Old English Vocabulary Dealing with Translation[1]

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This article discusses Old English translation vocabulary with special reference to the evidence provided by the Dictionary of Old English Corpus (DOEC). Terms connected with glossing have, however, been excluded from the discussion. The article throws light on the special characteristics of the Old English translation terminology: its onomasiological diversity, its dependence on Latin models and its polysemous nature. With certain lexemes, the boundary between translating, interpreting, expounding and narrating is extremely fluid.

Verbs meaning 'to translate' represented by ten lexemes, are the biggest group. There are eight different agent nouns meaning 'translator', but six of them are hapax legomena. The five nouns meaning 'translation' are all from late texts and are represented by only one instance each. All in all, translation as a process is not often referred to in the extant Old English texts. This seems partly be the result of the anonymity of much of the literary activities, including translation, in Anglo-Saxon England. Notable exceptions to this anonymity are the seventy translators of the Septuagint, Jerome and, among Anglo-Saxon translators, King Alfred and the Benedictine scholar Ælfric.

In light of the findings of this article, the list of translation words in the Thesaurus of Old English should be slightly revised.

1. Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to gain an overall view of Old English translation vocabulary, a view that would go beyond that provided by the *Thesaurus of Old English (TOE)* and dictionary definitions.

I searched for lexemes connected with the process of translation in Old English using the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (*DOEC*) as my corpus. I excluded terms connected with glossing, although glossing, which was widely practised by Anglo-Saxons, particularly with liturgical and paraliturgical texts,[2] is in many ways closely related to translation.

The period of the English language we are dealing with here is the first of the three main periods of English, Old English (OE). The written evidence of OE is available in any great amount only after the Christianization of Anglo-Saxon England, which took place around the year 600 and a few decades after it, and the end of the OE period is usually dated to fairly soon after the Norman Conquest, that is, around the year 1150.

The OE period was one in which Anglo-Saxon civilization rather rapidly, as it seems in the light of the evidence available, moved from an oral, Germanic culture towards a literary culture which was Mediterranean and Christian.[3] It effectively became a bilingual culture where Latin was the superior language of civilization. The extant corpus of OE texts shows the extent of the influence of Latin. The scholars compiling the diachronic part of the Helsinki Corpus of English texts some twenty years ago had difficulty in finding a sufficient number of texts that could be regarded as representing vernacular OE independent of Latin sources. This is particularly true of prose, although certain text types, such as legal and historical writing, were relatively speaking more independent of Latin than some others. The fact remains, however, that Anglo-Saxon civilization was profoundly influenced by Latin texts, particularly religious texts but also secular ones. It was a bilingual culture in which translation had a central role. It is against this background that I wish to examine extent to which the Anglo-Saxons referred to translating, and what the lexemes were that they used for this.

2. Vocabulary Connected with Translation in the *TOE*

For a recent overview of the OE vocabulary of translation, let us consider the appropriate section of the *TOE* (vol. 1, 474-5):

09.04.03.01 A translation: foresaga[g] , geþēode, geþēodnes
A translator: becweþere[og] , þēodend, wealhstōd, weallstaþol[o] , wendere[g]
To translate: āreccan, āwendan, gecierran, gehwierfan, oferlædan, reccan, getraht(n)ian, geþēodan, (ge)wendan

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The two flags used in this section, **g** and **o**, call for a brief comment. The flag **g** attached to a word indicates that the lexeme mostly occurs in glosses or glossaries (*TOE* vol. 1: xxi). The **o** flag marks a *hapax legomenon*, a nonceword (*TOE* vol. 1: xxii-xxv). A word flagged **og**, like *becweþere*, combines the features indicated by the flags **o** and **g**.

A couple of observations can be made on the basis of Category **09.04.03.01** in the *TOE*.

1) There are a large number of lexemes here; the greatest onomasiological diversity can be seen in the number of verbs, nine in all, which can mean 'to translate'. This situation is far from exceptional: Århammar (2004, 48) points out that in the earlier phases of the Germanic languages whose translation vocabulary he has studied, there is an unexpectedly great onomasiological diversity. This is due to two main factors: firstly, the fluid boundaries between 'translating', 'interpreting', 'explaining' etc., and secondly, the creation of a translation terminology that goes back to Latin models through the processes of borrowing, loan translation, and semantic borrowing.

