

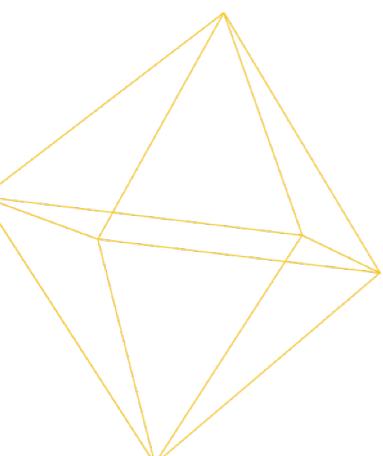
First-Person Visibility: Ælfric's Authorship in his Prefaces

Myrthe Reuver, BA English

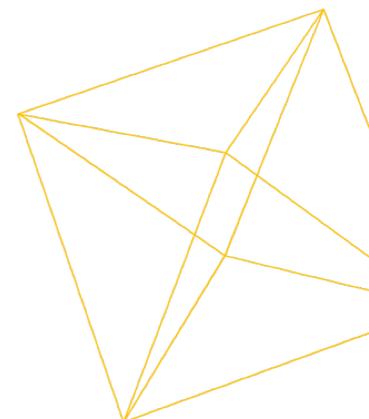
Supervisors:

drs. Tangelder & dr. Chardonnens, English

department



Radboud Honours Project, 2015-2017



Overview of my project

1. Ælfric? Ælfric!
2. Methodology : digital analysis & Denmark
3. Results
4. Conclusion & Explanation
5. Questions and Discussion

Ælfric? Ælfric! A (very short) introduction

- Ælfric of Eynsham (955 to +/- 1015)
- Winchester; Benedictine Reform
- Bible translations and sermons
- Anxious, self-aware authorship
- Lay patronage and closeness

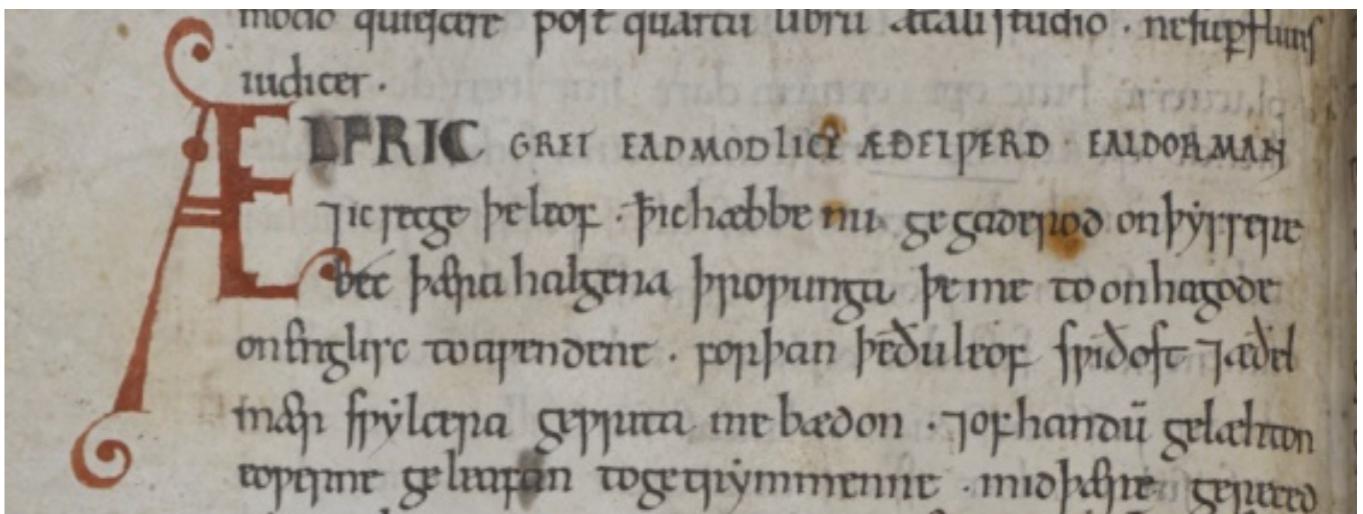


Ælfric of Eynsham
@Aelfricus

Monk, mass-priest, bestselling author,
loather of the sinful, wannabe-saint

📍 Eynsham
📅 Joined March 2013

- Unique style
- Prefaces



Preface to the Lives of Saints

Filled with self reference

We will not draw out this narrative any longer, in case you might think it tedious; but you should pray for intercession from these innocent martyrs.”

