae super Boetium* nor (as far as I can see) in the *Glosae super Platonem*.³⁶ The reviser also uses ‘manifestum est’ (said of conclusions or propositions), which is not used by William in this sense.³⁷ Other terms not found in William’s *Glosae* (nor, as far as I can see, in the Plato commentary) are ‘passus’ for passage (where William uses a term such as ‘uersus’) and ‘lectura’ for interpretation (where William usually writes ‘sententia’).³⁸ The reviser derives much more information from the Remigian tradition than William did.³⁹ He also gives information on the metrics of Boethius’ poems – information ultimately derived from Lupus of Ferrières’ treatise on Boethius’ metrics. The reviser also tries to write the Greek quotations in Greek characters, suggesting even something of a textual interpretation (possibly derived from the Remigian tradition as well: ‘Aliud autem grecum corruptum est, sed in latina interpretatione sic dicitur (...).’⁴⁰ Cross-references to other works by William are systematically omitted.⁴¹

Of course, these features are not conclusive evidence that William could not have written this revision, but added to the evidence furnished by the quotations as well as by a study of the text, its format and the textual traditions of William’s authentic *Glosae* and this revised text, the simplest and most economic explanation of all these differences seems to be virtually unavoidable, namely, that William was not the person responsible for the revision.

³⁵ E.g. London, BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 47v, f. 61v, f. 91r, f. 94r, and elsewhere.

³⁶ E.g. London, BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 18r, f. 21r, f. 22r, f. 31r, f. 52r, f. 67v, and elsewhere.

³⁷ E.g. London, BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 65r, f. 67v, f. 95v, f. 97r, f. 123v, and elsewhere.

³⁸ E.g. London, BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 126v (‘Sed quia quidam male exponunt passum istum’) and f. 74r (‘aliter potes legere passum istum’); f. 96r (‘et ista lectura magis est consona littere’). The reviser also uses ‘dicit in textu’ (e.g. f. 63v and f. 139r), which does not occur in William’s *Glosae*.

³⁹ To mention just a few examples: on Catullus (London, BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 69v; cf. Paris, BN lat. 6401A, f. 37r); on Busiris (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 54v; cf. 6401A, f. 26v), ‘tyrannus Dyonisius’ (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 72r; cf. 6401A, f. 39r), ‘ambrotos’ (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 73v; cf. 6401A, f. 40r). In general, the reviser is much more interested in the Roman background of Boethius than William.

⁴⁰ BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 117r on IV pr. 6 (possibly indebted to the Remigian commentary tradition; cf. interlinear gloss in the Remigian comm. in Paris, BN lat. 6401A, f. 75v: ‘leuia oportet autem post hec deum ar<...> omnia conuocare’). Boethius’ quotations in Greek characters are also found e.g. at BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 73v, f. 115r and f. 116v.

⁴¹ On II pr. 6 William had mentioned as modes of destruction ‘exustio’ and ‘eluuio’, concluding ‘Vnde illa exustio uel illud diluuium contingat, super Platonem exponemus’ (*Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae super Boetium*, ed. NAUTA, p. 117). The reviser omits the entire section, replacing it by a long section starting with ‘legitur in hystoria romana quod romani prius reges habuerunt (...)’ (BL Royal 15.B.III, f. 53v; cf. interlinear gloss at f. 53r: ‘in hystoria romana’). Naturally, all the references to William’s future works are omitted by the reviser. (On the absence of such references in William’s authentic works, see my ed., p. cxxiii + n. 170.). William referred to his *Philosophia* in his Plato commentary (ed. E. JEAUNEAU, Paris, 1965, p. 58) and in the *Dragmaticon* (ed. RONCA, 7). There are no such references to works already published by William in the revised Boethius commentary.