2) A look at Category **09.04.03 Exposition, making clear by explanation** and Category **09.04.03.03 A commentary, exposition** shows that many of the lexemes of Category **09.04.03.01** occur in more than one section: **areccan, reccan, gereccan** and **getrahtnian,** for example, occur both in Category **09.04.03**, under the sense 'to explain, expound' and in Category **09.04.03.01**, under 'to translate'. Further, **wealhstod** not only occurs in Category **09.04.03.01**, under 'translator', but also in Category **09.04.03.02**, under 'a commentator, interpreter'. I will return to this kind of polysemy in more detail below.

3. The Old English Vocabulary of Translation in the Light of the *DOEC*

Let us now turn to the OE material that I have found in the electronic *DOEC*, which contains some 3.5 million running words and covers virtually all extant OE. The fact that the *DOEC* does not contain all recorded OE explains why one *hapax legomenon* lexeme relevant to this study, the agent noun *weallstaðel* (section 3.2.4.), is not found in this corpus.

In my searches of the *DOEC*, I took the *TOE* lists of translation words as my starting point. In the repeated searches I carried out, a few lexemes connected with translation but not recorded in the *TOE* were found. It is important to note, however, that there may well be translation words in the *DOEC* not caught by my searches or by the *TOE*.

I first discuss verbs meaning 'to translate', then agent nouns meaning 'translator', and finally nouns meaning 'translation'.

3.1. Verbs Meaning 'to Translate'

Verbs meaning 'to translate', represented by ten lexemes, are by far the biggest group here, both in terms of number of different lexemes and of the numbers of occurrences. They will be discussed below one by one.

3.1.1. Wendan, gewendan (8 instances without ge-, 1 with; 1 instance ambiguous with regard to prefixation)

This is a verb with a variety of senses, such as 'to turn, change, vary;' the sense 'to translate' is relatively rare. It is found both in earlier OE, for example in King Alfred's language, but also in later OE and even in the Early Middle English period until the early 13th century. Examples:

(1) CPLetWærf B9.1.1 (49) Forðy me ðyncð betre, gif iow swæ ðyncð, ðæt we eac sumæ bec, ða ðe niedbeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne, ðæt we ða on ðæt geðiode *wenden* ðe we ealle gecnawan mægen…. 'Therefore it seems better to me, if you agree with me, that we also translate some books which are the most important ones for all people to know into the language which we all know…'

(2) LS 23 (Mary of Egypt) B3.3.23 (1) ÐAS HERIGENDLICESTAN GEHWYRFED-NYSSE…and þa micclan hreowsunga, and swa ellenlic gewinn þære arwurðan Egyptiscan Marian, hu heo hyre lifes tida on þam westene gefylde, of grecisc geþeode on læden *gewende* Paulus se arwurða deacon… . 'Paul the venerable deacon… translated from Greek into Latin this most praiseworthy conversion…and the great penitence and brave fight of the venerable Mary of Egypt, how she spent the time of her life in the desert.'

(3) BoProem B9.3.3 (1.6) …& þeah ða þas boc <hæfde> geleornode & of lædene to engliscum spelle *gewende*…'…and yet he [i.e. King Alfred] had studied this book and translated it into an English narrative…'

The past participle *gewende* in Example (3) is ambiguous with regard to prefixation in that the partciple may either belong to the simplex *wendan* or to *gewendan*. The meaning and function of the preverbal *ge-* has been subject to considerable controversy (see e.g. Lindemann 1970). For the purposes of this article, it is not necessary to try to establish a semantic distinction between *wendan* and *gewendan*; the results of such an attempt would remain hypothetical in the best of cases.

