FROM BEDE TO WYCLIF: MEDIEVAL ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATIONS[1]

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CUTHBERT'S description of the dying Bede hastening to complete his lost translation of the whole of or part of St. John's Gospel[2] forms the usual beginning of any account of the Bible in English, and is normally followed by a chronological review of the various translations of Scripture into Old English or Anglo-Saxon and Middle English up to the time of Wyclif. Since it is my intention in this survey to concentrate on the level of knowledge and attainment of the early translators, I propose to allow myself some chronological liberty in referring at need to these translations, which are : in Old English, the series of psalters, twelve in number, ranging in date from the middle of the ninth to the middle of the twelfth century, in which a Latin text is accompanied by a continuous interlinear word-for-word gloss [3]; the Paris Psalter, the first fifty psalms of which are in

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[1] A revised version of a lecture originally delivered in Lambeth Palace Library on the 24th of May 1961.

[2] The incident is recounted in the *Epistola Cuthberti de Obitu Bedae* (cf. Migne, *P.L.*, xc. 35 ff.) of which a full critical text is presented by E. van K. Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Caedmon's Hymn and Bede's Death Song* (Columbia Univ. Studies in English and Comparative Literature, 128 : New York, 1937). Of the two versions of this text, apparently transmitted independently on the continent and in England, the Insular version says simply " evangelium vero sancti Iohannis in nostram linguam . . . convertit ", whereas the Continental version specifies more closely, " a capite evangelii sancti Iohannis usque ad eum locum in quo dicitur, Sed hec quid sunt inter tantos [John vi. 9] in nostram linguam . . . vertit." See Dobbie, op. cit. pp. 50, 122-3.

[3] These are : Brit. Mus. Cotton MS. Vespasian A i, gloss mid-ninth century, ed. H. Sweet, *The Oldest English Texts* (*Early English Text Society*=[*EETS*] *Ordinary Series* [*OS*], 83 : London, 1885), pp. 183 ff ; Bodl. MS. Junius 27, early tenth century, ed E. Brenner, *Der altenglische Junius-Psalter* (*Anglistische Forschungen*, 23 : Heidelberg, 1908) ; CUL MS. Ff. 1. 23, mid-tenth century, ed. K. Wildhagen, *Der Cambridger Psalter* (*Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Prosa*, vii : Hamburg, 1910) ; Brit. Mus. Royal MS. 2 B v, mid-tenth century, ed. F. Roeder, *Der altenglische Regius-Psalter* (*Studien zur Englischen Philologie*, xviii : Halle, 1904); Trinity Coll., Cambridge MS. R. 17. 1, mid-twelfth century, ed. F. Harsley,

West Saxon, possibly Alfredian, prose, and the remainder in verse [1]; the version of the Heptateuch based on the work of Ælfric[2]; and from the New Testament the Gospel translations, both those in interlinear glosses in the Lindisfarne and Rushworth manuscripts and that in West Saxon prose.[3]   In Middle English

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Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter (*EETS OS*, 92, : 1889), with a full facsimile ed. M. R. James, *The Canterbury Psalter* (London, 1935); Brit. Mus. Stowe MS. 2, mid-eleventh century, ed. J. Spelman, *Psalterium Davidis Latino-Saxicum Vetus* (London, 1640); Brit. Mus. Cotton MS. Vitellius E xviii, mid-eleventh century, ed. J. L. Rosier, *The Vitellius Psalter* (*Cornell Studies in English :* 1962); Brit. Mus. Cotton MS. Tiberius C vi, mid-eleventh century, unedited; Lambeth Palace MS. 427, early eleventh century, ed. U. Lindelöf, *Der Lambeth-Psalter* (*Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae :* Helsingfors, 1909-14); Brit. Mus. Arundel MS. 60, late eleventh century, ed. G. Oess, *Der altenglische Arundel-Psalter* (*Anglistische Forschungen*, 30 : Heidelberg, 1910); Salisbury Cathedral MS. 150, eleventh-twelfth century, ed. Celia Sisam and Kenneth Sisam, *The Salisbury Psalter* (*EETS*, 242 : 1959); Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 37517, early eleventh century (partial gloss only), ed. U. Lindelöf, " Die altenglischen Glossen im Bosworth-Psalter ", *Mémoires de la Société néophilologique de Helsingfors*, v (1909), 137 ff.   Their unchronological order in this list is determined by the fact that in detailed comparative studies they are usually designated by capital letters, A to L respectively; the fullest modern discussion of their relationships is that of Dr. Kenneth Sisam in the introduction to *The Salisbury Psalter*.   The dates assigned above are derived from those of N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957), in which detailed authoritative descriptions of these and all other Old English manuscripts mentioned in this paper are given.

[1] The whole is edited by B. Thorpe, *Libri Psalmorum Versio Antiqua Latina cum Paraphrasi Anglo-Saxonica* (London, 1835): better editions of the two sections are (*a*) prose : ed. J. W. Bright and R. L. Ramsay, *The West Saxon Psalms* (The Belles Lettres Series : Boston, 1907); (*b*) verse : ed. G. P. Krapp, *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius* (*Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, v : 1932).   A facsimile of the whole manuscript is ed. B. Colgrave, *The Paris Psalter* (*Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, viii : Copenhagen, 1958).   The latest discussion of the authorship is in J. I'A. Bromwich, " Who was the Translator of the Prose Portion of the Paris Psalter? ", in *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe : H. M. Chadwick Memorial Studies*, ed. Sir Cyril Fox and Bruce Dickins (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 289-304.

[2] Ed. S. J. Crawford, *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch* (*EETS*, 160 : 1921).   See also J. Raith, " Ælfric's Share in the Old English Pentateuch ", *Review of English Studies*, n.s., iii (1952), 305 ff. and P. A. M. Clemoes, "The Chronology of Ælfric's Works ", in *The Anglo-Saxons : Studies . . . presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. P. Clemoes (London, 1959), pp. 224, 241.

[3] All edited together by W. W. Skeat, *The Holy Gospels in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian and Old Mercian Versions, Synoptically Arranged* (Cambridge, 1871-87).

there are three psalters from the first half of the fourteenth century, the *Surtees Psalter*,[1] Richard Rolle of Hampole's *Psalter*[2] and the *West Midland Prose Psalter*[3]; the fourteenth-century New Testament version published by Miss Paues and usually called by her name[4]; the Pauline Epistles published by Miss Powell[5]; and the two Wycliffite versions generally recognized, of which the earlier is found in various states of revision.[6]

Two words of warning may be necessary about these versions. Their relative importance is not always easy to determine. Every educated layman has heard of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*; with some laudatory adjective for its artistic merit the manuscript is granted a mention and often a photograph in most popular

[1] Ed. J. Stevenson, *Anglo-Saxon and Early English Psalter* (*Surtees Society*, 16, 19 : London, 1843-7) (whence the name : the " Anglo-Saxon " Psalter included is the Vespasian Psalter, very poorly edited) and in a better edition by C. Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers : Richard Rolle of Hampole and his Followers* (Library of Early English Writers : London, 1895-6), ii. 129-273. There are several names for this version. In the *New English Dictionary* it is cited as *Early English Psalter*, in the *Middle English Dictionary* as *Northern Verse Psalter*. I use the name preferred by J. E. Wells, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400* (New Haven, 1916, with nine supplements to 1951), to which reference should be made for all versions in Middle English mentioned in this paper.

