

SIR ISRAEL GOLLANCZ MEMORIAL LECTURE

JOHN TREVISA AND THE USE OF ENGLISH

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JOHN TREVISA stands at the intersection of a number of pathways in the social and intellectual life of late fourteenth-century England. First and foremost he introduces in no uncertain way, in his translations of two enormous encyclopaedic works and a number of shorter pieces, a new genre of English writing, the prose of historical and scientific information.¹ Secondly, the context for this vast undertaking—that of a nobleman's castle in the West Midlands—puts him in the clerical tradition of the provision of useful learning for the lay nobility, which (as far as the later Middle Ages were concerned) originates with the twelfth- and thirteenth-century *specula principum* and other encyclopaedias of such men as John of Salisbury, Ægidius Romanus, and Bartholomæus Anglicus. The process of converting this kind of material into vernacular form happened first in France in the late thirteenth century, and mainly through translation from the Latin (rather than through the composition of original works in the vernacular). Peter Dembowski has recently proposed the term 'service translation' for this faithful, utilitarian kind of translation to distinguish it from the earlier, freer use of Latin sources for (mainly verse) literature in the vernacular—the sort of 'translation' or adaptation exemplified in the verse of Jean de Meun. Jean de Meun also offers an early example of the newer genre in his prose translation of the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius. Dembowski emphasizes that the distinction between verse and prose is crucial to this process:

Faithful translations into Old French were associated, in the XIIIth century, with broad attacks on imaginative literature as 'lie'. Menda-

¹ For a recent account of the chronology and canon of Trevisa's writings see A. S. G. Edwards, 'John Trevisa' in A. S. G. Edwards (ed.), *Middle English Prose: A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres* (Rutgers UP, New Brunswick, NJ, 1984), Chap. 8.

cious literature was, in turn, associated with verse. Thus, in about 1200, Buoncompagno da Signa declares the general clerical 'truth': 'Tota scriptura trahit originem a prosa. Nam rithmi et metra sunt medicata suffragia, que a prosa originem trahunt.'²

'Service translation' is an appropriate term for what Trevisa was doing for the first time in English, and he is outspoken in his own distrust of poetic discourse in at least one personal comment.

God woot what þis ys to mene (he says, after dutifully translating a piece of Latin verse into dreadful rhymed couplets), bote poetes in here manere of speche feyneþ as þey euerych kunde craft and lyuyng hadde a dyuers god, euerych fram ooþer. (Bk. I, Chap. 48)³

In an English-language context, Trevisa's activity as a translator is given additional significance by the decline in the use of French among children of gentlemen to which he himself draws attention in one of the longest of his original interpolations in the *Polychronicon*, where he talks of the change-over to the use of English in place of French as a medium of instruction in Latin grammar.⁴ The fact that he translates neither from Latin into French nor from French into English is itself a reflection of this shift in the relative importance of the two vernaculars in provincial England at this time. French versions of two of the works he translated were in being before 1380, products of the group of scholars working under the patronage of Charles V: *De Proprietatibus Rerum* by Bartholomæus Anglicus was translated by Jean Corbechon and the *De Regimine Principum* of Gilles de Rome (Ægidius Romanus) by Jean Golein. If Trevisa knew of these French versions he apparently did not use them.⁵

² Peter F. Dembowski, 'Learned Latin Treatises in French: Inspiration, Plagiarism, and Translation', *Viator* 17 (1986), pp. 255–69, quotation p. 258. Buoncompagno is cited by Dembowski from C. Sutter, *Aus Leben und Schriften des Magisters Buoncompagno* (Freiburg i. Br.-Leipzig, 1894), p. 106. See also Richard F. Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (UTP, Toronto, 1980), Chaps 3, 5; Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: the Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066–1530* (Methuen, London, 1984), Chap. 3.

³ London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius D. VII, fol. 44r. Unless otherwise specified, all quotations from the *Polychronicon* are from this manuscript, by kind permission of the British Library Board.

⁴ Book I, Chap. 59. The passage is printed in Kenneth Sisam (ed.), *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose* (OUP, Oxford, 1921, repr. 1948), p. 149.

⁵ Dembowski, art. cit., p. 258 and notes 9 and 10.

There is a slim body of evidence connecting him to another important fourteenth-century movement—the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. From Caxton onwards he was credited with nothing less than a complete Bible in English of his own making, a tradition which Caxton may have created, by inference from the discussion of Bible-translation in the preface to the *Polychronicon*. After the failure of repeated searches for the text of this translation, Trevisa is nowadays seen as possibly participating only in the early experimental stages of the Wycliffite Bible, but to judge from the degree to which some of his practices in his own translations are taken up and rationalized in the Later Version of the Wycliffite Bible, his example may have been influential.⁶

It is clear also that he shared in the contemporary university interest in grammar in all its aspects, not only from his remarks on John of Cornwall's new methods in the *Polychronicon* but also in his expanded treatment of the grammatical implications of theological terms in the early chapters of *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (as has recently been pointed out by Dr David Thomson).⁷

Of central importance in any consideration of Trevisa's aims as a translator must be the Dialogue on translation between the Lord and the Clerk and the dedicatory Epistle—the two original pieces prefixed to some of the copies of the *Polychronicon*. They have, of course, long been known in versions derived from Caxton's printed text; I have recently published an edition of them made on the basis of the Cotton manuscript, and I would like to use this opportunity to re-examine their implications for Trevisa's conception of his role as a translator and the strategy of his approach to his Latin sources.⁸ As far as the latter topic is

⁶ David C. Fowler, 'John Trevisa and the English Bible', *MP* 58 (1950), 81–98.

⁷ *An Edition of the Middle English Grammatical Texts* (Garland, New York and London, 1984), p. xvf. Trevisa's connection with Latin education at grammar school level may have continued at Berkeley: the free grammar school at Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, was re-established in 1384 by Lady Katherine Berkeley (d. 1385) the step-grandmother of Lord Thomas IV. See Nicholas Orme, *Education in the West of England 1066–1548* (University of Exeter, Exeter, 1976), pp. 16, 190–9. The character of the MSS (and of the texts themselves) makes it unlikely that his translations were intended for use in this kind of context, however.

⁸ Ronald Waldron, 'Trevisa's Original Prefaces on Translation: a Critical Edition' in Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron and Joseph S. Wittig (eds), *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane* (D. S. Brewer, Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 285–99. Quotations from the *Dialogus* and *Epistola* are from this edition.

concerned I shall confine my attention exclusively to the *Polychronicon* as the earliest of his major translations and will be looking in particular, towards the end of the lecture, at the section of Book VI containing in some manuscripts a substitute translation which has been seen as a portion of an earlier Trevisa version.

Though the *Dialogus* and *Epistola* cannot be overvalued as historical documents, it would be a mistake to regard them as factual records of a historical moment in 1385 or 7.⁹ As the generic titles of the two pieces themselves and the generic names of the two characters of the *Dialogus* clearly signal, they are free literary compositions in which the moments of conception and inception of the work of translation are dramatized before the reader. (The *Polychronicon* is unusual, though not unique, in being introduced in this way.)¹⁰ As the reader opens the book the project is not yet begun and even the *Epistola*, unlike many dedicatory epistles speaks of it as a future undertaking rather than as a task already accomplished.¹¹

⁹ The composition of them is, of course, closely associated with (though it may not actually have preceded) the translation of the *Polychronicon* itself. In London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius D. VII, which belongs (together with Manchester, Chetham's Library MS 11397) to what is probably the oldest stratum of the extant manuscripts, the two pieces are written immediately before the main text, which follows on without a break (there is no Tabula in this manuscript). In one early manuscript—London, BL MS Stowe 65—however, they are copied after the main text, and they are entirely absent from London, BL MS Additional 24194 and a group of seven affiliated manuscripts, including the Cambridge, St. John's College manuscript used as copytext for the Rolls Series edition. See also note 15 below.

¹⁰ An interesting parallel is the 'Prologue' to the contemporary (non-Wycliffite) New Testament translations edited by Anna C. Puares in *A Fourteenth Century English Biblical Version* (Cambridge, 1902, 1904), which is in the form of a conversation between two novice inquirers (addressed as 'brother' and 'sister') and a more learned brother.

¹¹ Marie de France's Prologue to her *Lais*, for instance, which is addressed to an unnamed king (probably Henry II) speaks of the composition as already in the past:

Rimez en ai e fait ditié,
 Soventes fiez en ai veillié.
 En l'honor de vus, nobles reis,
 Ki tant estes pruz e curteis,
 A ki tute joie se encline,
 E en ki quoer tuz biens racine,
 M'entremis des lais assembler,
 Par rime faire e reconter.

(edited by Alfred Ewert, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, pp. 1–2)

The literary dialogue has a long history and was probably known to Trevisa through many examples but certainly through the dialogue which he translated, and which may indeed have been his model for this one—the Dialogue between the *Knight* and the Clerk (long attributed to William of Ockham).¹² There are also affinities with other Middle English literary conversations. His two characters are related to the historical Sir Thomas and his chaplain in somewhat the same way as the Man in Black and Dreamer in the *Book of the Duchess* to John of Gaunt and Chaucer the poet. Chaucer's dramatization of the relationship is more subtle, but there is a similar overemphasized acceptance of the fall guy role by the writers in both cases, a similar casting of the Lord in the role of rather peremptory instructor. Trevisa's Dominus, as we should expect in this non-pastoral context, addresses his servant Clericus as *pou* throughout, while the Clerk uses the respectful personal pronoun, *ȝe*. But the dramatization goes much further than this. Dominus is given all the reasonable arguments, while Clericus's objections become more and more desperate, more and more timid and brief. As Dominus's exasperation grows, his impatience becomes progressively more scathing and colourful:

Pou spekst wonderlych, vor *þe* lewed man wot noȝt what a scholde axe ... (ed.cit., ll. 84f.)