Nativity of the Innocents, Homilies I

“Ælfric friendly greets alderman Aehtelweard, and I say to you, my dear, that I have now gathered in this book the holy Passions of Saints..”

Ælfric's systematic use of language

The brand 'Ælfric' (Reuver, 2017)

- "extremely nervous" (Magennis, 2007)
- Prose like Old English poetry: rhythm, alliteration, & 'half-line' (Gneuss, 2009; Wilcox, 1994)
- No mere 'translations', but more 'adoptions' or 're-inventions.' (Gneuss 2009)

Use of onginnan/beginnen is systematic, verb positions are "carefully selected" (Los 2000, p. 271)

Anecdote: personally changing all acc → dative in a whole Homilie Series (Irvine, 2006)

Earlier comments on the Prefaces

Swan (2009)

“we” = authorial voice

“ic” = more personal

“the shift from ‘I’ to ‘we’ is to move the locus of authority **away from a named individual and towards an author, translator and interpreter** whose individual identity is imbued with the **shared authority** of all teachers of the truth.”

But: what does the data say?

Research Question

“What do patterns in Ælfric of Eynsham’s use of first person pronouns in his Old English writing tell us about his authorship ?”

2. Methodology and Denmark

Toronto Corpus: 200 Ælfric texts

Finding patterns with digital text analysis



Summerschool “Text Mining the Great Unread”

