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"WELL AND TRULY TRANSLATED"

AN EXPLORATION OF THE PROCESSES AT WORK IN

ENGLISHING THE BIBLE

FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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SUMMARY

This thesis aims to open up a new perspective on the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. It offers the idea that the first complete translation of the Bible into English in the 1380's was not a sudden and short-lived political gesture, but the natural progression of a process which began in Anglo-Saxon times, continued through the Middle Ages and culminated in the definitive 1611 version of the English Bible.

It hopes to set the Englishing of the Bible into a linguistic and literary context as well as a religious and political one. It takes into account the problems of retrospective assessment and the danger of attempting to impose modern values on pre-conquest and medieval prose. The early development of the vernacular from Bede to Aelfric begins the study of the process of Englishing; the wealth of medieval translations from the Conquest to Rolle continues it. The inheritance of translation theory, the mystical tradition and the theories of authority and authorship are discussed as a background to the Wycliffite translation of the Bible.

The study of the progress of the vernacular at this point becomes a study of the development of English prose and includes an account of Pecoock's works and the contemporary perspective of Thomas More. The Humanist element comes into sharper focus with a discussion of the rise of Greek studies and of the effect of the redefinition of the source text in the form of Erasmus's Greek New Testament.

William Tyndale's position as reformer and translator of the scriptures is contrasted with that of the Wycliffites in respect of available source texts, distribution in the form of relatively inexpensive printed books and a literate potential readership. The Englishing of the Bible after Tyndale is traced through a process of editing, defining, layering and expanding previous texts which culminated in the production of the King James Bible of 1611.

Chapter OneINTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of Englishing the Latin Bible has been looked at many times before but primarily from the religious and political perspective. The literary context and the rise of the vernacular have tended to be overlooked or marginalised by commentators with other priorities. As a consequence, understanding the nature of the process as it happened has been hindered by the polarisation of religious views in succeeding centuries. In order to bring a different dimension to the subject, this thesis will take a translation studies perspective, combining the Polysystems theory of analysis with the approach of the Manipulation school in an effort to describe the processes at work.

The Polysystems theorists¹ view a text not in isolation but as part of a literary system which interrelates with other systems which may be literary or non-literary. The Bible is a text so central to the English culture that its translation into the culture cannot be adequately described without reference to that culture and its systems. Equally the manipulation aspect² of the text has to be addressed, particularly in the light of the

sixteenth century versions where the idea of translation as a rewriting³ is a major feature of this text's development. Also relevant to the study of the Englishing of the Bible is the way in which post-Reformation writers retrospectively reconstructed a pre-Reformation history which suited their ideology and in doing so obscured some of the most important aspects of the translation process, including the nature of the text.

When the Bible arrived in England in the sixth century as the focal point of the Christian religion, it came with its authoritative status and its translation history already established. Through this central Christian text, Augustine and his missionaries presented to the Anglo-Saxons "an entire schematic context for the human condition, a ready made universal history extending far beyond the limits of oral tradition".⁴ They presented it as a complete unit in Latin, but its linguistic history was far more complex. The Old Testament, the history of the Jewish people, was originally written in Hebrew, and according to tradition miraculously translated simultaneously into the seven texts of the Greek Septuagint.⁵ It was this Septuagint that was used by Origen in the early third century when, with the aim of getting as close to the original as possible for commentary purposes, he produced the Hexapla.⁶ Jerome (346-420) also intended to

use the Septuagint in the preparation of the Vulgate version of the Old Testament, but found it so unreliable that he was obliged to learn Hebrew instead.

The New Testament came from an even more flexible linguistic background. As Louis Kelly points out, "the first Christian translators were the four evangelists who recorded in Greek what Christ and his disciples said in Aramaic".⁷ The first text of the New Testament was in fact a translation from spoken Aramaic into written koine Greek, a trading language used over a wide area of the Middle East at that time. Many people could read both Latin and Greek, in fact, as Augustine of Hippo wrote: "...the Latin translators are innumerable. In the first ages of the faith, when a Greek text came into the possession of anyone who considered himself slightly capable in both languages, he attempted to translate it".⁸ The result was a proliferation of Latin texts which Jerome undertook to edit into the Vulgate version of the New Testament.

The direction of the early translation activity was towards a settled text for exegetical purposes; the result was the beginning of a theory of Biblical translation. Augustine (354 - 430) was confident that while the sense remained intact, the word of God would not be damaged by various translations. On the contrary, he states that "this

diversity has helped rather than impeded understanding, if readers would only be discerning".⁹ He believed that "the meaning of Scripture is strictly autonomous from the temporal, verbal signs by which it is expressed... for this reason Scripture may be translated from one historic language to another".¹⁰

Jerome, his contemporary, was less willing to make changes in the process of transferring from one language to another. He complains in the preface to his translation of the Chronicle of Eusebius that "a literal translation sounds absurd; if, on the other hand I am obliged to change either the order or the words themselves I shall appear to have forsaken the duty of a translator".¹¹ He claims to translate sense for sense rather than word for word except in the case of Holy Scripture where he says "even the order of the words is a mystery".¹²

The Latin Bible,¹³ which Gregory sent from Rome with another Augustine, arrived with built-in restrictions on the direct translating of it, some of which were bound up in the text's history, some of which were a result of the text's new context. The aim of Origen and Jerome had been to provide a fixed text, the most accurate original upon which to base commentaries; they had discovered the dangers and difficulties of translation; Jerome in particular knew

that the translator could please no-one. Having achieved a fixed text, there was no thought of transferring the Latin Bible into any of the vernaculars. This would have been to begin the whole problematic process over again just at a time when the Latin text had become accepted as the basis for commentary.