Þis reson ys worþy to be ploned yn a plod and leyd in pouþer of lewednes and of schame. Hyt myȝte wel be *þat* *þou* makest *þis* reson onlych in murthe and in game ... (93–5)

And in response to Clericus's half-hearted interjection, *Þe reson mot stonde bot hyt be assoyled*, Dominus replies:

A blere-yȝed man, bote he were al blynd of wyt, myȝte yseo *þe* solucion of *þis* reson; and *þey* a were blynd a myȝte grope *þe* solucion, bote *ȝef* hys velyng hym faylede. (96–100)

This leads into a long historical note by Dominus on the

In the Preface to the *Astrolabe*, addressed to *Lyte Lowys my sone*, Chaucer starts off in the future tense (*I purpose to teche the, wol I shewe the*) but switches to past tense towards the end (*have it translatid*). F. N. Robinson (ed.), *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd edition (OUP, London, 1957), pp. 545f.

¹² *Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum*, edited by Aaron J. Perry, EETS OS 167 (1925). Ockham's authorship was challenged, and that of Pierre du Bois proposed instead, by S. Riezler, *Die literarischen Widersacher der Päpste zur Zeit Ludwig des Baiers* (Leipzig, 1874), pp. 143–48.

translation of scripture, punctuated by further disparaging references to the feebleness of the arguments brought up by the Clerk. It is all highly dramatic and amusing—and, in the form in which it is presented, a literary fiction. But if John of Gaunt found in the *Man in Black* of the poem a truer self reflected than he had known, then the same might be true of Sir Thomas Berkeley. Or perhaps we should say, more prosaically in the case of Trevisa, that the dialogue is too one-sided to represent the waking reality of the relationship between the two people and may have been designed to present Sir Thomas himself with a formulation of his attitude to translation into English. At all events it is difficult to separate the contributions of the two in terms of mover and moved.

If the impulse for the enterprise came from Sir Thomas, Trevisa has enthusiastically accepted his place in an English tradition of co-operation between nobility and clergy in the education of the laity—a tradition which for him stretches back to King Alfred. Again he makes Dominus the mouthpiece:

Also Kyng Alured, þat foundede þe vnyuersite of Oxenford, translatede þe beste lawes into Englysch tonge and a gret del of þe Sauter out of Latyn into Englysch, and made Wyrefryth, byschop of Wyrecetre, translate Seint Gregore hys bokes Dialoges out of Latyn ynto Saxon. Also Cedmon of Whyteby was inspired of the Holy Gost and made wonder poesyes an Englysch nyȝ of al þe storyes of holy wryt. Also þe holy man Beda translatede Seint Iohn hys gospel out of Latyn ynto Englysch. (135–44)

At this point we may remember that until the creation of the see of Gloucester in 1541 Berkeley itself was in the diocese of Worcester, where there was a strong awareness in the early thirteenth century of the lines of continuity with the Anglo-Saxon past. In fact it has been asserted, on the basis of annotations in manuscripts of Old English prose, that 'interest in Old English in the West Midlands was not spasmodic antiquarianism but must have run a steady course to the end of the Middle Ages'.¹³ It is disappointing, therefore, to find no evidence that

¹³ Dorothy Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1957), p. 106, cited (p. 226) by A. F. Campbell, 'Middle English in Old English Manuscripts' in Beryl Rowland (ed.), *Chaucer and Middle English Studies in honour of Rossell Hope Robbins* (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1974), pp. 218–29. See also E. G. Stanley, 'Lazamon's Antiquarian Sentiments', *MÆ* 38 (1969), pp. 23–37.

Trevisa was directly acquainted with King Alfred's Preface to the *Pastoral Care*, the Worcester copy of which we now know as MS Hatton 20. Everything that he cites of the Old English tradition of translation from Latin he could have learned from Higden. (Alfred of Wessex is the hero of the opening chapters of Book VI.)¹⁴ Nevertheless, we are not mistaken, I think, in sensing the Westcountryman's personal identification with Wessex in the emphasis on the Alfredian tradition, and that sense is reinforced by the ease with which (in his own voice in the *Epistola*) Trevisa breaks into rhythmical alliterative prose:

Welthe and worschip to my worþy and worschypfol lord Sire Thomas,
lord of Berkelewe, Y Iohn Treuysa þoure preost and þoure bedman,
obedyent and boxum to worche þoure wyll, holde in herte and þenke
in þoþt and meue in muynde þoure meedfol menyng and speche þat þe
speke and seyde þat þe wolde haue Englysch translacion of Ranulf of
Chestre hys bokes of cronikes. (205-11)

The nearest contemporary parallel to the translation-project which he announces in these terms, that of the intellectual activities of the court of Charles V of France, is here confidently mirrored in an English baronial and provincial context. The dialect of the two earliest manuscripts of the *Polychronicon* is assigned to the immediate neighbourhood of Berkeley by the *Linguistic Atlas*. Six other early fifteenth-century ones, all large vellum products of the fine book trade, belong to a close textual group and were probably written and decorated in London.¹⁵

¹⁴ Other discussions in Higden of matters alluded to in the *Dialogus* are in Book II, Chaps 4 and 6 (Septuagint), Chap. 6 (Babel), Book IV, Chap. 18 (Aquila, Symachus, Theodocion, and Origen), Chap. 29 (Jerome) and Book V, Chap. 32 (John the Scot).

¹⁵ MSS London, BL Addit. 24194 (A), Cambridge, St. John's Coll. 204 (J), Aberdeen Univ. Lib. 21 (D), Liverpool Public Lib. f909 HIG (L), Princeton Univ. Lib., Garrett 151 (P), and Formerly Penrose (F). The sigla are those used in the edition of the *Polychronicon* now in progress. For notes on the scribal characteristics of A and J, see A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century' in M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (eds) *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts & Libraries: Essays presented to N. R. Ker* (Scolar Press, London, 1978), pp. 163-210; for F, see Sotheby's Sale Catalogues, 8th December 1981, Lot 80, and 6th December 1988, Lot 45. A seventh affiliated manuscript, Corpus Christi College Cambridge 354, is a rough copy on paper. Where, for part of Book VI, MS A has a lacuna, the other six manuscripts in this group all have a substitute translation. See my (forthcoming) article 'The MSS of Trevisa's Translation of the *Polychronicon*'.

Their de luxe character suggests that they were designed for a baronial market; one of this group, the former Tenison manuscript, now BL Addit. 24194, is decorated with the coat of arms of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who in 1393 became betrothed to, and later married, Elizabeth, the daughter and heir of Sir Thomas Berkeley. The manuscripts of the Bartholomæus, Dr Seymour remarks, suggest a similarly restricted circulation of that text among the wealthy and bibliophile.¹⁶

The South Gloucestershire dialect of the Cotton and Chetnam's manuscripts is, of course, that of the local Berkeley scribes. Manuscripts from this area are characteristically South Western, however, so that if Trevisa was, as we believe, a Cornishman, his own spoken and written dialect would not have been very different from that of the area where his translations were first copied.¹⁷ It is noteworthy (though not at this date surprising) that there can be no impropriety in Trevisa's attributing to Dominus the same provincial (but evidently not—in any disparaging sense—*oplondysche*) form of English speech as Clericus uses; Lord and Clerk speak the same language.

Of Trevisa's connections with the group of Wycliffites involved in the translation of the Bible we can still only speak in terms of possibility. David Fowler has established that he had a fellowship of Quenehalle, Oxford, between 1376 and 1379, roughly contemporaneously with Wyclif's and Hereford's presence at the college, and that he apparently also rented rooms there between 1383 and 1386 and again for the period 1374 to 1396.¹⁸ Lindberg has also claimed that some of the vocabulary used in the Early Version of the Wycliffite Bible (up to Baruch iii. 20) shows traces of Trevisa's involvement in this early stage.¹⁹

¹⁶ M. C. Seymour *et al.* (eds), *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomæus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum, A Critical Text*, 3 vols. (OUP, Oxford, 1975, 1988), Vol. 3, pp. 11f.

¹⁷ I am indebted to Professor M. L. Samuels and to Dr Jeremy J. Smith for information on dialect matters. They do not, of course, necessarily endorse my conclusions. Trevisa's presumed Cornish origin should not be held to imply that he must have been a Celt or a speaker of the Cornish language, as I argue in 'Trevisa's "Celtic Complex" Revisited', *Notes and Queries*, n. s. 36 (1989) (forthcoming).

¹⁸ David C. Fowler, 'John Trevisa and the English Bible', *MP* 58 (1950), pp. 81–98, and *The Bible In Early English Literature* (Sheldon Press, London, 1977), Chap. 4. See also R. H. Hodgkin, *Six Centuries of an Oxford College* (Oxford, 1949), pp. 32, 37f.

¹⁹ Conrad Lindberg, 'A Note on the Vocabulary of the Middle English Bible', *Studia Neophilologica* 57 (1985), pp. 129–31.

If it is not difficult to believe that his Oxford years brought him into contact with some Wycliffites, and even led to some collaboration on the common ground of translation, neither he nor his patron Sir Thomas Berkeley was accused of Lollard sympathies.