3.1.2. *Awendan* (43 instances)

Like *wendan*, this verb is highly polysemous. It is the most frequently used OE verb referring to translating. The prefix *a-* originally had a directional sense, 'away

from', which continued to be reflected in the senses 'to avert, turn aside, remove' of *awendan*, but the prefix had here become semantically vacuous.[4] *Awendan* is particularly common in the work of the late Anglo-Saxon Benedictine scholar Ælfric. Ann Eljenholm Nichols (1964, 7-9) points out that Ælfric uses *awendan* for all types of translation: for translation proper, such as his rendering of Genesis, and for his biblical epitomes or homilies drawing on the books of the Bible. Examples:

(4) ÆGenPref B8.1.7.1 (1) Þu bæde me, leof, þæt ic sceolde ðe *awendan* of Lydene on Englisc þa boc Genesis: ða þuhte me hefigtime þe to tiþienne þæs, & þu cwæde þa þæt ic ne þorfte na mare *awendan* þære bec buton to Isaace, Abrahames suna, for þam þe sum oðer man þe hæfde *awend* fram Isaace þa boc oþ ende. 'You asked me, sir, that I should translate for you from Latin to English the book of Genesis; then it seemed troublesome for me to grant you that, but you said that I did not need to translate more of the book than to Isaac, Abraham's son, as someone else had translated for you the book from Isaac to the end.'

(5) ÆLet 4 (SigeweardZ) B1.8.4.4 (766) Hester seo cwen, þe hire cynn ahredde, hæfð eac ane boc on þisum getele, for ðan þe Godes lof ys gelogod þæron; ða ic *awende* on Englisc on ure wisan sceortlice. 'Esther the queen, who saved her people, also has a book in this number, because the praise of God is found there; that book I translated into English in our manner in a succinct way.'

The three instances in (4) refer to translation proper as exemplified by Ælfric's Genesis, while example (5) refers to the epitomizing widely practised by Ælfric in his renderings of a number of other Old Testament books. For an Alfredian example of *awendan*, in the sense 'to translate' see example (10) below.

Both *(ge)wendan* and *awendan* go back to Proto-Germanic **wandjanan* (Barnhart 1999, s.v. *wend* v.). Århammar (2004, 53) gives examples of the use, in the meaning 'to translate', of cognate verbs in other Germanic languages (Middle Low German *wenden*, Old Danish *wænde* and Old Swedish *venda*). According to Århammar (2004, 46-7), it is most likely that Latin *(con)vertere* provided the model for the use in the sense 'to translate' of various verbs with the basic meaning 'to turn' in various European languages. One of the verbs mentioned by Århammar, the English *to turn* (Middle English *turnen*), developed the meaning 'to translate' in Early Middle English, *c.* 1200 (*MED s.v. turnen* (v.) 28(a)), and thus repeated the semantic development seen in *wendan* and *awendan*.

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4   The verb *areccan* (section 3.1.5) provides another example of the bleached semantics of the prefix *a-*.

3.1.3. *(Ge)reccan* (44 instances, all but one in the passive)[5]

This is a polysemous verb, cognate with G *recken* (< West Germanic *-rakjan*), which in OE and Old High German took on the sense 'to translate' (Århammar 2004, 48, 51). The other senses of the OE verb include such meanings as 'to stretch, give, explain, interpret, to wield (authority), to count', and so on. From the point of view of my research, the fact that the senses also include 'interpret' creates additional difficulties. It is difficult, but in many cases unnecessary, to decide that the meaning is X to the exclusion to Y or Z. I have noticed that this verb is commonly used in the passive, in the set phrase '*is gereht*'. Here are two typical examples:

(6) ÆCHom I, 13 B1.1.14 (283.73) Se heahengel þe cydde þæs hælendes acennednysse, wæs gehaten gabrihel, þæt is *gereht* godes strencð. 'The archangel who announced the birth of the Saviour was called Gabriel, that is interpreted/translated God's strength.'

(7) MtGl (Ru) C8.2.1 (1.23) *et uocabunt nomen eius emanuel quod est interpraetatum nobiscum deus* & hie nemnaþ noma his þæt is *gereht* god mid usic.