@  AARHUS
UNIVERSITY

```

PrefHomII.freqs.rel.t <- PrefHomII.freqs.t/sum(PrefHomII.freqs.t)*100
PrefHomII.freqs.rel.t[1:10]

PrefGen.freqs.rel.t <- PrefGen.freqs.t/sum(PrefGen.freqs.t)*100
PrefGen.freqs.rel.t[1:10]

PrefGram.freqs.rel.t <- PrefGram.freqs.t/sum(PrefGram.freqs.t)*100
PrefGram.freqs.rel.t[1:10]

Saints.freqs.rel.t <- Saints.freqs.t/sum(Saints.freqs.t)*100
Saints.freqs.rel.t[1:10]

Let.freqs.rel.t <- Let.freqs.t/sum(Let.freqs.t)*100
Let.freqs.rel.t[1:10]

Ael.freqs.rel.t <- Ael.freqs.t/sum(Ael.freqs.t)*100
Ael.freqs.rel.t[1:10]

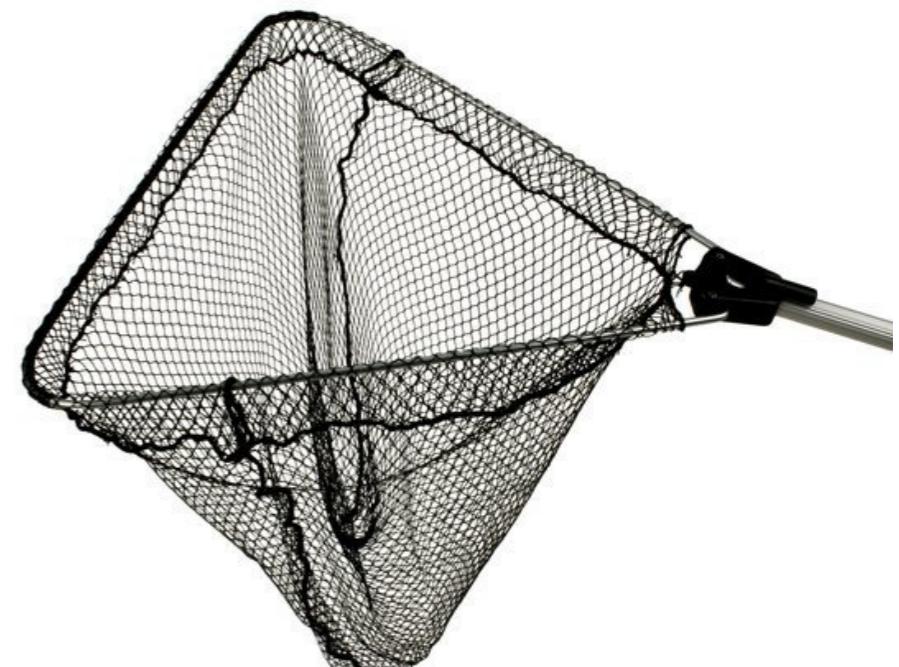
# individual word frequencies of singular and plural
Singular <- c('ic', 'me')
Plural <- c('we', 'us')

PersonalRefHomIAverage <- data.frame(Singular = rep(0,5), Plural =
rep(0,5))
for (w in 1:length(Singular)){
  PersonalRefHomIAverage[w,1] <- AverageHomI[Singular[w]]
  PersonalRefHomIAverage[w,2] <- AverageHomI[Plural[w]]
}

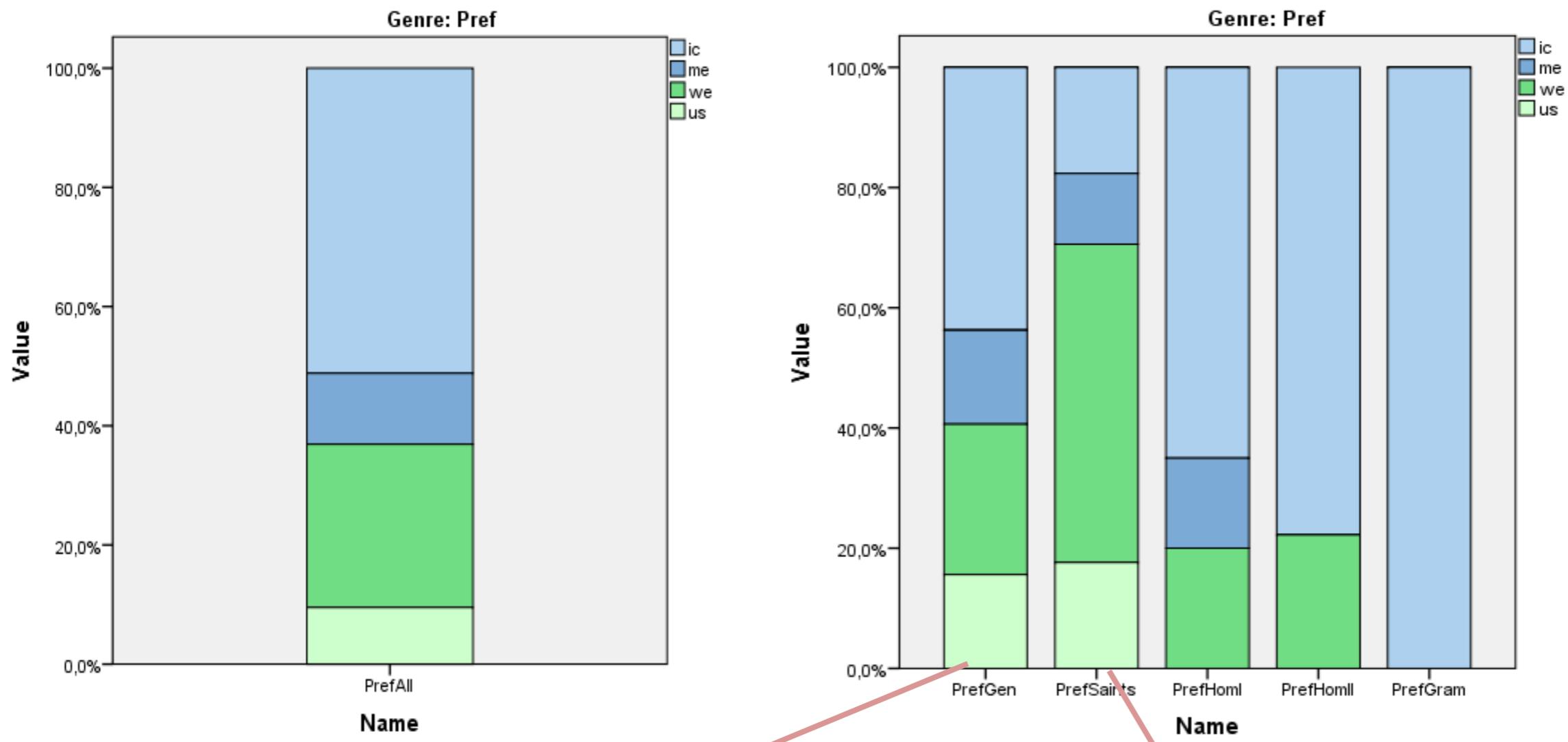
#HomI

PersonalReferenceHomIAverage.dt <- data.frame(Singular = rep(0,5),
Plural = rep(0,5))
for (w in 1:length(Singular)){
  (PersonalReferenceHomIAverage.dt[w,1]) <- HomI.freqs.t[Singular[w]]
  (PersonalReferenceHomIAverage.dt[w,2]) <- HomI.freqs.t[Plural[w]]
}