The *Dialogus* might at first sight seem to be in part a direct contribution to the contemporary debate on the translation of the scriptures, in that the case for translation of Latin works into English is at one point made to rest directly on the precedent of Biblical translation—from the original languages into Greek and Latin as well as from Latin into some vernaculars like Old English and French—and some of the arguments do parallel those in contemporary Lollard documents on the subject. The best-known of these are Chapter XV of the General Prologue of the Later Version of the Wycliffite Bible and the added Chapter XV in the English version of Wyclif's *De Officio Pastoralis*.²⁰

The version of the *Dialogus* in MS Cotton Tiberius D. VII contains a sentence omitted by the other versions through eyeskip which makes the Biblical references even more insistent than in the version printed by Caxton. The passage reads:

Also, atte prayng of Kyng Charles, Iohn Scot translated Seint Denys hys bokes out of Gru ynto Latyn. Also holy wryt was translated out of Hebrew ynto Gru and out of Gru into Latyn and þanne out of Latyn ynto Frensch. Þanne what haþ Englysch trespassed þat hyt myȝt noȝt be translated into Englysch? (130–35)

The omission of *Also holy wryt was translated out of Hebrew ynto Gru and out of Gru into Latyn* makes it look as though the argument at this point concerns only non-canonical works. The parallel with the *De Officio Pastoralis* text is one not only of logical argument but even of style:

Also þes worþy reume of Fraunse, notwipstondinge alle lettingis, haþ translatid þe Bible and þe Gospels, wiþ oþere trewe sentensis of doctours, out of Lateyn into Freynsch. Why shulden not Engliȝschenmen do so?²¹

²⁰ Chap. XV of the 'General Prologue' is printed in Josiah Forshall & Frederic Madden (eds), *The Holy Bible . . . in the Earliest English Versions made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his Followers*, 4 vols. (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1850), Vol. 1, pp. 56–60; Chap. XV of *De Officio Pastoralis* in Kenneth Sisam (ed.), *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose* (Oxford, 1921, 1948), pp. 117–19; see also Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible* (CUP, Cambridge, 1920), p. 378.

²¹ Sisam, *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*, p. 118.

In both of these treatments, moreover, the discussion moves to the question of the possible damage caused by inaccurate translation.²²

This is an area, however, where chronology is of the greatest importance. The translation of the text of holy scripture, or the reading of any translation made since the time of John Wyclif, is forbidden by the Constitutions of Archbishop Arundel in 1407, but Dr Hudson has made it clear by her study of the determination of Richard Ullerston, that the subject could still be openly debated at Oxford as late as 1401.²³ There is therefore no need to see anything partisan in Dominus's acceptance of scriptural translation in the 1380s, unless it lies in the possibility that the use of the vernacular is itself becoming suspect in such discussions, as has been suggested by both Dr Hudson and Dr Aston.²⁴ Further-

²² The 'Twelve Tracts' in Cambridge University Library MS li. 6. 26 has similar arguments in similar language to that used by Trevisa, e.g.:

(fol. 6r) And as neful as it was to translate þe gospel from ebrewe into grwe & into latyn for helpe of þe peple þat couden noon ebrwe, now it is nedful & leful (fol. 6v) to translate it into englysche, for helpe of englich peple þat kunnen neiþer ebrewe, grewe ne latyn. For þouȝ [if] we preche to þe lewid peple goddis lawe & þe gospel in ebrewe, grwe or latyn, þei schullen neuere be þe wyser, but þei & þe prechour boþe leesen her tyme.

(Reproduced from the manuscript by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.) Cf. the text of the seventh tract printed by Anne Hudson in *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings* (CUP, Cambridge, 1978), pp. 107-9.

A number of the same precedents for translation of the Bible, together with some different ones, are cited by the anonymous Lollard who wrote (after 1401) the tract *Aȝens hem þat seyn þat Hooli Wryt schulde not or may not be drawen into Engliche* (printed by Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, pp. 439-45, and by Curt Bühler, 'A Lollard Tract: On Translating the Bible Into English', *MÆ* 7 (1938), pp. 167-183. Anne Hudson has identified the author of the Latin text of a fuller debate on the legitimacy of vernacular scriptural translation, on which the Lollard tract is based, as the orthodox Richard Ullerston. See 'The Debate on Bible Translation, Oxford 1401', *JEH* 29 (1978), pp. 257-79, reprinted in *Lollards and their Books* (The Hambledon Press, London and Ronceverte, 1985), pp. 67-84. She has also questioned Margaret Deanesly's attribution of all this material to Purvey in 'John Purvey: A Reconsideration of the Evidence for his Life and Writings', *Viator* 12 (1981), pp. 355-80, reprinted in *Lollards and their Books*, pp. 85-110.

²³ 'The Debate on Bible Translation . . .'; see note 22 above.

²⁴ Anne Hudson, 'Lollardy: The English Heresy?', *Studies in Church History* 18 (1982), pp. 261-83, reprinted in *Lollards and their Books*, pp. 141-163; Margaret Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular' in Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (eds), *From Ockham to Wyclif*, *Studies in Church History, Subsidia* 5 (Blackwell, Oxford, for The Ecclesiastical History Society, 1987), pp. 281-330.

more, Dominus is rather finely balanced here between arguing *for* the translation of the Bible and taking it as, from early times, an established fact which makes Clericus's objection to other kinds of translation absurd *a fortiori*. There are, of course, unmistakable references to current objections to translation of the scriptures, as, for instance, in one of the braver interventions of Clericus:

A gret del of þeuse bokes stondeþ moche by holy wryt, by holy doctors and by filosofy. Þanne þeuse bokes scholde noȝt be translated ynto Englysch. (124-26)

But the objection is treated with characteristic contempt by Dominus, who sweeps Aristotle, Dionysius the Areopagite, Wessex laws, and other non-canonical writings under the umbrella, as it were, of the Bible.

In one significant respect the *Dialogus* and *Epistola* point in a different direction from the tracts and determinations which centred on the Wycliffite translation of the Bible: in the treatment of the idea of what is *needful*. In the Wycliffite discussions the focus (for both sides) is on what is strictly necessary for salvation. Wyclif and his followers insisted on the need for everyone to know 'God's law', and even the determination attributed to their opponent Thomas Palmer concedes that those parts of scripture which are necessary to salvation should be known in the vernacular.²⁵ A slight shift of emphasis can add an element of exclusiveness to this argument. For instance, the writer of the Wycliffite tract *The holi prophete David seith . . .* cites St. Paul, and St. Bernard on him, to the effect that the Christian's reading ought to give first, or only, place to what is necessary for the soul's health:

Siche maner of peple schulden takyn hede what Poul comaundyth, to *kunne no more than nedith to kunne, but to kunne to sobirnesse*; that is as moche as perteyneth to saluacion of thin owene sowle, eithir to edificacion to othere mennes.

And Bernard expouneth this auctorete, *On Cantica*, xxxvj. sermon, and writith thus: 'To vndirstonde to soberness, is to kepe most wakyngli what it bihoueth to kunne more and sunnere. The tyme is schort: ech trewe science is good in it silf, but thou that hastist for the schortness of tyme to worche thyn owne helthe, with drede and tremblyng, do

²⁵ E.g. 'Ad octavam concedo quaestionem adductam, quod licet habere in vulgari omnia nobis necessaria ad salutem.' (Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, p. 436.)

thi besynesse to kunne sunnere and more tho thyngis that ben ner to helthe . . .²⁶

This traditional doctrine of the necessity to the Christian of only certain kinds of knowledge will help to explain the elaborate apologetics of Higden's first prologue. Dominus confidently asserts a more liberal view of useful knowledge, however. The effect of Babel is *a gret meschef þat volweþ now mankynde* simply because it prevents people from communicating, *þey hy meete and haue gret neode of informacion and of loore*. Ranulf of Chester has taken one step in writing his universal geography and history in Latin. *And so þarynne ys noble and gret informacion and lore to hem þat can þarynne rede and vnderstonde*. Knowledge, it seems, is in itself *noble and gret* and the more of it we can spread about the better. Moreover, Clericus's objection that *Hyt neodeþ noʒt þat al soche* [i.e. those who do not understand Latin] *knowe þe cronymes* provokes from Dominus a semantic analysis of the phrase *þyng þat neodeþ*, 'what is necessary' in which he distinguishes three kinds of necessity:

Spek noʒt to streytlych of þyng þat neodeþ, for streytlych to speke of þyng þat neodeþ onlych þyng þat ys and may noʒt faile neodeþ to be, and so hyt neodeþ þat God be for God ys and may noʒt faile; and so vor to speke no man neodeþ to knowe þe cronymes vor hyt myʒte and may be þat no man ham knoweþ. Oþerwyse to speke of þyng þat neodeþ, somewhat neodeþ vor to susteyne oþer to haue oþer þinges þarby, and so mete and dryngke neodeþ vor kepyng and sustenaunce of lyf, and so vor to speke no man neodeþ to knowe þe cronymes. Bote in þe þridde manere to speke of þyng þat neodeþ, al þat ys profytable neodeþ, and so vor to speke al men neodeþ to knawe þe cronymes. (70–81)

Only a very general definition, *al þat ys profytable*, is produced to support knowledge of the chronicles by everyone, but in this context that apparently suffices. The scope of *þyng þat neodeþ* is brought by Dominus closer to that of King Alfred's phrase *sumæ bec, ða þe niedbeþearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne* (a category which came to include the universal chronicle of Orosius) than to the narrower notions of the Wycliffites.²⁷ The attitude to wisdom in the *Dialogus* thus leans towards that of the fifteenth-century writer of a medical treatise, to whom

²⁶ Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, p. 447.