3.1.4. *Reccan* (2 instances)

The simplex *reccan* is twice used in the sense 'to interpret (orally), to act as a medium between speakers of different languages.' Here is one of the two instances:

(8) Bede 5 B9.6.7 (470.3) Mid ðy þæt gewrit ða wæs ræded beforan þam cyninge & monigum gelæredum werum & him geornlice wæs *reht* on his agen gereorde fram þam, ðe hit ongitan mihton,… 'When the letter then was read in the presence of the king and many learned men and it was carefully interpreted to him in his own language by those who were able to understand it…'

3.1.5. *Areccan* (2 instances: 'translate', 'interpret')

With *areccan* the range of meanings is not nearly as large as with *(ge)reccan* but there is still the problem posed by the common meaning 'interpret'. Here are both the instances:

(9) CPLetWærf B9.1.1 (13) Swa clæne hio wæs oðfeallenu on Angelcynne ðæt swiðe feawa wæron behionan Humbre ðe hiora ðeninga cuðen understondan on Englisc, oððe furðum an ærendgewrit of Lædene on Englisc *areccan*; 'So completely it [sc. learning] had decayed in England that there were very few this side of the Humber who were able to understand their services in English or even translate a letter from Latin to English.'

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5   The prefix *ge-* has been put into brackets as an overwhelming majority of the instances contain the past participle *gereht* where the difference between *reccan* and *gereccan* is neutralised.

(10) CPLetWærf B9.1.1 (66) Siððan ic hie ða geliornod hæfde, swæ swæ ic hie forstod, & swæ ic hie andgitfullicost *areccean* meahte, ic hie on Englisc awende:… 'After I had learnt it so that I understood it and so that I could interpret/expound it in the clearest way possible, I translated it into English.'

Example (10) traces an entire chain of activities, ranging from the cognitive processes of learning, understanding and interpreting to that of translation.

3.1.6. *Getraht(n)ian* (18 instances, 14 of them in the passive voice; 'interpret')

This is a loanword from Latin *tractare* (Holthausen 1934, *s.v. trahtian*). The semantics and use of *getraht(n)ian* closely resemble those of *gereccan*: compare example (12) with examples (6) and (7).

(11) ByrM 1 (Baker/Lapidge) B20.20.1 (2.1.402) Boceras *getrahtniað* þæne naman for þære ripunge oððe for þære gaderunge. 'Learned men interpret the name as meaning 'ripening' or 'gathering'.

(12) MkGl (Li) C8.1.2 (5.41) *Et perducunt illum in golgotha locum quod est interpretatum caluariae locus* & ðerhlædon hine on stowe þæt is *getrahted* heafudponnes stowe. 'And they led him to a place which is interpreted as the place of the skull'.

3.1.7. *Gehwierfan* (1 certain instance; 'translate')

This verb occurs in the anonymous late 9th-century translation of Bede's Ecclesiastical History. As an example of this verb in the sense 'translate' example (13) is unique, but the same verb is also used for a situation in which a poetic text has been transformed into a prose work, for example.

(13) Bede 5 B9.6.7 (484.10) Lifes boc & þrowunge Sancte Anastase martyr, sio wæs yfle of Grecesce on Læden *gehwyrfed* & gyt wyrs from sumum ungetydum geryhted,… 'The book of the life and passion of St Anastasius martyr, which had been badly translated from Greek into Latin and even worse corrected by some ignorant person,…'

3.1.8. *Geþeodan* (1 instance)

This is a verb with only one occurrence in the meaning 'to translate.' It is etymologically related to German *deuten* and Swedish *tyda* (See Århammar 2004, 50 and 58). Århammar (2004, 50) points out a parallel from Old West Norse, where *þyða* can be used in the meaning 'explain, interpret, translate'. Here is the OE instance:

(14) RevMon (Whitelock) B17.11 (250) Þurh þises wisdomes lust he het þisne regul of læden gereorde on englisc *geþeodan*. 'Through the desire of this wisdom he ordered this rule to be translated from Latin into English.'