[2] Ed. H. R. Bramley, *The Psalter or Psalms of David . . . by Richard Rolle of Hampole* (Oxford, 1884).

[3] Again I use the name preferred by Wells, though there is no justification for the first word. It is edited by K. D. Bülbring, *The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter* (*EETS OS,* 97 : 1891), a title which also lacks clear justification : there is no evidence about the priority of this and Rolle's *Psalter.*

[4] Ed. Anna C. Paues, *A Fourteenth Century English Biblical Version* (Cambridge, 1904).

[5] Ed. Margaret J. Powell, *The Pauline Epistles Contained in MS. Parker 32, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (*EETS ES,* 116 : 1915).

[6] The only full edition is *The Holy Bible . . . made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his Followers,* edited by the Reverend Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederic Madden, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1850) (abbreviated as FM). This needs to be used with caution. The introductory account of medieval English versions still serves as a source for writers of general histories of the Bible ; even the latest (5th) edition of Sir Frederic Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (London, 1958) shows its influence, though it is in need of revision. Even on the Wycliffite versions themselves the introduction is not fully reliable : the texts are good, but of diverse origin. The forthcoming first volume of *The Cambridge History of the Bible* will have an up-to-date account ; in the meantime, the best short account is Sir William Craigie's chapter in *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions,* ed. H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford, 1940), pp. 137-45.

histories of the Bible. And undoubtedly the gloss has some importance, even apart from its philological attractions to the student of the Northumbrian dialect of Old English. In no well-regulated scriptorium would a scribe be allowed to insert casually into so precious a manuscript his own translation, like a schoolboy " glossing " his Caesar. But to set against Lindisfarne and its one partial copy Rushworth there are five complete or nearly-complete texts of the Gospels in West Saxon, one copied with extensive modernization of its language well after the Old English period,[1] and fragments that show that at least another four manuscripts must have existed. To Middle English translations the caveat is perhaps not so applicable, since more manuscripts altogether have survived, and the 200 or so manuscripts of parts of the Wycliffite versions may properly be set against the unique manuscript of the translation of the Pauline Epistles published by Miss Powell to indicate their relative importance.

The other word of warning concerns dates. The earliest glosses—to the *Vespasian Psalter*—were written about 850: the later Wycliffite version can be dated, more exactly, to 1395-7. As long a period separates them from each other as separates us from Wyclif, and the language of the Old English copies was as unintelligible to Purvey, Wyclif's secretary, as it is to the layman today ; he described them as " of so oolde Englische that vnnethe can any man rede hem ".[2] In the controversies in Oxford around 1400 about the propriety of Biblical translation the precedent of Bede's version of John was frequently cited,[3] but knowledge of it was gained from historical sources. Though today the whole range of translation is the subject of one survey, they represent different strata in the pre-history of the English Bible—the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Ages together. The archaeological analogy may usefully be extended to remind us that with the dawn of the Iron Age, that of the study of the original

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[1] Bodl. MS. Hatton 38, dated by Ker as twelfth-thirteenth century : printed in the right-hand column of the left-hand pages of Skeat's edition.

[2] In the tract, " Agens hem that seyn that hooli wrigt schulde not or may not be drawun into Engliche ", printed by Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible* (Cambridge, 1920), pp. 439-45 ; quotation on p. 441.

[3] Deanesly, op. cit. pp. 133-4.

languages and the printing press, the earlier cultures were gradually superseded and continuity lost.

Let us then consider the highest level of late Bronze Age culture, and visualize one of the large folio manuscripts of the later Wycliffite version—perhaps such a one as Cotton MS. Claudius E ii. It is a handsome volume, with the text neatly written out in double columns; initial letters of books are decorated with a little gold, those of chapters with red and blue and in the Psalms the initial letter of every verse is flourished alternately with red and blue. In the margins of the page, top, bottom and sides, are written in a smaller handwriting a series of glosses, sometimes so numerous as completely to fill the space available, sometimes only short and sporadic, in some books of the Bible quite lacking. The page is well set out, and so it ought to be, for it was certainly written by a professional scribe who would have had adequate experience of laying out a text with gloss. Several features of such a page may serve as starting-points for our considerations. Let us take a page somewhere about the beginning of Proverbs : here is a portion from Chapter IV, verses 4-12 :

And my fadir tauʒte me, and seide, Thin herte resseyue my wordis ; kepe thou myn heestis, and thou schalt lyue. Welde thou wisdom, welde thou prudence ; forʒete thou not, nethir bowe thou awey fro the wordis of my mouth. Forsake thou not it, and it schal kepe thee ; loue thou it, and it schal kepe thee. The bigynnyng of wisdom, welde thou wisdom ; and in al thi possessioun gete thou prudence. Take thou it, and it schal enhaunse thee : though schalt be glorified of it, whanne thou hast biclippid it. It schal ʒyve encresyngis of graces to thin heed ; and a noble coroun schal defende thee. Mi sone, here thou, and take my wordis ; that the ʒeris of lijf be multiplied to thee. Y schal schewe to thee the weie of wisdom ; and Y schal lede thee bi the pathis of equyte. In to whiche whanne thou hast entrid, thi goyngis schulen not be maad streit ; and thou schalt rennen, and schalt not have hirtyng.

First, the style of the translation. There are one or two in-felicities : " the bigynnyng of wisdom, welde thou wisdom " is a literal translation of " principium sapientiae, posside sapien-tiam ", which does not attempt to relate the two pairs of words together (AV. " Wisdom is the principal thing : therefore get wisdom "; RSV. " The beginning of wisdom is this : Get wis-dom "), and " in to whiche whanne thou hast entrid " is obviously

translator's language for the Vulg. " quas cum ingressus fueris ". But there is also some fluency, the level of which is the result of deliberate policy, and some experimentation ; in the earlier copies of the Wycliffite Bible we can see certain of the grammatical principles which determine the structure of the sentences emerging : that prohibitions should take the form " forȝete thou not " rather than " ne forȝete " ; that in the imperative the pronoun should be added ; that vocatives should be brought forward in the sentence (" Mi sone, here thou ", not " Here þou, mi sone ") ; that auxiliary verbs and pronouns sometimes must be repeated (" Y schal schewe . . . and Y schal lede ").[1] Other such principles are dealt with in the *General Prologue*, a long, somewhat heretical prologue surviving in some copies but now lost from Cotton MS. Claudius E ii—that participles may be resolved in English into a finite tense ; that words such as " autem " and " vero " may require to be translated in different ways ; that in English word-order replaces case differentiation in establishing the relationship of words.[2] Each of these principles, self-obvious and minor though they seem, marks a slight step away from earlier practice.