²⁷ The Lollards made considerable polemical use of the (Latin) *Polychronicon*, however; see, for instance, E. W. Talbert, 'A Lollard Chronicle of the Papacy', *JEGP*, 41 (1942), pp. 163–93. King Alfred's Preface to the *Cura Pastoralis* is quoted from Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, revised by Dorothy Whitelock (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1967), p. 6.

in wisdom in þis lyf ys þe heyste godenes þat may be þouȝt & þe heyste ioye þat evere was souȝt & þe heyste merthe þat euer was or schal to þe herte ybrouȝt, and þis ys þe stody of wisdom.²⁸

In spite of the backward look at Biblical translation (which may well allude indirectly to earlier preoccupations) Trevisa's principal intention in the *Dialogus* and *Epistola* appears to be, therefore, to cut out for himself a new sphere of activity in the translation of non-canonical works. At the same time he shakes himself free from the constraints which the Bible-translators imposed on their own handling of the sacred text. The records of this contemporary translation project (which in all likelihood was the work of a team of changing composition) are the different versions of the English Bible as they have been reconstructed by Forshall and Madden and later scholars (Hargreaves, Lindberg, Fristedt) and also the comments in writing of the translators themselves, in particular the General Prologue to the Later Version. These records show a marked progression away from the very literal approach preserved in the earliest extant version of the beginning of the Old Testament (up to Baruch iii: 20) to the freer and more idiomatic rendering of the Later Version printed in the right hand column by Forshall and Madden.²⁹ The General

²⁸ Quoted from Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College MS 176/97, fol. 38, by kind permission of the Master and Fellows. I am indebted to Dr Linda E. Voigts for this reference. The wisdom praised by Solomon is commonly appealed to in medieval prefaces and traditionally, of course, identified with the wisdom that leads to salvation (see A. J. Minnis, 'The Influence of Academic Prologues on the Prologues and Literary Attitudes of Late-Medieval English Writers', *Medieval Studies*, 43 [1981], pp. 342-83). It can, however (as appears from these examples) be conveniently generalized to cover wisdom of all kinds.

²⁹ For Forshall and Madden, see note 20 above; Sven L. Fristedt, *The Wycliffe Bible, Parts I-III*, *Stockholm Studies in English* 4 (1953), 21 (1969), 28 (1973); 'New Light on John Wycliffe and the First Full English Bible', *Stockholm Studies in Modern Philology* n.s., 3 (1967), pp. 61-86; 'A Note on Some Obscurities in the History of the Lollard Bible: Amplification of *The Wycliffe Bible. Part II*', *Stockholm Studies in Modern Philology* n.s., 4 (1972), pp. 38-45; 'Spanish Influence on Lollard Translation: Amplification of *The Wycliffe Bible, Part III*', *Stockholm Studies in Modern Philology* n.s., 5 (1976), pp. 5-10; Henry Hargreaves, 'The Latin Text of Purvey's Psalter', *MÆ*, 24 (1955), pp. 73-90; 'An Intermediate Version of the Wycliffite Old Testament', *Studia Neophilologica*, 28 (1956), pp. 130-47; 'The Wycliffite Versions', Chap. IX, 3, of *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Volume 2: G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), *The West From the Fathers to the Reformation* (CUP, Cambridge, 1969) pp. 387-415, 527f.

Prologue gives us in Chapter XV a formal statement of some of the principles followed in the later renderings and they reflect a good deal of awareness of the differences of structure between Latin and English which have to be overcome in producing a satisfactory translation from one language to the other: the ablative absolute construction, evidently still not naturalized in English, can be resolved into an adverbial clause or, like participles, into an independent clause; relative clauses (very often used conjunctively in the Latin of the Vulgate) can be made into independent clauses with *and*; words can be supplied where they are understood in the Latin (pronoun subjects and objects, for instance); there are suggestions about the frequent Latin link-words, *enim*, *autem* and *vero*; word order should follow the SVO pattern which (it is implicitly recognized) is by this time the way the English language marks subject and object in declarative sentences. To these six or seven formulated principles Hargreaves and Fristedt have added many more which were actually applied by degrees and which show up not only in the Later Version but in the intermediate stages preserved in some manuscripts: for example, accusative and infinitive is 'resolved' into a clause, the perfect passive like Paul's *traditus sum* (Acts 28:17), at first translated 'by the letter' with the present tense of the verb *to be* and the participle: *I . . . am bitaken*, is later rendered by the preterite *I . . . was bitaken*; the Latin subjunctive is translated by an English modal such as *wolde*; another important change is that a word which is rather tentatively introduced as a gloss in the Early Version, as a more idiomatic alternative to what is felt to be the literal equivalent of the Latin word, will in some later MSS be adopted as the sole translation in place of the literalism: *dominantur (eis)* (Mark 10:42 'exercise lordship [over them]' in AV) is at first translated by the calque verb *lordschipen*, then *lordschipen* or ***been lordis***, finally by *ben lordis* alone.³⁰

Trevisa's comments on method seem rather sparse and general, even by comparison with the fairly selective treatment found in the General Prologue: at the end of the *Dialogus* he prays for *myȝt and muynde of ryȝt menyng to make translacion trysty and truwe* (170–72); and in the *Epistola* he declares a little more expansively:

For to make þis translacion cleer and pleyn to be knowe and vnderstonde, in som place Y schal sette word vor word and actyue vor actyue and passiue vor passyue arewe ryȝt as a stondeþ withoute changyng of

³⁰ Hargreaves, 'The Wycliffite Versions', pp. 395ff.

þe ordre of wordes. But yn som place Y mot change þe rewe and þe ordre of wordes and sette þe actyue vor þe passiue and aʒenward. And yn som place Y mot sette a reson vor a word to telle what hyt menep. Bote vor al such chaungyng, þe menyng schal stonde and noʒt be ychaunged. (218–27)

In addition he notes that proper names will stand as they are in the original. The generality may itself be significant, however, if we consider it in relation to the question of Bible-translation, as he invites us to do.

It was Margaret Deanesly's mature opinion that in its very literal beginnings the Wycliffite Bible was intended not for the masses but 'for use by the less learned clergy, and the lords and knights of the "lay party"' as 'a new authority, to set over against that code of the Church's coercive jurisdiction: the canon law'.³¹ Nevertheless, she acknowledged in the same lecture that the Bible translators were also constrained by the traditional concern for the preservation of the words of the sacred text, a concern which came down to the fourteenth century through the epistles and prefaces of St. Jerome.

The attitude of Jerome to the problems of the translator was (as Werner Schwartz has clearly demonstrated) equivocal.³² On the one hand he eagerly embraced the classical doctrine that the only way to convey the whole meaning in translating from one language to another is to paraphrase; and he adopted the phrase *fidus interpres*, 'faithful translator', with all the pejorative overtones with which it is used by Horace to denote a slavish, over-literal word-for-word translation. He made, however, an all-important exception (at least in theory) in the case of the sacred text, where he insisted that since the spiritual meaning would be lost in paraphrase, the only valid translation of the Bible must be word-for-word. Some of the contradictoriness in Jerome's position may be the result of the controversy in which he was embroiled over the validity of the Septuagint over against the Hebrew scriptures, but Schwartz also shows, in a very important article, that Boethius early in the sixth century, in translating philosophical works from Greek, echoes Jerome's phrase *culpam fidi interpretis* somewhat ironically, while declaring that he intends

³¹ Margaret Deanesly, *The Significance of the Lollard Bible*, The Ethel M. Wood Lecture, 13 March 1951 (The Athlone Press, University of London, 1951), p. 8.

³² *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation* (CUP, Cambridge, 1955), pp. 34–7, 51.

to use the word-for-word method for this kind of material too. For later translators, like the John the Scot whom Trevisa mentions as the translator of the pseudo-Dionysius in the ninth century, the word-for-word method is accepted as the only reliable method of conveying the meaning of the original without distortion, even if the translator thereby should 'incur the fault of the faithful translator'.³³ What we must infer from this is that the word-for-word approach was not a halting first step for fourteenth-century translators but remained an artificial method, never literally possible in practice (since even the transition from the glossing of single words to the most literal of independent translations is a very big step indeed), but carrying in the later Middle Ages a cachet for accuracy which came to it by way of its association with the Bible and (by extension) with doctrinal and philosophical works.

It is undoubtedly an awareness of this theoretical bias towards a close translation that leads Richard Rolle (who died in 1349) to adopt such a literal style in his English Psalter. For instance, Psalm 3: 5 reads in the Latin which he gives, as he does for each verse before translating it literally into English: *Ego dormiui et soporatus sum, et exurrexi quia dominus suscepit me.* (A modern English rendering might be 'I slept and was drugged by sleep, and I recovered because the Lord supported me.') Rolle translates *I slepe* (pa. t.) *and am soked, and I rase, for oure Lord vptoke me.* The translations are particularly close to the Latin in word order, and often in this respect quite unlike Middle English of other kinds: *ego autem in misericordia tua speraui* (Psalm 12 (13):4-5) becomes *bot I in þi mercy hoped; Tu autem domine susceptor meus es; gloria mea et exaltans caput meum* (Psalm 3:3) becomes *Bot þou, Lord, es myn vptaker, my ioy and heghand my heved.* On the other hand the vocabulary is simple and familiar (though he does not avoid a well-established word of Latin or French origin). Perhaps we are to understand his rather contradictory statement in the preface in the light of this divergence between his treatment of vocabulary and syntax.

In þis werk (he declares) I seke no strange Inglis, bot lightest and comunest and swilke þat es mast like vnto þe Latyn, so þat þai þat knawes noght Latyn, be þe Inglis may cum tille many Latyn wordes. In þe translacioun I folow þe letter als mekil als I may, & þare I fynde

³³ 'The Meaning of *Fidus Interpres* in Medieval Translation', *The Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1944) pp. 73-78.

na propir Inglys I folow þe witte of þe word, so þat þai þat sal rede it, þam þar noght dred errynge.³⁴

Probably, though, the best explanation is that of Roger Ellis that Rolle was thinking of the technique he uses of breaking down Latin compounds into their parts and rendering them by English roots and affixes, as he does in translating *suscepit* by *uptoke* in the first example.³⁵ Similarly *populi circumdantis me* becomes *folke vmgifand me*, *adjiciat* becomes *tokast*; *apponet*, *toset*; *astiterunt*, *tostode*. Anyone using the translation to decypher the Latin might indeed learn the meaning of many words of the original in this way. Rolle's *English Psalter* shares with other fourteenth-century Bible versions the credit for the first use of many new calques of this type. It is worth noting that this is not an expedient that Trevisa makes great use of.