3.1.9. *Gesettan* (6 instances: 'translate', 'write', 'compose')

This verb, as well as the simplex *settan* discussed under 3.1.10, is another highly polysemous verb. It is a particular favourite with Ælfric. Nichols (1964, 10) points out that whenever Ælfric uses this verb for the process of translation, he refers to his paraphrases, which usually omit a lot of material. The alternative translations, 'write' and 'compose', are suggestions by Nichols (1964, 10). An example:

(15) ÆLet 4 (SigeweardZ) (507) Nu standað manega cyningas on þæra Cininga Bocum, be þam ic *gesette* eac sume boc on Englisc. 'Now there are many kings in Kings of which I also translated some books into English.'

3.1.10. *Settan*

Only one certain instance of *settan* in the meaning 'translate' is found in the *DOEC*:

(16) BoProem B9.3.3 (1.2) Hwilum he *sette* word be worde, hwilum andgit of andgite, swa swa he hit þa sweotolost & andgitfullicast gereccan mihte… . 'At times he translated word for word, at times sense for sense, according as he was able to interpret it in the clearest and most intelligible way…'

Neither *gesettan* nor the simplex *settan* are listed in Category **09.04.03.01** of the *TOE*, most probably because the meaning 'translate' is so subordinate with these verbs, and must mostly be retrieved from the context rather than from the semantics of *(ge)settan*.

3.1.11. *Oferlædan* (2 instances)

Oferlædan is a typical glossatorial word in which the translation takes place on the level of morphemes. It is doubtful whether this verb was ever used outside glosses. The instances, both glossing Latin *transferre*, occur in LiEpis (Skeat) and DurRitGlCom (Thomp-Lind).

3.1.12. *Gebrengan* (1 instance)

It is open to discussion whether the following instance, in which the context allows us to translate *gebrengan* as 'to translate' justifies the inclusion of this verb in the category of OE translation words:

> (17) Ælet 4 (SigeweardZ) B1.8.4.4 [0194 (1017)] Hieronimus se wurþfulla & se wisa bocere, þe ure bibliothecan *gebrohte* to Ledene of Greciscum bocum & of Ebreiscum, he awrat be Iohanne þam halgan godspellere,… 'Jerome, the honourable and wise scholar, who translated our Bible into Latin from Greek and Hebrew books, wrote about John the holy evangelist'

A partial analogy that would support the occasional context-bound reading of *gebrengan* as 'to translate' is provided by the common 17th -century meaning 'to translate' of German *überbringen*, as well as the use of Dutch *overbrengen* in the same meaning, attested since the 18th century (Århammar 2004, 56, fn. 26). The *TOE* does not recognise *gebrengan* in the sense 'to translate'.

3.2. OE Agent Nouns Meaning 'Translator'

There are a total of eight lexemes to be considered here, but six of them are *hapax legomena*. Note that with *wealhstod*, *trahtere* and *reccere*, the processes of translating and interpreting are not clearly separated.

3.2.1. *Wealhstod* (19 instances: 'interpreter, translator')[6]

> (18) Bede 1 B9.3.3 (58.3) Noman hi eac swylce him *wealhstodas* of Franclande mid, swa him Sanctus Gregorius bebead. 'They also took interpreters with them from Francia, as St. Gregory had told them to do.'

> (19) CPLet WærfB9.1.1 (46) & eft Lædenware swæ same, siððan hie hie geliornodon, hie hie wendon <ealla> ðurh wise *wealhstodas* on hiora agen geðiode. 'And the Romans likewise, after they had learnt them, had them all translated by wise translators into their own language.'

The etymology of *wealhstod* is partly opaque. The first element, *wealh*, means 'foreigner, slave' but according to Holthausen 1934, s.v. *stōd* 1, the second element, *stod*, is of unknown origin. Of the two examples cited, Ex. (18) has *wealhstod* in the meaning '(oral) interpreter'. In Ex. (19) *wealhstod* is clearly used in the sense 'translator'. Of the nineteen instances, four could be said to represent the meaning 'translator' and six the meaning 'oral interpreter', while of the remaining nine

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6   The theological sense 'mediator (between God and men)', found in one instance, CP 3.33.11, has been excluded.

instances eight occur in glosses, and any attempt to fix their exact meaning would be incommensurate with the aim of this paper. The remaining instance of *wealhstod* occurs in the poem *Exodus* (Ex (519) *lifes wealhstod*); Tolkien in Turville-Petre 1981, 75 translates this phrase as 'interpreter of life-giving knowledge'.