The fundamental dilemma which faces the translator of a sacred text, whether to translate word for word, thereby preserving the possibility of re-establishing in the second language all the special significance and connotations which each word possesses in the original, or to re-express idiomatically in the second language what the translator thinks to be the meaning of the original writer, has been shown by Dr. Schwarz to be a recurring one [3]; but for the medieval translator the second alternative did not arise. The dominant theory of Biblical translation, based on Jerome's discussion of this specialized task rather than on his consideration of translation in general, accepted the principle that every word of the text was sacred: even the order of the words is a mystery, and this mystery must be preserved in translation. The *fidus interpres* does take care

[1] H. Hargreaves, " An Intermediate Version of the Wycliffite Old Testament ", *Studia Neophilologica*, xxviii (1956), 130-147. [2] FM, i. 57-60.

[3] W. Schwarz, *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation* (Cambridge, 1955).

to make word correspond to word.[1]   This presumably is why the earliest translations are the interlinear glosses, where the word-order of Latin is imposed on the English.   Most unfortunately, in discussion of early English translations the one word " gloss " is used with two meanings, first that of the word-for-word rendering in a second language to accompany the Latin text, with which we are concerned here, and secondly that of the explanatory or interpretative comment in the same language as the text, to which we shall devote some attention later.

Moreover, in such interlinear glosses, as every word is considered by the careful student (though by no means all glossators were careful students), any particularly difficult one can receive alternative and cumulative renderings, either because the translator knows that his grasp of the exact meaning is not firm, or because he feels that the nuances of the original are such that they cannot all be conveyed by a single gloss.

In the Lindisfarne Gospels Mark iii. 11, " procidebant " is glossed " gefeollon vel hluton "; the first is the general word for " they fell ", though it can also mean " they fell down in reverence "; the second means " they bowed down ".   At Luke x. 13, " paeniterent " is glossed " Þætte hea gehreawsadon vel geboeton ", where " gehreawsadon " means " they sorrowed, they grieved " and " geboeton " " they atoned, they made amends for ".   At Luke xxii. 28, where " temtationibus " is glossed " suoenccum vel costungum ", the first word expresses the element of tribulation or affliction in the Latin, the second that of trying or testing.   The glossator of the Lambeth Psalter, too, can be watched at work : at Psalm ci. 7, " sicut nocticorax in domicilio " he writes first, probably copying, " on getimbringce " (" in the dwelling ") above " in domicilio ".   Other glossators have understood the passage differently : some, presumably interpreting the house as the " night-raven's " own, have " on neste "[2]; another has " on solere "—the house is an upper room [3]; others again have " on husincle ", a diminutive.[4]

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[1] W. Schwarz, " The Meaning of *Fidus Interpres* in Medieval Translation ", *Journal of Theological Studies*, xlv (1944), 75.

[2] Stowe, Arundel.   All references by chapter (or psalm) and verse are to those of the versions cited.   [3] Regius.   [4] Vespasian, Junius, Bosworth.

And so, careful lest there should be particular force in the diminutive form of the Latin, the Lambeth glossator adds to " on getimbringce " an alternative " vel on lytelre wununge " (" or in the little dwelling "). Seven words further on he meets " solitarius " in " sicut passer solitarius in tecto " and writes " anhoga " (" a solitary one "). But the " anhoga " of the Old English poem *The Wanderer* is one who is destined " hreran mid hondum hrimcealde sæ, wadan wræclastas " (" to stir with his hands the ice-cold sea, to tread the paths of exile "). Are there undesired connotations about the word? In case " solitarius " should mean simply " living alone ", he adds " anwuniende ". Other glossators, less careful, write simply "ancra" ("a hermit ").[1]

Nor should we forget that extreme literalness has been called " the refuge of the unlearned as well as the stronghold of the scrupulous ".[2] The writer of the *Surtees Psalter*, working over, so it seems, a glossed psalter and recasting it, with the Latin omitted, into rough octosyllabic couplets,[3] padded out with virtually meaningless rhyming tags, retains such uncouth passages as :

> Deme fadreles and meke, and noght set he
> Our mikel him man ouer erþe to be

from Psalm ix. 42, " judicare pupillo et humili, ut [et?] non apponat ultra magnificare se homo super terram," or

> Loke swa gode, swa winsom yhite
> Til eerde brethre in ane es ite

for Psalm cxxxii. 1, " Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum." For individual words, too, the most rigid literalness is used, producing a number of unintelligent calques : Psalm viii. 7, " Insuper et pecora campi "—" Inouer and beestes of þe felde "; Psalm xxii. 4, " Nam etsi ambulem in medio umbrae mortis "—" For and ife I ga in mid schadw of dede "; Psalm xciii. 17, " paulominus habitauerat in inferno anima mea "—" Littelles woned mi saul in hel "; Psalm lxxvii.

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[1] Arundel.

[2] E. Jacobsen, *Translation a Traditional Craft* (*Classica et Mediaevalia. Dissertationes,* vi : Copenhagen, 1958), p. 98.

[3] H. Hargreaves, " The Vocabulary of *The Surtees Psalter* ", *Modern Language Quarterly,* xvii (1956), 326 ff.

23, " et torrentes inundaverunt "—" And þe welles vnwatred þai ilkan ". More excusable perhaps are " outscheþed " for " evaginaverunt ", and " outscerandnes " for " excusatio ", but the level of knowledge revealed by such elementary blunders can hardly be said to be high.