Trevisa shows a lively awareness of the long debate on the accuracy of Biblical translation both in the phrase *translacion trusty and truwe* (perhaps an echo of *fidus interpretis*) and in Clericus's uneasy objection in the course of the discussion that *A gret del of þeuse bokes stondeþ moche by holy wryt, by holy doctors and by filosofy*. The two introductory pieces as a whole, however, make a strong assertion of the possibility of a *translacion trusty and truwe* which nevertheless departs quite radically sometimes from the *rewe and þe ordre of wordes*. For the sake of clarity, changes of word order, voice, and phrase-structure there will be, *Bote vor al such chaungyng, þe menyng schal stonde and nozt be ychanged*.

In twentieth-century terms what Trevisa is claiming here is that faithful translation proceeds not directly from surface structure to surface structure but to a semantic deep structure and back to surface structure in the other language. The writer of the General Prologue comes close to Trevisa's identification of

³⁴ Hope Emily Allen (ed.), *English Writings of Richard Rolle* (Oxford, 1931), pp. 7–12.

³⁵ R. Ellis, 'The Choices of the Translator in the Late Middle English Period', in Marion Glasscoe (ed.), *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England*, Papers read at Dartington Hall, July 1982 (University of Exeter, 1982), pp. 18–46, ref. pp. 29f. For discussions, from different points of view, of translation methods in this period, see also Alastair Minnis, 'Aspects of the Medieval French and English Translations of the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*' in Margaret Gibson (ed.), *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 312–61; Rita Copeland, 'Rhetoric and Vernacular Translation in the Middle Ages' *SAC* 9 (1987), pp. 41–75; Rosemarie Potz McGerr, 'Editing the Self-Conscious Medieval Translator: Some Issues and Examples' (forthcoming; I am grateful to Dr McGerr for allowing me to read her typescript).

the semantic level as the target for the faithful translator when he says *the best translating is out of Latyn into English, to translate aftir the sentence, and not aftir the wordis* but in spite of the similarity there seems to be to be a fundamental difference of attitude: the General Prologue gives rules-of-thumb; Trevisa rather casually throws out instances of the kind of changes that may result from the application of the semantic principle.

As I turn to his practice, I shall not attempt, of course, any comprehensive analysis or evaluation of Trevisa's prose style. For my purposes it will be sufficient to mention some features which have a particular bearing on the way Trevisa made his choices in relation to his notion of faithfulness to the Latin of his original. It has been generally recognized that he allowed himself considerable liberties as a translator, and that his freedom sometimes involved him in blandness of expression, which loses the precision of his exemplar, as well as in occasional inaccuracies. The virtues which (it is also acknowledged) accrue from this freedom are principally those of vigour and colloquial vividness.³⁶ In passage (1) in the Appendix, very small touches like the anticipation involved in *rod in* and the extra emphasis of *vel down vnder hym* bring Higden's formal period to life. Similarly a story of loyalty and treachery (in Book V, Chap. 12) will encourage him to render *sed Lilla, minister regis amicissimus* as *But oon Lilla, þe kynges trusty seruaunt*, and *sica sua* simply 'his sword' (but in the hand of the traitor) as *wiþ his cursed swerd* (R.S. edn v, 442f.).

It might be most useful in the present context, however, to try

³⁶ Any discussion of Trevisa as a translator must necessarily take as its point of departure the valuable article by Traugott Lawler, 'On the Properties of John Trevisa's Major Translations', *Viator* 14 (1983) pp. 267-88. This represents a considerable advance on previous studies, such as that of Alice D. Greenwood, 'The Beginnings of English Prose. Trevisa, the Mandeville Translators' in A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (eds), *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (1932), Vol. 2: *The End of the Middle Ages*, pp. 70-87, or those of Aaron J. Perry in *Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum*, pp. civf. (see note 12 above) and 'John Trevisa: a Fourteenth-Century Translator' in R. C. Lodge (ed.), *Manitoba Essays* (Macmillan, Toronto, 1937), pp. 277-89. I am in general agreement with Lawler's argument that, while giving roughly equal weight to accuracy and to intelligibility, Trevisa becomes more accurate from the second book of the *Polychronicon* and that in the *Bartholomæus* he is slightly more concerned with exactness and less inclined to expand and elucidate. In trying to focus more particularly on Trevisa's choice among different available theories and practices, I am aware that I owe a great deal to Professor Lawler's pioneer study.

to indicate the outer limits of the freedom he allows himself. The reader is always aware that he saw his task as that of the 'service translator'—that is, to convey the meaning of the original to his readers; if he adds anything he is careful to set it off by prefixing the addition with his own name, or else he gives some other indication within the text that he has added a gloss or explanation, often by a phrase like *þat ys to menyngē*. What comparison with the Latin reveals as unacknowledged expansion, or stylistic embellishment, must for him, I think, have come within the category of the putting into English of something there in the original. J. Burke Severs once wrote of *The Clerk's Tale*: 'discounting his frequent expansions, his infrequent short omissions, and one slight abridgement . . . it may be said that his tale is a sentence-for-sentence rendering'.³⁷ Trevisa also provides what could be fairly described as a 'sentence-for-sentence rendering' but to turn from *The Clerk's Tale* to the *Polychronicon* is to be struck by a radically different attitude in the translator—an attitude of 'serviceability' to his author rather than of exploitation of his source for independent literary ends. He never allows himself the kind of imaginative additions to narrative that make the *Clerk's Tale*, though it is based on Latin and French sources, such an original work; he will not invent dramatic incident beyond the text, or add (for example) direct speech. Higden, as it happens, often livens his very anecdotal narrative with direct speech. Trevisa always gives us exactly the same amount of direct speech and never, as far as I have observed, changes direct to indirect or vice versa.

In lexical usage, the 'thew and sinew' of the language is so much in evidence that one is at times tempted to think of him as a linguistic purist, and I suppose he was in the sense that he often seems to avoid an English cognate of a word in his Latin source, even if one was already current in the language: *oppressa* is 'bar doun', *contentus* 'apaid', *dedicata* (of a pagan temple) 'halowedē', *ascendit* is 'styȝ (vp)', *baptizandi* is 'vollyngē'. But if he is reluctant to use new Latinisms he is not averse to well-established French loan words (like 'apaid' in one example just quoted). I think a fair generalization, and one which seems consistent with the conception of his role as a service translator, is that he strove to use familiar language, and that frequently meant using a word of mainly colloquial currency, sometimes a word from his own

³⁷ *The Literary Relationships of Chaucer's Clerkes Tale*, Yale Studies in English, No. 96 (Yale UP, New Haven, 1942), p. 227.

South Western English, which did not long survive in the developing literary language. Caxton's comment that in printing Trevisa he has *somwhat . . . chaunged the rude and old englyssh, that is to wete certayn wordes which in these dayes be neither vsyd ne vnderstonden* is an indication of the archaism of Trevisa's language a bare hundred years after his time.³⁸

He is not alone among Middle English writers in using doublets, but they are so numerous and pervasive in all his translations (as well as in the original prefaces I have been discussing) as to count as a personal characteristic. They often have the function which is very widespread in Middle English of coupling a less familiar to a more familiar word, usually a native word and loanword (*god happes and bonchef, armes and wepene, uncerteyn and vnknow, prouinces and londes*,—and in [1]: *relessed & wipleped* for *relaxasset*) but also, one sometimes suspects, a more common with a more *oplondysche* word: *stalworpe men and wight* (for *fortes coloni*, R.S. edn i, pp. 286f.), *steorne and wither* (for *ferancos*, R.S. edn i, pp. 274f.). It has also been noted that Trevisa sometimes covers himself, when he is not sure how to read a word or an abbreviation, by giving alternative translations in the form of a doublet.³⁹ But a great many are probably the expression of an urge to make a *skylfol translacion þat myȝt be knowe and vnderstonde* (164), to give too much rather than too little. Pairs like *armes and wepene, of gras and of lese, rokkes and skarres*, are not really necessary to the meaning, simply generous. Even in these, however, one can sense the colloquial, an energetic reaching towards a personal relation with the reader, in secondary features of rhythm, rhyme, or alliteration: *Occean spredeþ & schedeþ into dyuers mouþes & costes* (Bk. I, Chap. 9; fol. 7v); the Red Sea *flascheþ & wascheþ on red clyues & stones* (fol. 8r).

In Latin of Higden's moderate level of literary sophistication the translator was dealing with a language in which there was a recognized structure: namely the Latin period with its envelope form—a matrix sentence containing a variety of embedded sentences in the form of participial and other phrases and subordinate clauses of three main types. Trevisa's English is undeniably more paratactic. It has many more independent clauses linked by connectives like *and, also, for*, and so on, or as separate sentences. (It is notoriously difficult—and at times

³⁸ W. J. B. Crotch, *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton* (Lenox Hill [Burt Franklin], New York, 1928, reprinted 1971), p. 68.

³⁹ See *On the Properties of Things*, Vol. 3 (note 16, above), p. 7.

arbitrary—to apply a modern system of punctuation because of this looseness of structure.) However, I think there has been a tendency (not only in older accounts of prose of this period, like Workman's, but even in Janel Mueller's recent *The Native Tongue and the Word*, with its welcome revaluation of the virtues of parataxis) to underrate the capabilities of Middle English for hypotaxis.⁴⁰ When he wishes to, Trevisa can easily accommodate most types of clause within the rules of Middle English syntax. Adverbial clauses, for instance, have well-established equivalents and are introduced by regular subordinating conjunctions: *cum* translates as *whanne*, *ut* as *þat*, *ita ut* as *so þat*, *antequam* as *ar (ere)*, *quia* as *for*. The *Dialogus* itself (and this may be one of its functions) displays an impressive array of clause types in a credible speech situation—that of two educated people engaged in logical discourse—and this suggests that much of the complexity of the Latin period could already be reflected quite naturally even in some kinds of spoken English. There is again some differentiation between Lord and Clerk in this respect: but after all, better arguments necessitate better syntax.