3.2.2. *Wendere* (3 instances, 2 of them in glosses)

The only instance of this noun outside glosses is the following:

(20) HeptNotes B 8.1.4.7. (13) Þa hundseofontig *wenðeres* & Methodius & Josephus gewriten þæt adam wæs twa hund wintra & xxx þa he gestrinde seth. 'The seventy translators and Methodius and Josephus wrote that Adam was 230 years old when he begat Seth.'

The verb *wendan* (section 3.1.1) provides the infinitive stem behind the agent noun *wendere*. For a discussion of the highly productive suffix *–ere*, see Kastovsky 1992, 385-386. Further instances of the suffix *–ere* can be seen in *becweþere*, *reccere* and *trahtere* (sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.5).

3.2.3. *Þeodend* (1 instance)

This *hapax legomenon* occurs in a gloss (AldMV 3.1 (Nap)). The Latin lemma it glosses is *translator*. The agent noun suffix *–end* is very productive (Kastovsky 1992, 385). For the infinitive stem from which *þeodend* has been derived, see *geþeodan*, section 3.1.8.

3.2.4. *Becweþere, latimer, weallstaþol*

These three agent nouns are all *hapax legomena* from the transition period between OE and Early Middle English. In PSCaE (Liles), a reference to the Septuagint translators (*a septuaginta…interpretibus*) receives a double gloss, *ða hundseouenti biqueðeres othðe latimeres*. The only sense given by the *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) to becweþere (s.v.) is 'interpreter'; in light of the context in which the word occurs, the addition of the sense 'translator' would have been justified. The noun phrase *se fyremeste weallstaðel* 'the foremost translator/interpreter', referring to Jerome, occurs in a late copy of an Ælfrician homily (see *MED s.v. weal-staðel* (n.)).

3.2.5. *Reccere, trahtere*

These two nouns, both of them *hapax legomena*, occur in a double gloss referring to the seventy translators of the Greek Old Testament:

(21) LiEpis (Skeat) C20.2 (11) …*post septuaginta interpretes emendare…* æfter unseofentigum *trahteras* [uel] *recceras* eftniwige [uel] gerihte… .

For the verbs functioning as the sources of these agent nouns, see sections 3.1.4 (*reccan*) and 3.1.6 (*getraht(n)ian*).

3.3. OE Nouns Meaning 'Translation'

All the five nouns with the sense 'translation' are *hapax legomena*. Apparently, nominalisations of the process of translation came fairly late into OE, as all the lexemes here are from late texts. The noun *awendedness* should be added to the *TOE* list. The noun *foresaga*, on the other hand, should probably be removed from the *TOE* list.[7]

The five nouns in question are the following:

(a) *awendedness* (1 instance)
(22) ApT B4.1 (51.36) And gif hi hwa ræde, ic bidde þæt he þas *awændednesse* ne tæle, ac þæt he hele swa hwæt swa þar on sy to tale. 'And if anyone reads it, I ask him not to blame this translation but to hide whatever is blameworthy in it.'

(b) *geþeodnes* (1 instance)
(23) RevMon (Whitelock) B17.11 (253) Þeah þa scearpþanclan witan…þisse engliscan *geþeodnesse* ne behofien… 'Although the quick-witted experts…will not need this English translation…'

(c) *geþeode* (1 instance)
(24) RevMon (Whitelock) B17.11 (273) Ic <þonne> *geþeode* to micclan gesceade telede. 'I reckoned then a translation to make much difference' [Bosworth and Toller's translation]

(d) *gesetnes* (1 instance)
(25) ByrM 1 (Baker/Lapidge) B20.20.1 (4.2.41)…and æfter þæra hundseofontigra wealhstoda *gesetnyssa* se tima stod on þusend wintrum and on twa and hundseofontigum wintrum. '…and according to the translations of the seventy interpreters/translators the period of time lasted for 1072 years.'