```



3. Results → Distribution



“We also say beforehand that the book is very spiritually deep to understand, and we write no more than the naked narrative”

We say nothing new in this composition, because it has stood written down before in Latin books [...]”.

Genesis & Saints

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	14	8
Accusative	5	5

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	43%	25%
Accusative	15,6%	15,6%

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	3	9
Accusative	2	3

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	17,6%	52,9%
Accusative	11,8%	17,6%

Saints vs Homilies

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	3	9
Accusative	2	3

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	17,6%	52,9%
Accusative	11,8%	17,6%

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	13	4
Accusative	3	0

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	65%	20%
Accusative	15%	0%

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	7	2
Accusative	0	0

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	77,8%	22,2%
Accusative	0%	0%

3 Results → Frequencies (raw)

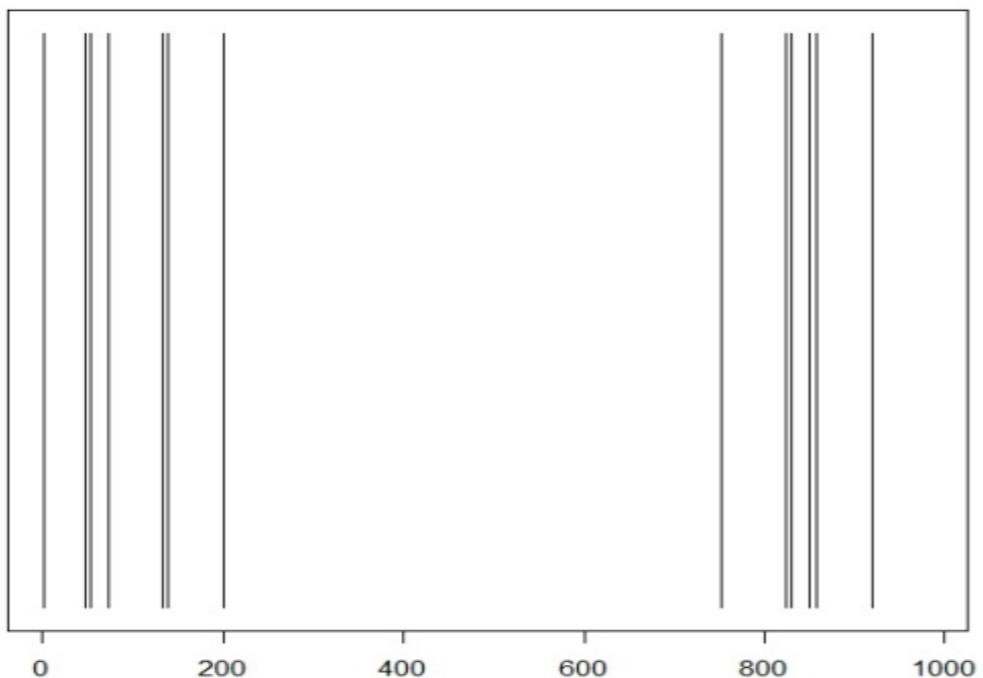
Prefaces	Word Token	ic.	godes	we	hoc	god	nu	heora	bið	gode
	Frequency	43	23	23	22	22	17	13	12	12