" The stronghold of the scrupulous " is perhaps rather revealed by Richard Rolle, despite his contempt for the " doctores et philosophi et theologi, infinitis quaestionibus implicati " and for the " sophismata sapientium saecularium superstitiosa ". His translation of the Psalter conforms to the pattern of unidiomatic literalness, although as an original writer in the vernacular he has been described as " the master of a good prose style, varying from the plain didactic to the ecstatic ".[1] His Psalter translation was designed not to stand alone but to follow the Latin verse by verse and to be accompanied by a commentary elucidating its spiritual meaning. In a few brief sentences in his prologue he outlines his methods of translation :

In þis werke .i. seke na straunge ynglis, bot lyghtest and comonest. and swilk þat is mast lyke til þe latyn. swa þat þai þat knawes noght latyn. by þe ynglis may com til mony latyn wordis. In þe translacioun .i. folow þe lettere als mykyll as .i. may. And þare .i. fynd na propire ynglis .i. folow þe wit of þe worde, swa þat þai þat sall red it þaim thare noght dred errynge.[2]

Where following " the wit of the word " leads him may perhaps be shown by his translations of the two verses mentioned above :

For to deme to þe fadirles barn & till þe meke : þat man sett noght ouer to wirschip himself abouen erth;

Lo how goed and how delitabill : breþere to won in ane.

Rolle's general writings have been compared favourably with the earlier Wycliffite translation,[3] and the validity of the comparison rightly challenged.[4] Certainly, in translation, both Rolle and those responsible for the earlier version are in the same tradition.

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[1] R. M. Wilson, " Three Middle English Mystics ", Essays and Studies, N.S., ix (1956), 95.   [2] Bramley, op. cit. pp. 4-5.
[3] " whilst Rolle writes modern English, the first Wycliffite version, written thirty-five years after Rolle's death, is almost incredibly crude " (R. W. Chambers, " On the Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his School ", in Harpsfield's Life of More, ed. E. V. Hitchcock and R. W. Chambers (EETS OS, 186 : 1932), p. ciii).   [4] R. M. Wilson, loc. cit. p. 92.

They represent the average standard of their time—a literalness just comprehensible, and on either side of them stand the sometimes incomprehensible and the moderately fluent.

Perhaps the level of fluency most comparable with that of the later Wycliffite version was reached in late Old English times with Ælfric's Old Testament extracts and the West Saxon gospels. Ælfric, too, in his preface to Genesis expresses briefly his ideas on the technique of translation :

Nu is seo foresæde boc on manegum stowum swyðe nearolice gesett, and ðeah swyðe deoplice on ðam gastlican andgyte ; and heo is swa geendebyrd, swa swa God sylf hi gedihte ðam writere Moyse, and we ne durron na mare awritan on Englisc þonne ðæt Leden hæfð, ne ða endebyrdnysse awendan, buton ðam anum, ðæt ðæt Leden and ðæt Englisc nabbað na ane wisan on ðære spræce fadunge : æfre se ðe awent oððe se ðe tæcð of Ledene on Englisc, æfre he sceal gefadian hit swa ðæt ðæt Englisc hæbbe his agene wisan, elles hit bið swyðe gedwolsum to rædenne ðam ðe ðæs Ledenes wise ne can.[1]

He realizes that syntactic necessity in English must overrule the principle of preserving the word-order of the original. Old English being an inflected language like Latin, the necessity is not really so strong for him as it is for the Wycliffite translators later, but the advantages of flexibility are seen in such renderings as that of Genesis iii. 11, where it would be syntactically possible, but stylistically in the highest degree undesirable, to surround the adjectival and noun clauses by the elements of the conditional clause as in the Latin.

Quis enim indicavit tibi quod nudus esses, nisi quod
ex ligno de quo tibi praeceperam ne comederes, comedisti.

Hwa sæde ðe ðæt ðu nacod wære, gyf ðu ne æte of ðam
treowe ðe ic ðe bebead ðæt ðu ne æte.

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[1] Crawford, op. cit. pp. 79-80, taking the alternative reading " fadunge " from the Cambridge MS. for " fandunge " (" testing ") of the Claudius MS., in conformity with the later infinitive " gefadian ".
Translation : " Now this book already mentioned [Genesis] is in many places expressed very succinctly and yet very profoundly in the spiritual sense ; and it is arranged just as God himself composed it for Moses the scribe, and we dare not write more in English than the Latin has, nor change the order, except in this one respect. Latin and English do not have the same method in the arrangement of language ; whoever translates or teaches from Latin to English must always arrange it so that the English has its own method ; otherwise it is very deceptive for the man who does not know the Latin method to read."

Sometimes the alteration is too great to be called one of word-order only. In the same chapter, verse 22, " Ecce Adam factus est quasi unus ex nobis sciens bonum et malum " has the adjecti-val phrase transformed into the main clause and the verb of the main clause omitted, " Nu Adam can yfel and god, swa swa ure sum " (" Now Adam knows evil and good, just like one of us "), though equally correct in Old English would be " Nu Adam is geworden swa swa ure sum, witende god and yfel " (" Now Adam is made like one of us, knowing good and evil "), and in verse 24, " Ejecitque Adam, et collocavit ante paradisum voluptatis Cherubim " the active verb of the first clause is changed to passive with transfer of the adverbial phrase of place, as " Ða ða he adræfed wæs of neorxnawanges myrhðe, ða gesette God æt ðæm infære engla hyrdrædene " (" when he was expelled from the joy of Paradise, God set at the entrance a guard of angels "). Despite the statement in his Prologue, Ælfric does add in the same chapter such short clauses as " be ðam ðe hyre ðuhte " to verse 6 " Ða geseah ðæt wif ðæt ðæt treow wæs god to etenne " (" Then the woman saw that that tree was good to eat, *as it seemed to her* "), and " Eft ða ða God com " (" Then, when God came ") at the beginning of verse 8.

I illustrate these minor changes from a single chapter of the undoubtedly Ælfrician section, since other chapters of Genesis and the rest of the Heptateuch are not definitely attributable to him and show more numerous omissions, so that the version becomes sometimes a very full summary, in which a certain freedom is more called for. They are reasonably acceptable to us in a translation sense for sense. Similar ones are made in the West Saxon gospels, which present a clear and accurate translation in a simple but on the whole idiomatic style. Only the magnitude of the linguistic changes which manifested themselves after the Norman Conquest rendered the attempted modernization of these texts ineffective, and they represent in Old English what the later Wycliffite version represents in Middle English, the highest level of accuracy and fluency that was reached.