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7   Of the three instances of the noun *foresaga* (variant spelling *forasaga*)**,** two have a straightforward relationship to the Latin source text: in LkHeadGl (Li) [0002 (1)], the noun glosses the Latin noun *praefatio* 'preface' and in JnComGl (Li) [0005 (5)] the noun *prochemium* 'preface'. The third instance of *foresaga*, on which the inclusion of *foresaga* among the translation vocabulary in the *TOE* obviously rests, is problematic. It occurs in LkHeadGl (Li) [0068 (67)] as a gloss of *translatio*. The Latin here, in the phrase *de translatione arboris*, refers to the removal of a tree from one place to another, and has thus nothing to do with the process of translation. Even if we consider the correspondence between *foresaga* and *translatio* here as an instance of thoughtless glossing, the choice of this particular OE word as *the interpretamentum* remains opaque. The DOE (s.v. *foresaga*) also recognises this gloss as erratic.

(e) *gerecnes* (1 instance: 'translation' or 'meaning'?)

(26) HomS 19 (Schaefer) B3.2.19 (221) Þa æt þære nontide, Hælend mid swiþe hlutre stefne he cigde & cwæð, *Eli, Eli, Eli, lamat sabathanig? Hoc est, deus meus, deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me*; þæs wordes *gerecnes* is þæt he cwæð, Min god, min god, tohwon forgeate þu me þus? 'Then at noon Jesus called out and said in a very clear voice: *Eli, Eli, Eli,…ut quid dereliquisti me*; the translation/meaning of the sentence is that he said "My God, my God, why did you thus forget me?"'

4. Final Remarks

The OE vocabulary of translation consists of a fairly large number of near-synonymous lexemes. This obviously reflects a situation typical of the early stages in the formation of the technical vocabulary of a special field. For possible reasons for the onomasiological diversity of the translation vocabulary of early Germanic languages, see section 2 above.

Translation as a process is not often referred to in the extant OE texts. This may partly be due to what seems to be the anonymity of most literary activities, including translation, among the Anglo-Saxons. There are certain translations, and translators, that provide an exception here: for example, the Septuagint and its seventy translators, or the learned Jerome. Among Anglo-Saxon translators, King Alfred was famous as a translator even in his own time, and even commented on his own translatorial activity. Another Anglo-Saxon scholar who escaped the anonymity that was the usual lot of medieval translators was the Benedictine scholar Ælfric; like Alfred, he was also critically aware of translation as a process.

The third general point I would like to make is that the OE lexemes dealing with translation are mostly native formations, but at least some of them are semantic loans: thus, Latin *vertere* and *convertere* are the obvious sources of *awendan*, *gewendan*, *wendan* and *gehwierfan*. There are interesting parallel developments in other European vernaculars; Århammar 2004 contains a detailed analysis of translation words, particularly in the languages of Northern Europe.

Finally, the lexemes we have examined are mostly highly polysemous. With lexical items like *(ge)reccan*, *areccan*, *getraht(n)ian* and *wealhstod*, the boundaries between translating, interpreting, expounding and narrating are extremely fluid. Part of this polysemy may have been inherited from the polysemy of Latin *interpretari* and *interpres*, but much of the polysemous nature of this vocabulary must also be due to the fact that words that already had many meanings, such as *reccan*, which could mean 'stretch, go, extend, tell, narrate, judge, decide, count' etc. also came to mean 'interpret' and 'translate'.

No wonder, then, that in the Middle English period (1150-1500) the search for 'translation' words continued. To mention only three examples, *turnen* 'turn' took on the meaning 'translate' c. 1200, as mentioned in section 3.1.2., and towards the end of the 14th century the verb *translāten* and the noun *translāciŏun* came into the picture (*MED s.v. translāten* (v.) 6; *s.v. translāciŏun* (n.) 5). But that is another story.

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