Lives of Saints	Word Token	ic.	cowæd	god	bu	heora	godes	we	halgan	weard
	Frequency	583	539	492	432	427	399	386	384	355

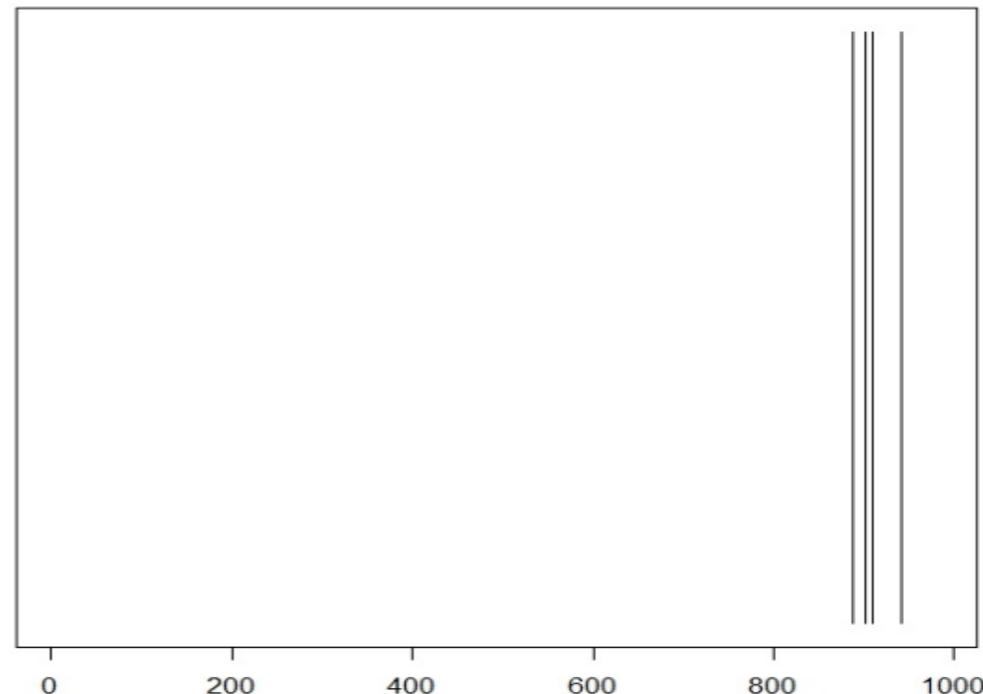
3. Results → Frequencies (relative)

	Word	<i>ic.</i>	<i>godes</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>hoc</i>	<i>god</i>	<i>nu</i>	<i>heora</i>	<i>bið</i>	<i>gode</i>
Prefaces	Token	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Relative Frequency	1.317 4020	0.70465 69	0.704656 9	0.674019 6	0.674019 6	0.520833 3	0.398284 3	0.367647 1	0.367647 1
The Lives of Saints	Word	<i>ic.</i>	<i>cwead</i>	<i>god</i>	<i>hu</i>	<i>heora</i>	<i>godes</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>halgan</i>	<i>weard</i>
	Token	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Relative Frequency	0.579 9322	0.53616 3	0.489411 0	0.429726 7	0.424753 1	0.396900 4	0.383968 8	0.381979 3	0.353131 9