Let us return now to the open manuscript we visualized to consider the form and accuracy of the Vulgate text on which it is

based. This will be a fair test of the translator's level of scholarship, since the author of the *General Prologue*, whom for convenience we may call Purvey, though the identification is not universally accepted,[1] specifically claims to have established a correct Latin text before he could proceed to the real work of translation :

First, this symple creature hadde myche trauaile, with diuerse felawis and helperis, to gedere manie elde biblis, and othere doctouris and comune glosis and to make oo Latyn bible sumdel trewe.[2]

It is possible, moreover, because of the preservation of the earlier version and its printing side-by-side with the later version in Forshall and Madden's edition, after making allowances for the stylistic innovations of the revisers, to distinguish changes in the Latin basis of the text, which presumably are to be regarded as corrections. Purvey himself indicates the source of most of the corrections when he goes on to say that " speciali Lire on the elde testament . . . helpide ful myche in this werk ;" he also says that where the Latin text, according to Jerome and Lyra, diverges from the Hebrew he will add a marginal gloss to explain the divergence. " Lire " is Nicholas of Lyra, the early fourteenth-century Franciscan commentator whose *Postills* were a standard commentary for some two centuries. Purvey is not however always consistent in carrying out his intentions. In Job xx. 16, where the earlier version translates " caput aspidum surget " as " the hed of edderes shal rise ", Purvey reads " caput aspidum suget " " he schal souke the heed of snakis ", and the marginal gloss, translated from Lyra, explains further :

Tomas Alquyn and summe othere doctours expownen thus this lettre, *The heed of snakis schal rise*, that is, the deuel ether another my3ty man schal rise to asaile him,

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[1] The identification is fully argued in Deanesly, op. cit. pp. 252-67 ; the responsibility of Purvey for the whole of the Later Version was first suggested by Waterland ; the suggestion was supported by FM, i. xxviii. Some doubt has been expressed, for example by A. W. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible* (Oxford, 1911), pp 1-2 and recently by K. B. McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (London, 1952), p. 149. Wyclif himself was dead twelve years before the *General Prologue* was written : he certainly had nothing to do with the later version and, despite the attempt of S. L. Fristedt, *The Wycliffe Bible, Pt. I. (Stockholm Studies in English*, iv : Stockholm, 1953) to restore a direct connection, little directly to do with the earlier version.

[2] FM, i. 57.

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as the head of a snake is reisid to bite.　But this exposicioun acordith not with the Ebrew, where it is, *schal souƙe* :　and where we han heed, in Ebrew it is *ros*, that signefieth bothe heed and galle :　if it is takun in the ij. signeficacioun, that is, galle, it is pleyn ynow seiynge thus, *He schal souƙe the galle o snaƙis*.

That is, Purvey makes the textual emendation that can be presumed to be the result of scribal corruption, but not the one that represents a wrong understanding of the Hebrew on the part of the original translator.　Elsewhere, however, he is quite willing to incorporate into his text itself a correction of such a wrong understanding ;　in Psalm xxx. 16, where the Vulgate has " in manibus tuis sortes meae " " in thin hondys my lottis ", Lyra points out that the Hebrew means " tempora mea " and Purvey incorporates this reading—" my tymes ben in thin hondis ", and in Psalm xli. 8 for the " gooteris " that translates " cataractarum " of the Vulgate he substitutes " wyndows " " fenestrarum "— because Lyra points out that this is the meaning of the Heb- rew.[1]

Nowhere does Purvey give any indication of having himself any knowledge of Hebrew or of Greek.　Even his more learned master, Wyclif, apparently knew none, in contrast with his chief English opponent at the Curia, Adam Easton,[2] and the extensive study of Hebrew that has been revealed by modern researches to have been taking place in the universities from the twelfth century onwards left no discernible mark on English translations except at second hand through Lyra on the later Wycliffite version.　And apart from those made by the incorporation of Lyra's comments, there is no obvious source for Purvey's emendations.　One assumes that he would have *correctoria*, which were available from the thirteenth century onwards with lists of variant readings, but it is disappointing to go through the book of Proverbs as Purvey left it, comparing it with the *correctoria*

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[1] H. Hargreaves, " The Latin Text of Purvey's Psalter ", *Medium Ævum*, xxiv (1955), 81.

[2] Beryl Smalley, " John Wyclif's *Postilla Super Totam Bibliam* ", *Bodleian Library Record*, iv (1952-3), 199 and note ;　Beryl Smalley, " Wyclif's *Postilla* on the Old Testament and his *Principium* ", *Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus*, *Oxford Historical Society*, N.S., xvi (1964), 279 ;　for Easton see A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (Oxford, 1957-9), i. 621.

that Denifle printed from the thirteenth century[1] ; here are many of his readings carefully shown to be erroneous—the unjustifiable " et liberabit se " " & schal delyuere hymsilf " left in at vi. 31, " in interiora " " in to ynnere thingis " not " in inferiora " at vii. 27 (" quod si secundum quosdam ponitur ibi ' in interiora ' nichil tangetur de sensu " says one *correctorium*), " exaltabitur " " schal be enhaunsid " preferred to " exultabit " at xi. 10, " amici " " of a freend " to " animi " at xi. 13 (though another *correctorium* says " Hebreus non habet ' amici ', nec ' animi ', sed simpliciter ' celat commissum ' "). Some corrections he has made, substituting " correptionem, correptioni " " my repreuyng, myn amendyng " for " correctionem ", " correctioni " in i. 23, 30, " exaltatio " " enhaunsing " for " exultatio " in iii. 35, " et rapitur somnus " " sleep is rauyschid " for " nec capitur somnus " in iv. 16, translating " ludens " twice in viii. 30-31, and omitting " iuvenem " from vii. 6, but elsewhere, in Acts, of five alterations affecting the forms of names, two are corrections and three corruptions. The two corrections are xvi. 1 from " mulieris viduae " " of a woman widowe " to " mulieris Iudæae " " of a Iewesse " and xxviii. 11 from " insigne castrorum " " a noble thing of castels " to " insigne Castorum " " an excellent singne of Castours ", and the three corruptions iv. 36 from " Barnabas " to " Barsabas ", xiv. 24 from " Atalie " " Attalia " to " Italie " and xix. 14 from " Sceue " " Sceva " to " Steuen ".[2]

The text which Purvey adopted as his basis before emending was, not unnaturally, the standard Paris text of his time, that represented in the Vatican Vulgate by Ω^s and in Wordsworth and White by W, which would be circulating, with inevitable corruptions, also in Oxford and in fact throughout Europe. In thus translating the text nearest to hand he was following the custom of his predecessors. The importance of England in the history

[1] H. Denifle, " Die Handschriften der Bible-Correctorien des 13 Jahrhunderts ", *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters*, iv (1888), 263-311 and 471-601.