Trevisa, however, habitually modifies the structure of his original in certain ways. Word order within the clause is usually made to conform to the current structural patterns of English (exceptions can often be accounted for, I think, by a wish to conserve the rhetorical force of the original).⁴¹ The longer periods are split up to produce a looser and more conversational structure. Where a Latin relative clause has connective or adverbial force, Trevisa usually converts it to the more explicit form of a co-ordinate or adverbial clause.

Passage (1) shows him preserving nearly all the structure of

⁴⁰ Samuel K. Workman, *Fifteenth Century Translation as an Influence on English Prose*, Princeton Studies in English, No. 18 (Princeton, 1940). Janel M. Mueller, *The Native Tongue and the Word: Developments in English Prose Style 1380–1580* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984).

⁴¹ This would apply, for instance, to *þat makeþ goodnes of þe lond for hoc facit ubertas soli* (R.S. edn, i, 8of.), cited by Lawler (art. cit., p. 269) as an example of 'Latinized English which obscures meaning', though here 'only slightly'. It surely also applies to examples such as: (fol. 4v) *þe vurst of þeose in þe vurst bok and þe opere in þe opere bokes byþ oponlych ywryte for Primum istorum in primo libro, reliqua in reliquis, sunt expressa* (R.S. edn, i, 30). Again in Bk. I, Chap. 12, *multas claras victorias habuit* (R.S. edn, i, 88) is rendered in two clauses, with what looks like a deliberate variation of structure: *a dude meny vyages & meny fayr victoryes hadde* (fol. 10r). We should bear in mind that our twentieth-century intuitions of clarity of word order may not coincide with those of a fourteenth-century speaker.

Higden's periodic sentence, and even changing a participial phrase *calcaribus aut lanceis stimulatus* into a concessive clause *þey a were ypreked . . .* (it is the *nec . . . aut* element that gives him the semantic clue for this syntactic change), but separating the merely additive relative *quo voverat*, etc., in an independent sentence. As in the Later Version of the Bible, it is of course various non-clausal types of embedding—participles, supines, gerunds, ablative absolutes, agent nouns, and so on—that are least at home in Middle English syntax and are most often changed to a clause through 'resolution' (a term which, incidentally, recognizes their generative derivation from sentences).

Perhaps the most strikingly individual feature of Trevisa's style is that he quite frequently chooses to bypass the surface form of his source entirely by going back to the essential meaning of the original and restructuring it in his own English. He is not always completely successful in this, but the aim is clear. In passage (2) the essential information seems to be that the various sides of *mons Libani* are always filled with snow (*jugis*: 'perpetual') and that this snow shines from different directions to guide seamen to various ports. By departing from the structure of the original Trevisa gets most of this in. It may be that *alwey in som syde* is not quite precise enough for Higden's *ex aliqua sui parte* but the overall sense is tolerably well preserved. The fifteenth-century translator takes it phrase by phrase and misses a good deal of the meaning.

In passage (3) Trevisa again makes the meaning explicit not only by his terse rendering of Higden's extraordinary paraphrase of the meaning of the names *quæ est pars frontis patens supra supercilia* 'which is the part of the forehead showing above the eyebrows' by *a baar scolle* but by re-enacting the sequence of events in Higden's very compressed last clause; and once again his superior explanatory power shows in comparison with the obscurity of the anonymous fifteenth-century translator.

The restructuring aspect of Trevisa's technique becomes a key consideration as I move to the possible relation between the two translations of part of Book VI of the *Polychronicon*. It was while the Rolls Series edition was in progress, between 1865 and 1886, that it was discovered that the two early fifteenth-century manuscripts chosen as main witnesses had an anomaly in the text of Book VI, from towards the end of Chapter 14 to a point near the end of Chapter 26. This portion of text is missing entirely

from one of the manuscripts, London, British Library, Additional 24194 (A), and represented by a more literal translation in the other manuscript, now Cambridge, St. John's College MS 204 (J). For the purpose of the present discussion I need not go into the reasons for this anomaly. I argue elsewhere⁴² that it happened in the copying of MS A itself, and not as the result of an earlier lacuna: that the scribe of MS A lost his place in his exemplar and simply omitted to copy a portion of something like twelve chapters. Whatever the cause of the omission, when it was noticed subsequently, the gap was filled with a different translation in a much more wooden and literal style than is generally used by Trevisa, and indeed differs in just this way from the text of the passage as it is found in the majority of manuscripts (including Harley 1900 and Cotton Tiberius D. VII which the Rolls Series editor was collating by this time). I will distinguish the two versions as the 'Major' and 'Minor' versions of this passage. The Minor (or substitute) version is found in six of the extant copies of the *Polychronicon*, including the Penrose manuscript which is currently at Sotheby's again and is to be auctioned early in December.⁴³

Sven Fristedt argued in 1973 that the Minor Version is a fragment of an earlier translation made by Trevisa which he later revised to the form which we are familiar with—and which itself (according to Fristedt) shows signs of ongoing stylistic revision. He compares the two different versions through three chapters of Book VI (Chapters 15, 25 and 26) in some detail, in order to show that this revision parallels that of the Wycliffite Bible. His conclusion is at one point stated as follows:

The text of H1 [the Minor Version], which was evidently in course of revision, accords with the first form of the Bible as presented in the First Revision printed by Forshall and Madden [Fristedt's term for 'Early Version']. The β text [Harley 1900—Major Version] conforms with the Later Version [of the Wycliffite Bible], exception being made for the liberties taken by Trevisa.⁴⁴

Fristedt's chief concern is with the authorship of the Wycliffite Bible and the possible extent of Trevisa's participation in it. My

⁴² See 'The Manuscripts of Trevisa's Translation of the *Polychronicon*' (forthcoming).

⁴³ See note 15, above.

⁴⁴ For the hypothesis that the principles of revision applied to the Wycliffite Bible translation were first applied to the English translation of the pseudo-Augustinian tract *De Salutaribus Documentis*, see Fristedt, 'New Light . . .' and *The Wycliffe Bible, Part II* (note 29, above).

comments are not directly aimed at that aspect of the discussion but the existence of these two versions of a section of the *Polychronicon* has an obvious bearing on the topic of Trevisa's use of English. Two short passages from Chapter 21 are printed as (4) and (5) in the Appendix to illustrate the differences between the two versions.⁴⁵

As Fristedt is able to show, the Minor Version does have many of the characteristics of the Early Version of the Wycliffite Bible, and the Major Version is closer in these features to the Later Version. The most striking of these is, of course, the treatment of Latin participles, which the Minor Version retains, but which the Major Version nearly always 'resolves' into a clause: e.g. in (4)

Angliam veniens: comynge to Engelond: com into Englonde
 piscatores . . . invenientes: fisshers fyndynge: vyschers vonde
 (and many more).

In addition ablative absolutes are translated word for word in the Minor Version, but again by a clause in the Major Version:

capite abscisso: and þe heved ikutte of: he made smyte of Harold hys hed
 succiso poplite: þe hamme ikut and hoxened: vorkarf þe fals pelour his homme

Connective *qui*, etc., is kept in the Minor Version but not in the Major:

Qua de causa: for whiche cause: Þarvore
 qui locum et gradum probis moribus honestavit: whiche honested . . . :
 Þes prust made . . . honest, etc.

Again, word order in the Minor Version sometimes follows the Latin where one suspects that a different order would be more idiomatic in English, e.g.

totum regimen regni sui consilio matris et Godwyni commisit: alle þe gouernaunce of his reme commytted he to . . . : & potte al þe reul & gouernans of hys kyngdom opon . . .

⁴⁵ Extracts from Cambridge, St. John's College MS204 are printed by kind permission of the Master and Fellows.

The question of the differences between the printed and manuscript versions of the translation of *Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum* (see Perry, edn cit., note 12 above, pp. xliii-liii) is beyond the scope of the present discussion, and perhaps a separate issue. A new edition of this dialogue is being prepared by Dr Elizabeth Brockhurst.

It is one thing, however, to say that the Major and Minor Versions are respectively closer to the Earlier and Later Versions of the Bible, and another to say that one has evolved from the other in the same way. Many of Fristedt's deductions from the data could be individually challenged, I think; but the theory as a whole does not seem to me to stand up to close inspection, even of short passages like these. The 'Early Version' (or 'First Revision') of the Bible, to put it simply, stands in a very much closer relationship to the Later Version, so close that it is easy as a rule to identify particular local adjustments to the first that have resulted in the second.⁴⁶ The Major Version of the *Polychronicon*, if it is a revision of the Minor Version, is a revision in a very different sense.

It is perhaps not a very strong objection that some readings suggest that the two versions may have been made from different Latin texts. (One can allow for a revision based on a different Latin MS.) In passage (4) the Major Version seems to have had an erroneous *imperiale* for *importabile* and—correctly this time—*Londoni* for the *Londoniensi* which, in the Minor Version, has made Godwin a bishop; or it may be that the abbreviations in those words have been read in two different ways. More significantly, the Major Version makes a fresh and independent approach to the Latin in many places. For example, in (4) the Latin *post longum tempus* (*long tyme after* in the Minor Version), becomes *whanne hue hadde ybe longe tyme wyþ here housbond*; and the beginning of the last sentence in (4): *Gunnilda inde tripudians viro perpetuum repudium dedit* which the Minor Version renders quite literally: *Gwynuld glad for þat and gaf to hire housbonde a perpetuel dyuorsynge* is treated with the virtuosity of *Danne Gunnilda gan to hoppe & daunse vor ioy and forsook here housbond vor eueremore*.