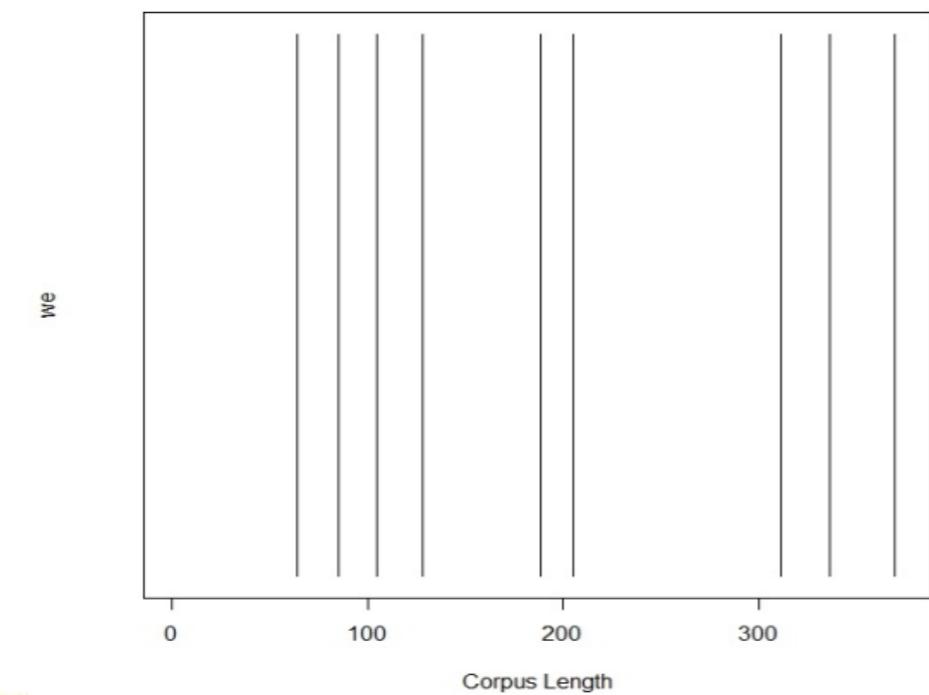
Dispersion plot of 'ic' in Preface of Homl



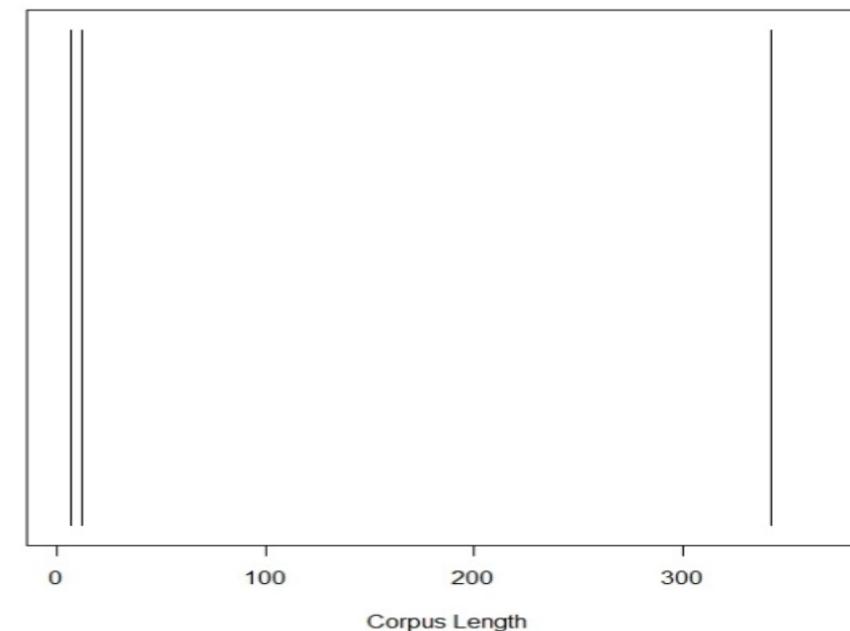
Dispersion plot of 'we' in Preface of Homl