[2] The best source of information on the corrections made in NT is the footnotes in *The New Testament in Scots* ed. T. G. Law (*Scottish Text Society*, 46, 49, 52 : Edinburgh, 1901-5). For OT there is no such source.

of the transmission of the Vulgate text has long been recognized, and the history of the Vulgate in England is mirrored in English translations.   Of the same family of manuscripts as the Codex Amiatinus is the Lindisfarne Gospels,[1] and though an authoritative answer to the question whether the gloss was prepared for this manuscript or copied into it from another is not given even in the magnificent Urs-Graf edition,[2] it is clear that the English follows the Latin text closely.   One might not have expected this, despite the nature of the gloss, since the insertion of the English is separated by some 250 years from the writing of the Latin, years during which Alcuin's revision of the Vulgate text had been carried through on the Continent and introduced to England by the Benedictine reformers in the tenth century.   It was in the second half of the tenth century that Aldred was writing his gloss in Lindisfarne to his manuscript of the South-Italian or Northumbrian family, and a little later within the same half-century Farman was making a freer interlinear translation to Matthew and Owun a copy of the Lindisfarne gloss to Mark, Luke and John in part adapted for the Rushworth Gospels, a text of an Irish family.[3]   At about the same time, Dr. Glunz has claimed with some plausibility, in the reformed Benedictine monasteries of the south-west a similar interlinear gloss, which was later revised as the West Saxon gospels, was being made to an Alcuinian text.[4]   Similarly with the Psalter; some of the purest surviving texts of the Roman Psalter are English, and the earliest, the *Vespasian Psalter*,[5] is provided with an interlinear gloss.   When the Gallican Psalter was introduced with the reformed Benedictine

[1] S. Berger, *Histoire de la Vulgate Pendant les Premiers Siècles du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1893), p. 39.

[2] " . . . when he [Aldred, the scribe] says he ' glossed it in English between the lines ', he means, not that he composed the Gloss—he may, indeed, have copied it in from other sources, either wholly or in part—but that he wrote it with his own hand " (A. S. C. Ross, E. G. Stanley and T. J. Brown, " Some Observations on the Gloss and Glossator ", in *Evangelium Quattuor Codex Lindisfarnensis* (Lausanne, 1960), Bk. II, pt. i, p. 11).

[3] H. Glunz, *Britannien und Bibeltext* (Leipzig, 1930), p. 14.

[4] H. Glunz, *Die lateinische Vorlage der westsächsischen Evangelienversion* (*Beiträge zur englischen Philologie*, ix : Leipzig, 1928), p. 81.

[5] Ed. R. Weber, *Le Psautier Romain et les autres Anciens Psautiers Latins* (*Collectanea Biblica Latina*, x : Rome, 1953), pp. ix, xiii, xxii.

monasticism, it too was glossed, and the two versions in Latin and English influenced each other so extensively that hardly any copy remained uncorrupted.[1] In the middle of the twelfth century there was prepared *Edwin's Canterbury Psalter*, with the three Hieronymian texts side-by-side, the Roman, with an interlinear Old English gloss, the " Hebrew " or Hebraicum with a similar gloss in Old French—the earliest translation into French of any Biblical book, and produced in England[2]—and the Gallican, with extensive notes in Latin very closely resembling the *Glossa Ordinaria* composed some years earlier.[3] Clearly this was a volume meant for careful study, particularly for textual comparison ; it is a pity therefore that the Old English is so poor that Dr. Kenneth Sisam regards the explanation of its presence in so fine a manuscript as " a problem for historians of education ".[4] Scraps of this Old English—a mere twenty words—were copied with the Roman Psalter into Bibl. Nat. MS. lat. 8846. Their only interest—apart from the fact that they escaped Mr. Neil Ker's meticulous gleaning[5]—is that they are the last glosses to any other text than the Paris Vulgate. There are traceable in the Middle English versions some unusual Latin readings, unrecorded among the variants in the Vatican Vulgate, such as " vitam " for " unam " in Psalm xxvi. 7 in the *Surtees Psalter* (" Life ofe lauerd asked .i.") and the *West Midland Psalter* (" Ich asked þe lif þat euer schal last "), and " placentes " for " bene patientes " at xci. 14 in the same two psalters and " iusto " (" ri3tful ") for " isto " at 1 Peter iv. 16 in the Paues version, but these are only to be expected. There is no evidence before that

[1] K. Wildhagen, " Studien zum Psalterium Romanum in England und zu seinen Glossierungen ", *Festschrift für L. Morsbach* (*Studien zur englischen Philologie*, 1 : Halle, 1913), pp. 417-72, and " Das Psalterium Gallicanum in England und seine altenglischen Glossierungen ", *Englische Studien*, liv (1920), 35-45. His conclusions should be viewed in the light of Dr. Kenneth Sisam's remarks in *The Salisbury Psalter*, p. 49.

[2] S. Berger, *La Bible Française au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1884), p. 1.

[3] For the date of composition of the *Glossa Ordinaria* and its authorship, see Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (2nd edn., Oxford, 1952), pp. 46-66.   [4] *The Salisbury Psalter*, p. 58.

[5] The manuscript is not described in the *Catalogue*, but by chance a vacant number corresponds to the space it should fill. My colleague Miss Cecily Clark and I print the glosses in a forthcoming number of *Notes and Queries*.

of the *General Prologue* to suggest that any translator regarded it as his first duty to establish a correct text ; such evidence could not, in the nature of things, be extensive, but one might have expected Ælfric or Rolle or the author of the Paues version to mention briefly in his prologue that he had used a corrected text. None of them does, and in this respect, too, the later Wycliffite version shows the highest level of scholarly care attained.

Let us return once again to the open page of our manuscript, and follow up the observation that the text stands surrounded by the gloss or by glosses, using the word now with its second meaning of explanatory comment in the language of the text, whether textual (i.e. inserted into the text, sometimes but not always differentiated from it by underlining) or marginal. Those that surround Purvey's text relate to both literal and spiritual meanings. The distinction between them Purvey twice explains in his *General Prologue*, the second time in a lengthy translated extract from Lyra's prologue to the Bible which apparently became available to him a little time after he had completed his own explanation. This runs :

But it is to wite, that holy scripture hath iiij vndirstondingis : literal, allegorik, moral and anagogik. The literal vndirstonding techith the thing don in deede ; and literal vndirstonding is ground and foundament of thre goostly vndirstondingis, in so myche as Austyn, in his pistle to Vincent, and othere doctouris seyn, oonly bi the literal vndirstonding a man may argue aȝens an aduersarie. Allegorik is a goostly vndirstonding, that techith what thing men owen for to bileeue of Crist either of hooly chirche. Moral is a goostly vndirstonding, that techith men, what vertues thei owen to sue, and what vices thei owen to flee. Anagogik is a goostly vndirstonding, that techith men what blisse thei schal haue in heuene.[1]

He goes on to give the stock example of Jerusalem and the necessary customary warnings that " these thre goostly vndirstondingis ben not autentik either of beleeue, no but tho ben groundid opynly in the text of holy scripture, in oo place other other, either in opin resoun that may not be distroied " and " It is to be war in the bigynnyng, that we take not to the lettre a figuratif speche ". Not surprisingly, in view of his insistence on the primacy of the literal meaning, most of Purvey's notes, taken from Lyra, elucidate this meaning. Their general tenor may be

[1] FM, i. 43.

deduced from that to Proverbs iv. 7, which we saw in the passage quoted presented a difficulty :

The bigynnyng of wisdom that is, to gete wisdom. *welde thou wisdom*; that is at the maner of possessioun, cleue thou stidefastly to a wiys techere. *welde thou wisdom*; that is, possessioun of wisdom in this liyf, is the bigynnyng to haue wisdom in heuenli cuntrey, which stondith in the cleer si3t and knowing of God. . . . In Ebreu thus, *the bigynnyng of wisdom, bie thou wisdom*; that is, the bigynnyng to gete wisdom, is to bie to thee bi priys ether seruyce a wiys techere, which is seid here wisdom.