Fristedt does, of course, recognize that liberties of this kind are quite untypical of the Wycliffite Bible even in its more idiomatic form. What his theory does not take into account, I think, is that they are instances of an urge, found throughout Trevisa's work, to 'resolve' at a deeper level than that generally resorted to in the translation of the Bible; to extract the essential meaning of a phrase or short passage from the original and re-express it entirely, using the semantics and syntax of the native language. And that argues for a radically different attitude from that brought to the other task.

⁴⁶ This is clearly demonstrated by the specimens chosen by Hargreaves to illustrate various stages of revision, in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Vol. 2, pp. 395–9 (see note 29 above).

If this were all, we could conclude (as some critics have done) that the Minor Version is simply an *ad hoc* translation produced perhaps by the scribe of the St. John's, or the archetype, specifically to fill the gap which appears in the other manuscript. But the question is not as straightforward as this. The language of the interpolated passage in these six manuscripts has not as yet received the sort of detailed expert attention that has been given to the Cotton and Chetham's manuscripts, but my own limited observation leads me to believe that the text used to fill the gap may have had a history of copying prior to its use by the scribe who wrote their archetype, in that it contains some Northern or North Midland dialect forms which are quite absent from the surrounding text in these manuscripts (the personal pronouns *þaire* and *þaim*, for instance, the *-ande* form of the present participle, and other Nthn or Nth Mdl forms like *giffen*, and *war*). At the same time, the Minor text contains relict forms which might point to a South Western origin, including a sprinkling of genitives with *his* (like *a preost his hous*), which is a regular grammatical feature of the two Berkeley manuscripts and progressively eliminated in the other manuscripts, one example of an erroneous *sche* for *þey*, perhaps the strongest indication that the text, like that of the Major Version, has been made over at some stage from a type that had initial *h-* forms of the feminine singular and plural personal pronouns (Cotton usually has *hue* and *hy*); there is also a single initial *v-* for *f-* in *viled*, 'defiled', suggesting an original dialect with regular voiced initial *f*.⁴⁷ Definitive answers must await a new edition of this section, or at least a fuller collation of all the manuscripts. But if it can be shown, as I am tentatively suggesting, that the Minor Version is not an *ad hoc* filler, then other factors become much more significant.

(i) It becomes likely, for instance, that the fragment we have derives from a complete text or a larger fragment, and we have

⁴⁷ For *þaire*, *þaym*, *gyfen* (*giffen*), *gaf* see, for instance, Rolls Series edn, vii, 159, and passim. *War* occurs at R.S. edn, vii, 107, *þat seande* at R.S. edn, vii, 95. Some of the nine examples of the *his* genitive in MS J are: *at a preeste his house* (R.S. edn, vii, 119), *Robert his bedde* (R.S. edn, vii, 123), *seynt peter his chirche* (R.S. edn, vii, 159), *Godwyne his douzter* (R.S. edn, vii, 179). The erroneous *sche* for *þay* and the spelling *viled* are both at R.S. edn, vii, 147. There are variations in the incidence of both NMdl and SW/SWM relicts in the different manuscripts of the Minor Version, but they are widespread enough to suggest that both sets of features were present in the archetype of these manuscripts.

no information of any other translation of the *Polychronicon* in the early fifteenth century except Trevisa's.

(ii) Then, in spite of the differences between the two versions, there are mannerisms in the Minor Version that are not inconsistent with Trevisa's style. The vocabulary, though a little more Latinate because of the closer translation method used nevertheless comes within the same ordinary, familiar range as that of Trevisa.

(iii) There are many cases of doublets of kinds that have come to be seen as typical of Trevisa's style. In (4) we have, for instance, *louynge or fame* for *gloria* (paraphrased as *to be ypreysed* for in the Major Version), *ikut and hoxened* ('hamstrung') for *succiso* (*poplite*) (which is translated *vorkarf* in the Major Version), and in (5) *a foule and vnschaply* (*preost*) for *deformis* (*sacerdos*), rendered *ryȝt a voul* (*prust*) in the Major Version. Many of the doublets in the Minor Version, in fact, resemble Trevisa's more than they do the words with added glosses of some 'intermediate' manuscripts of the Bible which Fristedt sees them as paralleling.⁴⁸

(iv) Another factor which would now become relevant would be the significance of the pieces of text which *are* substantially similar in both versions, like the passage towards the end of (4):

(Minor Version): sche putte hir nurri, whiche sche had brouȝt with hir out of Engelond, forto fiȝte

(Major Version): Þanne here nory þat hue hadde ybroȝt wyþ hure out of Englund potte hym to vyȝte

or the first sentence of passage (5). There are also some curious coincidences in choice of vocabulary: e.g., in (4), *couenable/*

⁴⁸ See H. Hargreaves, 'An Intermediate Version ...' (note 29, above). Other examples in Chaps 21 and 22 are *parted and dissevered* in the Minor Version, for the Latin *separavit* (R.S. edn, vii, 144f.), rendered by *departede* alone in the Major Version (MS C, fol. 235r); *by epistles and lettres* (Minor), for L. *per epistolas* (R.S. edn, vii, 156f.), against *by letters* (Major, MS C, fol. 236v); *myscheve and poverte*, for *inediam* (R.S. edn, vii, 156f.), against *myschef* alone (fol. 236v); *for to be polute and defouled*, for L. *profanari* (R.S. edn, vii, 158f.), against *to be defouled* in Major Version (fol. 237r). Of nineteen doublets in the Minor Version of Chaps 21 and 22, eleven are simplified in the Major Version, but Trevisa has twenty-seven further ones not found in the Minor Version. There is one 'doublet of ambiguity' in the Minor Version of Chaps 21 and 22: *non esse tutum si quisquam obtentu cognationis tantam copiam externæ et subdolæ gentis adduceret* is rendered: *þat it was nouȝt siker if any man under colour and geting of kynrede schulde brynge so greet plente of straungers and deceyvable folk* (R.S. edn, vii, 140f.). *obtentus* is either the noun 'screen, deceit' from *obtendo*, or the past participle of *obtineo*; *under colour and getyng* allows for both possibilities.

couenabelyche for *competenti*; the unspecific *destroyed/destroyed* for *depopulata*. We need to consider whether similarities of this kind are simply the chance result of two translators working on the same text, or whether they are stylistically close enough to suggest the same translator.

For these reasons, I believe that Fristedt's claim that the Minor Version is an earlier draft by Trevisa cannot at present be summarily dismissed. Nevertheless, even if it could one day be shown conclusively that both versions are by Trevisa, it would still be true, I think, that the Major Version approaches an independent translation rather than a revision in the manner of the Wycliffite Bible. What we may have in this curious phenomenon, in fact, even if it should turn out to be true that Trevisa began by applying the translation methods used for the Bible, is not (as Fristedt thought) the record of the gradual development of a style of translation, but the record of a leap of realization that a text like the *Polychronicon* could be done in a more completely English style, a style very much closer to that of spoken English, in accordance with the policy stated with such freshness and vigour in the *Dialogus* and *Epistola*.

It is to the *Dialogus* that I return in what must be a very brief concluding comment. An aspect which has perhaps not been given sufficient weight hitherto is the overt (even doctrinaire) stress it lays on the oral nature of language. Dominus begins with a consideration of the fundamental nature of *speche*—how it is learnt, and how communication between people of different countries can fail because of the curse of Babel. The Latin language enters the discussion at this early point because it can be a mean between otherwise mutually incomprehensible languages in a role that is parallel to that of the interpreter who can speak several tongues and can be a mean between speakers who do not understand each other any more than the gagging of geese. The theme of *speche* runs like a thread through the discussion in the references to argumentation, to preaching, and finally to the very naming of the parts of the creation by the voice of God.

Within the general field of spoken English the *Dialogus* points by its own form in the direction of the use of English in conversation and disputation as the model for the new Middle English prose which is being planned.

So I see the function of the two pieces as practical as well as theoretical: to promote the status of the vernacular by their own

example, to serve as a demonstration of the adequacy of English as the vehicle of learned and gentle communication, and therefore of its adequacy as a vehicle for the book-learning of gentle folk, and to exemplify the stylistic level of the translation they introduce.

APPENDIX

- (1) Higden, *Polychronicon* Bk. V, Chap. 7 (Rolls Series edn, v, p. 370):
Cum ergo rex Albuinus portam orientalem urbis Papiæ subintraret, equus cui insederat in portæ medio concidit, nec inde calcaribus aut lanceis stimulatus elevari potuit, donec rex votum suum durissimum relaxasset, quo voverat universum populum qui se tradere noluerat gladio extinguere.

Trevisa (London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius D. VII, fol. 173r):

Wha[n]ne þe kyng Albuinus rod i[n at þe] est 3ate of þe cyte of Papye þe hors þat he sat on vel doun vnder hym in þe myddel of þe 3ate & my3t no3t be arered þey a were ypreked wyþ spores & wiþ speres vorte þe kyng hadde relessed & wiþcleped a wel hard avowe þat a hadde ymad. He hadde ymad hys avowe þat al þe pupel þat wolde no3t 3elde ham scholde be slawe with swerdes.

15c. translator (London, British Library MS Harley 2261, R. S. edn, v, p. 371):

That kynge Albinus entrenge the cite Papy by the este yate of hit, the horse on whom he did ryde felle downe in þe myddes of the 3ate, whiche wolde not aryse in eny wise un til that Albinus seide that he wolde not fullefill the vowe that he hade made, whiche was that he scholde sle alle the peple the wolde not take that cite un to hym.

- (2) Higden, *Polychronicon* Bk. 1, Chap. 13 (R.S. edn, i, p. 100):
In finibus etiam Arabiæ, versus circium, est mons Libani, qui distinguit abinvicem Arabiam, Judæam, [et] Phoenicem; mons quidem summæ altitudinis, ita ut juges nives ex aliqua sui parte continens navigantes in mari magno ad varios portus dirigat.