Dispersion plot of 'we' in Preface of Saints



Dispersion plot of 'ic' in Preface of Saints



Results : Topic Model

Topic 1	<u>ABSTRACT</u>	<u>JESUS</u>	<u>HOLY</u>	Topic 5	<u>EGYPT</u>	Topic 7	Topic 8	<u>HEAVENLY</u>	<u>EARTHLY</u>
	<u>LORE</u>	<u>WORDS</u>					<u>KINGDOM</u>	<u>KINGDOM</u>	
[1]	"byð"	"gast"	"het"	"þing"	"halga"	"cyning"	"mine"	"hys"	"sind"
[2]	"rice"	"sunu"	"sona"	"sæde"	"sona"	"sona"	"sind"	"sceal"	"ðisum"
[3]	"sume"	"nis"	"andwyrde"	"gast"	"wer"	"lande"	"scep"	"menn"	"ðæra"
[4]	"wif"	"urum"	"casere"	"eall"	"martinus"	"folc"	"sceal"	"butan"	"rice"
[5]	"hyre"	"gesceop"	"wurdon"	"word"	"het"	"het"	"lare"	"mann"	"dæge"
[6]	"þing"	"sceolon"	"apostol"	"lare"	"sæde"	"folce"	"oðrum"	"hym"	"dæg"
[7]	"sceal"	"hæfð"	"min"	"sawle"	"siððan"	"gehaten"	"sæde"	"hyne"	"ðing"
[8]	"sind"	"synna"	"godum"	"her"	"ferde"	"hæfde"	"lufe"	"habban"	"eordan"
[9]	"bysum"	"þing"	"wundra"	"butan"	"eode"	"ongean"	"sceolon"	"obbe"	"witodlice"
[10]	"sylfum"	"butan"	"naman"	"bec"	"casere"	"moyses"	"oðre"	"swaþeah"	"lichaman"
	<u>Pref_Gram</u>	<u>Pref_Gram</u>	<u>Pref_HomI</u>	<u>Pref_HomI</u>	<u>Pref_HomII</u>	<u>Pref_HomII</u>	<u>Pref_Saints</u>	<u>Pref_Saints</u>	
[1]	4	4	9	9	4	1	4	4	4
[2]	7	8	8	1	9	4	6	3	

4. Conclusion and Explanation

- “we” more connected to the material than to Ælfric’s own identity -> uniqueness of **Saints**
- The prefaces mostly show a unity in **topic**, but also a (slight) difference in distribution and frequency of pronouns, with Saints being the odd one out.

Thanks to..

- Monique Tangelder and Sándor Chardonnens
- “Textmining” Aarhus Summer School,
specifically Kristoffer Laigaard Nielbo
- The Honours Academy

References

Ælfric. *Ælfric's Prefaces*. Ed. Jonathan Wilcox. Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1994.

Gneuss, Helmut. *Ælfric of Eynsham: His Life, Times, and Writings*. Medieval Institute Publications, 2009.

Kleist, Aaron J. "The Ælfric of Eynsham Project: An Introduction." *The Heroic Age*, 2007.

Los, Bettelou. Onginnan/beginnan with bare and to-infinitive in Ælfric.

In Fischer O, Rosenbach A, Stein D, editors. *Pathways of Change: Grammaticalization in English*. (Studies in Language Companion Series). Philadelphia: Benjamins. 2000. p. 251-274.

Magennis, Hugh. "Ælfric Scholarship." In: *A Companion to Ælfric*. Ed. Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Swan, Mary. "Identity and Ideology in Ælfric's Prefaces." In: *A Companion to Ælfric*. Ed. Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Wilcox, Jonathan. *Ælfric's Prefaces*. Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1994.