Here we see a patient attempt to express for the English reader what a standard commentary on the Latin text explains as the meaning of a passage rendered difficult by obscurity of expression, incorporating an explanation of the Hebrew and a glance at the anagogic meaning. Elsewhere, similar glosses add notes on Hebrew customs—" a bie [collar] to thi necke " in Proverbs i. 9, Hebrew history—the " seed " left to us of Isaiah i. 9 explained as the survivors of the Babylonian captivity, and Hebrew weights and measures—the " ephi ", " bathus " and " corus " of Ezekiel xlv. 10–11, and so on.

In the New Testament, too, except for the Gospels, similar care is taken to fill in the background of knowledge required to understand the text. This can perhaps be shown by a summary of the contents of the glosses to a single chapter, Acts xii, which comprise : a careful differentiation of Herod Agrippa from Herod of Ascalon and Herod Antipas, an explanation of the significance of the " dies azymorum ", " the daies of therf looues ", a definition of a " quaternyoun ", a comment on the obvious reason for the soldiers' fear after Peter's escape, an elaboration—not in fact justified by the Greek—of the meaning of " duci " " to be brou3t " used of Herod's treatment of the soldiers, suggesting that their punishment was forestalled by his death, a note on the geographical location of Judea & Caesarea, an explication of the people's cry, " The voicis of God, and not of man ", a brief addition to " smoot him "—" with sorewe of the wombe ", and a final expansion of the meiosis of Herod's sin of omission " for he hadde not 3ouun onour to God " into a sin of commission " but he ioyede more of this, that the puple 3af Goddis onour to hym ". The value of such notes for a straightforward comprehension of the chapter is obvious.

Though such full explanatory notes are confined to some manuscripts of the later Wycliffite version, Miss Powell called attention when editing the Pauline Epistles from their unique manuscript to the value of the glosses—which are here textual glosses, underlined in black—in ensuring the comprehension of each point in a tightly-packed train of thought, as in :

Romans xiv. 6. He þat etys *þat is alle thynges* he etys to oure lord . . . he þat etys not *þat is he þat abstenes* to oure lord he etys not ; *þat is to þe honour of oure lord it is þat he etys not ;* and he thankys god *for þe abstynence gifen vnto hym.*

Her comment is " Here the text is filled out, point after point being carefully emphasised so that nothing be lost by untrained minds because of the conciseness of the original ".[1] Again, at 1 Corinthians xiv. 26, where the contributions of the congregation to worship are listed, and each is amplified by a brief note, as " has þe salm, *þat is þurgh þe grace of god vndyrstandys þe salmys* ", she remarks, " Here an explanatory note is added to each phrase so that none of the meaning may be lost or assumed as known. This passage illustrates the careful exactness with which the argument of the original is followed, the recapitulations, amplifications and explanations with which each point is secured."[2] I cite her judgements at some length because they represent an impartial assessment of the value of another standard commentary on the text, the *Glossa Ordinaria,* from which the additions in fact derive, to set against the strictures of its critics, both medieval and modern.[3]

Glosses on the spiritual meanings in some form or other are far more wide-spread throughout the translations with which we are dealing, though the relationship of literal to spiritual meaning is nowhere so carefully explained as in Purvey's *General Prologue.* Rolle states simply, without elaboration, " þe matere of þis boke is crist & his spouse, þat is, haly kirke, or ilk ryghtwise mannys saule ",[4] and in the Paris Psalter in prose and verse sections alike there is added to each psalm an introduction, stating that it can be interpreted under four heads, when sung by David himself,

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[1] *The Pauline Epistles,* p. lxiii. [2] Ibid. p. lxiv.
[3] Miss Smalley cites several criticisms : see particularly *The Study of the Bible,* pp. 219, 228, 367. [4] Bramley, op. cit. p. 4.

when sung by some designated historical personage of Jewish history, when sung by any man—usually any righteous or Christian man—and when sung by Christ. Professor J. D. Bruce showed many years ago in how automatic and unintelligent a way this interpretation is often applied, so that the second head, of particular interest since it derives ultimately from Theodore of Mopsuestia's commentary, is garbled and disjointed.[1] Thus in the introduction to the sixth psalm the author incorrectly attributes to David the memorable sickness that in his source is properly recorded as having afflicted Hezekiah :

Duvid sang þysne syxtan sealm be his mettrumnesse and be his earfoðum, and eac be þam ege þæs domes on domes dæge. And swa deð ælc þæra þe hine singð. And swa dyde Crist, þa he on eorðan wæs ; he hine sang be his earfoðum ; and eac Ezechias be his untrumnesse.[2]

In the body of the psalms themselves only the allegorical and moral meanings are brought out, as in Psalm xxii. 5 "þin gyrd and þin stæf me afrefredon, þæt is þin þreaung and eft þin frefrung " (" Thy rod and thy staff comforted me ; that is, thy correction and thy consolation ") or Psalm xliv. 4, where, after the literal translation of " accingere gladio tuo super femur tuum, potentissime ", " Gyrd nu þin sweord ofer þin þeoh, þu Mihtiga " (" Gird now thy sword on thy thigh, Thou Mighty one "), the version goes on "þæt is gastlicu lar, seo ys on ðam godspelle ; seo ys sceorpre þonne ænig sweord " (" that is, spiritual doctrine which is in the Gospel ; that is sharper than any sword "). Six verses later " myrrha ", " gutta " and " cassia ", " vestimentis " and " domibus eburneis " are all given spiritual interpretations which make the gloss twice as long as the text, but such extensiveness is uncommon. Usually they do not exceed five or six words, as Psalm x. 5, " palpebrae ", " his bræwas, þæt ys his rihta dom "

[1] J. D. Bruce, " The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Book of Psalms Commonly Known as the *Paris Psalter*," *Publ. of the Modern Language Assn. of America*, ix (1894), 43-164. See further J. W. Bright and R. L. Ramsay, " Notes on the ' Introductions ' of the West-Saxon Psalms ", *Journal of Theological Studies*, xiii (1912), 520 ff. and R. L. Ramsay, " Theodore of Mopsuestia in England and Ireland ", *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, viii (1912), 452 ff., esp. 476 ff.