Trevisa (BL MS, Cotton Tib. D. VII, fol. 111r):

Yn þe contray of Arabia toward circius ys þe hul þat ys yclepud Mons Libani. [Þat] hul departeþ þre londes atwynne—Arabia, Iudea & Fenys. Þat hul ys fol hy3, so þat snow þ[at] lyþ alwey in som syde of þat hul ys certeyn merke & tokon to schipmen þat seyleþ in þe Grete Se & ledeþ ham to dyuers mouþes & hauenes.

15c. translator (BL MS Harley 2261, R.S. edn, i, p. 101):

The mownte of Libanus is in the costes of Arabye abowte the sowthe weste, which dividethe a sundre Araby, Iewery, and Fenicea. Whiche is an hille of excellent altitude, in so moche that hit, conteynenge grete habundaunce of snawe, directethe the men sayleng in the see to diuerse portes.

- (3) Higden, *Polychronicon*, Bk. I, Chap. 14 (R.S. edn, i, p. 114):
Ad septentrionalem plagam montis Syon est mons Calvaria, ubi crucifixus est Christus, qui, lingua Syra, dictus est Golgotha, quod interpretatum sonat Calvaria, quæ est pars frontis patens supra supercilia, pro eo quod ibi decalvabantur ossa latronum, damnatorum, et decapitatorum.

Trevisa (BL MS Cott. Tib. D. VII, fol. 12r):

In þe norþ syde of Mont Syon ys þe Mont of Caluary þa[r] Crist deyde on þe rode & ys ycleped Golgotha in þe longage of Siria. Golgotha ys to menyng a baar scolle, for whanne þeues & mysdoers were þar byheded þe hedes were left þar & so atte laste þe scolles wax al baar.

15c. translator, (BL MS Harley 2261, R.S. edn, i, p. 115):

The mownte off Caluarye is at the northe plage of the mownte of Syon, where Criste was crucifiede, which is callede, after the langage of men of Sire, Golgotha, soundenge by interpretacion, Caluaria, in [t]hat the boones of men condempnede and hedede were made bare there.

- (4) Higden, *Polychronicon*, Bk. VI, Chap. 21 (R.S. edn, vii, p. 136):
HARDEKANUTUS Angliam veniens tribus annis regnavit, nil tamen gloria dignum egit; nam mox Alfricum Eboracensem archiepiscopum cum Godwyno Londoniensi misit, corpus Haraldi regis nuper sepulti in ultionem maternasuarum injuriam exhumari fecit, et capite abscisso in Thamisim projici, sed piscatores corpus ejus invenientes competenti tradiderunt sepulturæ. Item Hardekanutus octo marcas argenti unicuique remigi suæ classis de importabili Angliæ tributo fecit solvi; totum regimen regni sui consilio matris et Godwyni commisit. Hic rex dum importabile tributum Anglis imponeret, duo hujus negotii regii ministri apud Wygorniam sunt occisi. Qua de causa urbs illa depopulata est et succensa. *Willelmus de Regibus, libro secundo*. Hic etiam rex Gunnyldam sororem suam speciosissimam, ex Canuto et Emma progenitam, a multis proceribus tempore patris suspiratam nec obtentam, imperatori Henrico copulavit; quæ post longum tempus adulterii accusata, alumnus suum quem ex Anglia secum adduxerat contra delatorem, gigantia molis hominem, ad pugnandum opposuit; qui Dei virtute insimulatorem succiso poplite stravit. Gunnylda inde tripudians viro perpetuum repudium dedit, nec ullo rogatu viri complexibus assentiens, velum sacrum suscepit.

Minor Version (Cambridge, St. John's College MS 204, fol. 231rb):

Hardeknute comynge to Engelond regned þre ȝere. Neuerþeles he dede no þing þat was worthy of louynge o[r] fame. Forwhy also sone he sente away Alfricus Archebisshop of York wiþ Godewyn Bisshop of Londoun; he made þe body of Kyng Harold, newly iburied in vengeaunce of his modir wronges and þe heued ikutte of, to be cast into Tempse. But fisshers fyndynge his body gaf it to couenable sepulture. Also Hardeknute of the vnportable tribute of Engelond made viij marcus to be paide to

Trevisa, Major Version (BL MS Cott. Tib. D. VII, fol. 234r):

HARdecnutus com into Englund & regnede þre ȝer bote he dude ryȝt noȝt þat a was worþy to be ypreysed vore. Vor anon he sent Alfricus Archebyschop of [Y]ork wyþ Godwyn to lo[nd]on [& made take] op Kyng Harold hys body out of þe erþe & vor wreche of þe wronges þat Harold hadde ydo hys moder; he made smyte of Harold hys hed þat was ded tovorehond & þrowe þe body into Temse. Bote afterward vyschers [von]de þe body & bur-yede hyt couenabelyche. Also Hardeknutus made paye to euerych rower of hys

euery steresman of his navy; alle þe gouernaunce of his reme commytted he to þe conseil of his modir and Goodwyn. Þis kyng, whiles he put a tribut to Englyshemen þat myȝt nouȝt be borne, to mynystres of þe kyng for þat erand were slayn at Worcestre, for whiche cause þe citee was destroyed and brend. *Willelmus de Regibus, libro 20*. Also þis kyng coupled to Henry Emperour Gonnyld his suster a ful fayre womman igetten of Canute and Emme, desired moche of many gentiles in his moder tyme bot not igraunted ne geten; whiche was long tyme after accused of avowtrye; sche putte hir nurri, whiche sche had brouȝt with hir out of Engeland, forto fȝte aȝenst þe accuser a man of a geantz mochilnesse whiche þoruȝ goddes grace, þe hamme ikut and hoxened, ouercome þe accusour. Gynuld glad for þat and gaf to hire housbonde a perpetuel dyuorsynge and forsakyng, ne for no prayere assented to her housbonde halsynges, but took þe holy veyle.

nauey eyȝte mark of siluer of þe trybut of þe emp[ire] of Englund & potte al þe reul & gouernans of hys kyngdom opon þe wyt & consayl of Godwyn & of hys oune moder. Whanne þes kyng pot þe empercal trybut oppon Englysch men tweyne of þe kyng hys mynysters þat were asse[n-tynge] to þat dede were yslawe at Wynceter. Þarevore þat cyte was destroyed & yse[t a]vure. *Willelmus de regibus libro 20*. Also þes kyng maryede hys veyreste soster Gunn[ilda] to Henry þe emperour; Gunnilda was þe doȝter of Canutus & of Emma an[d] was tovorhond ywowed of meny gret wowers in her vader tyme. [Whan]ne hue hadde ybe longe tyme wyþ here housbond hue was acused [of spouse]bruche. Þanne here nory þat hue hadde ybroȝt wyþ hure out of Engl[ond potte] hym to vyȝte in þat querel wyþ hym þat hadde ytold þat fals tale [þei þat] tale teller were as houge a giaunt. Hy voȝte to gedders & Gunnild[a nory] vorkarf þe fals pelour his homme & hadde hym doun & so by vertu of g[od a] hadde þe maystri. Þanne Gunnilda gan to hoppe & daunse vor ioy & [forsook here] housb[on]d vor eueremore and wolde neuere þareafter come in hys [bed vor no] man hys prayer, bote hue touk þe holy veyl & bycam a meynche[n].

(5) See next page

- (5) Higden, *Polychronicon*, Bk. VI, Chap. 21 (R.S. edn, vii, p. 142):
 Item accedens aliquando iste imperator Dominica Quinquagesimæ ad quandam capellam juxta forestam ut missam latenter audiret, ubi deformis quidam sacerdos ministrabat; mirabatur autem rex in animo cur Deus formosus tam turpem creaturam sua permetteret tractare sacramenta. Cum autem ad versum tractus ventum fuisset quo canitur *Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus*, sacerdos quasi socordiam clerici sui increpans, respiciendo versus imperatorem dixit, *Ipsē fecit nos, et non ipsi nos*. Quo dicto imperator re percussus, ipsum cito post promovit in episcopum, qui locum et gradum probis moribus honestavit.

Minor Version (fol. 231vb):

Also þe emperour comynge ones on þe Sonday of Quynquagesme to a chapel beside þe forest, þat he myȝte priuely here a masse, where a foule and vnschaply preost mynistred, þe kyng forsoþe merueilled why God, þat was so faire, wolde suffre his creature, þat was so foule, for to trete and handele his sacramentes. When forsoþe it was comen toward þe tracte in whiche it is songen, *Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus*—þat is, 'Wete ȝe oure Lord hym self is God,' þe preost, as it ware blamyng þe dulnes and sleuþe of his clerk, byholdynge to þe emperour, seide, *Ipsē fecit nos, et non ipsi nos*—þat is, 'He made vs, and nouȝt we oureself.' Þe whiche iseide, þe emperour ismyten aȝen promoted hym sone into a bisshop, whiche honested with worþy maneres his place and his degre.

Trevisa, Major Version (fol. 235r):

Also in a tyme þes emperour went in þe Sonday þat hat [Quingua]gesima vor to hure priueliche a mas in a chapel bysydes þe forest þere [seruede r]yȝt a voul prust. Þarevore þe kyng byþoȝte & wonderde in hys herte [why God] þat ys so veyr wolde suffre so voul a creatur come nyȝ & handle [His sacra]mentes. Whanne þe vers of þe tract was ysonge, *Scitote quoniam dominus [ipse est] deus*—þat ys 'Wyte ȝe þat vr lord he ys god'—þe prust lokede on þe emperour as hyt were blamyng þe defaut of hys clerk & seyde, *ipse fecit nos & non ipsi nos*—þat ys 'He made vs & nouȝt we vs sylf.' Þe emperour was y[moued b]y þat sawe & made þat prust a byschop sone þareafter. Þes prust ma[de þe] plas & þe gre honest wyþ good manere of lyuyng.