Irvine, Susan E. "Beginnings and Transitions: Old English," in *The Oxford History of English*, ed. L. Mugglestone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 32-60.

Reuver, Myrthe E. *First-Person Visibility : Ælfric's Authorship in his Prefaces*. Unpublished Honours Thesis (available on request).

nitē lingue infero. quia argui& me prætatus multoꝝ fideliꝝ
& maxime æfelpandi ducis. & adelmanu nři. q̄ ardentissime
nřes interpretationes amplectuntur latitando. sed de cu-
modo quiescat post quartū librū Atali studio. ne si op̄flum̄
iudicer.

ALFRIC GRET EADMOD LICÆDE PERD EALDORMAN
Tic regge heleof. si chæbbe mi ge gadrood on hylf regre
bet hæfa halgena þriopunga he me to on hægode
on hinglisc twa fendent. forhan he duleof spidost. ja del
in ari frýlæra geputta me bædon. 7 of handū gelachton
wære me gelæfan to ge tƿyrrin menne. mid hæfhe ge ne
nýrre. he ge on eorlum ge reorde næfdon ari. 7 ri past leor
hept a fendon on ham tƿa ærnum bocum hefe halgena
þriopunga. 7 lif. he angel cynn mid fætols dæg. 7 hæfhe
Huge recaid us heft þas boc be hæfa halgena. 7 ri opungū
7 lif. ge diltan he mið stan meni mid heora heuningū br
tƿux him riðið. Ne regge ye næ hineg mper on hylf regre
ge ret nýrre. forhan dehit stod gefylun apputen on ledan
bocu heah hefa lærpedan men heyston. Nelle retic mid
learungū hyllic licettan. forhan he ge let off fuller fæderas
7 halige lafropas hit appiton on ledan spræce. tolangu
gemynde. 7 to tƿyrrin menge ham to peridum mannu. Su
- ritaga clypode þurh hon halgan gaſt 7 cƿ. Manebilis dſ
insanctis suis. &cōcēre. Pundorlic is god on his halgu. he
sylf for gref mihte 7 sƿenigðe his folce. gebletrod is he
7. Regnum dſ erla munus en hæmum hæfðe on hæfðe

Questions?

nðri fñylcna gesjuta me bædon . 7 of handū gelacton
wyrme gelæfan to getiymmenne . mid hñhte gesjuto
ñrre . he ge on eorlum gesjropde naðdon aȝi . Hu past leof
re aþenden on ham tra . erium bocum heora halgna
ropunga 7 lif . he angel cynn midfneohr dagū ruris ñad .
Hu ge reað us heas boc behðia halgna . Ðiropungū
lif . gedilton he imjnstær meni mid heora heuningū br
wux him ruris ñad . Ne gege re nánþing mƿer on hñtthe
getmÿre . forhan dehit stod gefylm aƿuten on ledan
ocū heah hehalðedan men þnyston . Nelle reað mid
eczungū hyllic licettin . forhan hegeleasfullr faðeras
halige lafetopas hit aƿiton on ledan spacie . tolangu
emýnde . 7 to qyymminge ham to rendum manu . Su
itga clypode hƿi hñ halgan gaſt 7 c̄ . Mæbilis d̄
sƿitca sƿitca occæste . Pundorlic is god on his halgu . he
ylf for ḡd mihte 7 sƿitngðe his folce . gebletrod is he
od . Pe aƿitað fela pundra on hñtthe bec . forhan he
od is pundorlic on his halgu spaspa reði rædon 7 his
algena pundra ruris ñad hine . forhan heit forhite
a pundra hƿi hñ . An ƿoruld cymineg hæd fela hƿina
mislice picnefas . he ne mag beon ruris ful cymineg
uton hehæbbe heaðincde hehū gebýruad 7 spylce heuning
nen . he heafðast nÿre hi gebedon . Spa is tac ham