[2] David sang this sixth psalm about his sickness and his hardships and also about the fear of judgement on Doomsday. And so does every man who sings it. And so did Christ when he was on earth ; he sang it about his hardships. And Hezekiah too about his illness.

("his brows, that is His right judgment"); Psalm xxviii. 5,
" confringet Dominus cedros Libani ", " se God brycð þa hean
cedertreowu on Libano þam myclan munte : þa treowa tacniað
ofermodra manna anweald " ("God breaks the high cedar-trees
on Libanus, that great mountain : the trees signify the power of
proud men.") The precise source of most of these glosses is
not known, but they often coincide with interpretations found in
earlier commentaries, such as those of Cassiodorus, Remigius and
Bruno (Herbipolensis).

Similar brief spiritual glosses are found in those of the Old
English glossed psalters that are intended for study rather than
liturgical use—the *Regius Psalter* and the *Lambeth Psalter*, which
both also contain similar notes in Latin on spiritual meanings.
Here, however, there is a difference in that the gloss, though
usually added as an alternative to the literal meaning, sometimes
displaces it. In Psalm xxxvi of the *Lambeth Psalter*, for instance,
" terram " occurs six times ; the last three occurrences, in verses
22, 29, 34, are glossed simply " land "; in verse 9 " sust-
inentes autem dominum ipsi hereditabunt terram ", it is glossed
" land vel ece lif " " land or eternal life "; in verse 11 " mansueti
autem hereditabunt terram " it is glossed simply " heofonrice "—
the meek shall inherit the kingdom of heaven—with the anagogical
meaning substituted for the literal, and in verse 3 " inhabita
terram et pasceris in diuitiis eius " it is glossed " gelaðunge ",
" congregation, church "—the allegorical meaning—and the whole
sentence reads " onwuna on gelaðunge 7 ðu bist gefed on his
welum þæt is on godes rice " (" dwell in the church, & you shall
be fed on its riches, that is in the kingdom of God "). The
potential effect on the translation of such substitutions can
readily be appreciated, and in Middle English the potential is
realized in the *West Midland Psalter*. In this, the Latin text is
interspersed by frequent spiritual glosses—some 1,200 in all—
and followed by the English translation, which regularly rejects
the literal rendering for the spiritual meaning.[1] In consequence,
certain familiar texts appear strangely metamorphosed :

[1] Sarah Dodson, " The Glosses in ' The Earliest Complete English Prose
Psalter ' ", *Univ. of Texas Studies in English*, xii (1932), 5-26.

Psalm xli. 9, "Abyssus abyssum invocat in voce cataractarum tuarum"—"Helle blameþ þe fendes for þy deþ of þe croice."

Psalm xxii, 5–6, "Þy discipline & þyn amendyng conforted me. Þou madest redi grace in my siȝt oȝayns hem þat trublen me. Þou makest fatt myn heued wyþ mercy ; and my drynk makand drunken ys ful clere."

Very surprisingly, two (but only two) such spiritual glosses have made their way into the later Wycliffite version of the Psalms—viii. 5, " aut filius hominis quoniam visitas eum ", " eþir þe sone of a virgyn for þou visitist hym ", and xv. 5, " pars hereditatis meae et calicis mei ", " part of myn eritage and of my passioun ". But overwhelmingly the spiritual interpretations are in the margin, in close association with—parallel with—the text, but kept formally distinct. By Rolle, too, and the author of the *North Midland Glossed Gospels* they are kept similarly distinct, and in the Wycliffite *Glossed Gospels*, a work hitherto rather over-looked, the writer of the prologue to Luke emphasizes the care he has taken in the same matter :

Firste this pore caitif settith a ful sentence of the text togidre, that it may wel be knowun fro the exposicioun ; aftirward he settith a sentence of a doctour de-clarynge the text ; and in the ende of the sentence he settith the doctouris name, that men mowen knowe verili hou far his sentence goith.[1]

The exposition consists largely of extracts from St. Thomas Aquinas's *Catena Aurea* on the Gospels, another standard com-mentary from the late thirteenth century. To the modern mind, the matter of the exposition is far inferior to that of the marginal glosses ; one misses the discussion of textual points and the concentration on the literal meaning, which is here often swamped by excess of allegorization. But whereas the marginal glosses to the rest of the Bible derive almost exclusively from Lyra, here we find the compiler ranging more widely and taking in more from his own reading, from Grosseteste, from Odo of Chateauroux, from John of Abbeville, from William of Perault and from the canon law as well as from the usual patristic sources.[2] Moreover, he uses the *Catena*, a collection of select extracts, as a guide to the

[1] Cited from MS. Bodl. 143 in FM, i. ix note.

[2] H. Hargreaves, " The Marginal Glosses to the Wycliffite New Testament ", *Studia Neophilologica*, xxxiii (1961), 296 ff. I am engaged upon a fuller study of these *Glossed Gospels*.

original authorities ; he gives full and exact references to all his sources. His approach is that of the scholar. Since it is likely that Purvey was the compiler, and that he was also responsible for the marginal glosses, one can clearly see that in the treatment of interpretative comment, too, literal and spiritual alike, the Wycliffite translators show the highest level of scholarship we have found.

In three respects then, we have seen, Purvey, while remaining typical of the early translators considered as a group, reaches the highest level of attainment. His technique is to keep very close to the words of his original, but he combines this with a reasonable fluency ; he translates the standard Latin text of his time, without himself being able to go to the original languages, but he tries to ensure that that text is accurate ; he accepts that the text needs interpretative aids, but stresses the pre-eminence of the literal meaning and handles his sources with scholarly care. That his level of scholarship still falls far short of the achievements of contemporary and earlier scholars working in Latin as revealed by Miss Smalley is not really surprising ; translation into the vernacular was not a main activity of Biblical scholars in medieval times. It had to wait for the new spirit, the new learning and the printing press. The list of Englishmen prominent as Biblical scholars in medieval times is long and still lengthening—Bede, Alcuin, Herbert of Bosham, Stephen Langton, Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, Thomas Docking, Nicholas Trevet, Robert Holcot, Adam Easton, John Wyclif. It is somewhat wryly symbolic that the only two who have been credited with any connection with the work of translation into their own native speech are the two whose names delimit my period—Bede, whose version has perished almost as though it had never been, and Wyclif, from whom even that which he had—the credit for personal participation—has by modern research been taken away.