In the missionary context, the Latin Bible was an authority and a source text, the basis of the new religion to be expounded and assimilated into the Anglo-Saxon culture while itself remaining unchanged. In the light of these considerations it is difficult to see any signs of the beginnings of an English Bible, but in fact there was a substantial amount of translation activity surrounding the text and its introduction into the English culture.

The two main influences on the reception of the text were the flexibility of the linguistic environment that it was entering and the use of the vernacular in a strong oral tradition which had not yet reached the point where it was considered necessary or useful for it to be recorded. This explains why we have Old English manuscripts of works which were composed much earlier than they were written down.¹⁴ Sometimes there are several versions of the same work; the text developed and was re-worked several times before a fixed text was arrived at. In a sense this is what

happened in the process of Englishing the Bible (as opposed to translating it into English) and why the early religious poetry and the vernacular paraphrases are very much a part of the complete picture. Englishing the Bible is not so much a question of one person translating the Latin words into English ones so that the meaning of the text can be derived, but more the idea of the text entering the culture, being worked and re-worked within the literary system of the culture until it is part of that culture to the extent that it achieves a relatively fixed and familiar vernacular presentation. The King James Bible is the most obvious example, since it embodied the sum of the English literary tradition of its time and became an English source text in its own right. Its influence pervaded the literature and language which came after its composition; its status is that of a great work of English literature. Luther, when writing in the sixteenth century about his Bible translation work, uses the words "ubersetzen" and "verdeutschen" almost interchangeably,¹⁵ but in seventh century England there was no tradition into which a text like the Bible could be Englished, only words into which it could be translated. The earliest named English poet Caedmon, whose contribution will be discussed in more detail later, made the first steps towards drawing the Bible into the English culture by employing a traditional Anglo-Saxon genre as a vehicle for his Christian poetry.

This process of Englishing was a long and complex one, but it began shortly after the arrival of the text.

Inevitably linked with the fortunes of the English Bible is the rise of the language itself, its struggle for status, and its eventual recognition as an acceptable literary medium. Of similar importance is the nature of the text and its position as the origin of Church authority and its status as the word of God. To mask all these areas of study by placing too great an emphasis on religious power struggles is to present only part of the picture. Nevertheless, to see the issue in a new perspective requires a substantial clearing away of both religious and literary preconceptions.

Twentieth century fixed ideas about the nature of the text also need to be adjusted. Wyclif was the first person under whose auspices a complete translation of the Bible was made into English, but it has to be remembered that the text in question is in fact a collection of texts, or more accurately, "a collection of 66 separate books and letters, written over a period of some 1,500 years culminating approximately 100 years after Christ's death and resurrection".¹⁴ The texts cover a wide variety of subject matter and styles: histories, genealogies, chronicles, philosophical writings, laws and prophecies, lives of

saints. Most of these elements were reflected in the earliest English literary tradition; there were many lives of saints, chronicles, stories of kings and sagas of heroes which stood as separate units. Before the invention of printing, which reduced the size of the volumes needed, it was much more common for the texts of the Bible to be separate, the synoptic Gospels, for example, or the psalms. The whole text was important only for scholarly reference or when a particular process was involved, as when Jerome undertook to standardise the Latin text into what became known as the Vulgate,¹⁷ or when the text took on a symbolic role of authority as in the case of the Wycliffite translation.

When considering the process of the Englishing of the Bible as a group of texts, it is important to remember that long before Wyclif, not only had texts from the collection been translated into English before, but the various elements of the texts had been woven into the vernacular literature, which was almost exclusively religious. Bede is reported to have translated St. John's Gospel in the sixth Century,¹⁸ Caedmon's poems based on Old Testament themes are mentioned in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*.¹⁹ Alfred is said to have put the first fifty psalms into Old English prose,²⁰ and one manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels, not a gloss but a separate text without the Latin, was written

about 995,²¹ shortly before Aelfric began translating parts of the Old Testament in the eleventh century.²² Our modern conception of the Bible translated as a complete unit was not a practical option before the days of printing, except in monastery libraries where there were scribes to produce the manuscripts, but not the need for translation, as the monks worked in Latin. Even the Wycliffite version, produced as a single unit of translation, although with more than one version, was more often copied in parts than in complete volumes for purely practical purposes. In 1308, "Lollard preachers were reporting back to Oxford the eagerness with which the people were receiving the vernacular fragments".²³ It was only when paper replaced vellum and print replaced the quill and ink that the possibility of owning or reading a complete text became a real one. Even then the cost remained prohibitive for most people.

In considering the process of translating the Bible into English, then, it is necessary to put aside the notion of the complete text and to assign to partial translations their importance in the sequence of events. In the literary context of the time these units of translation whether Alfred's psalms, Aelfric's Genesis or a few pages of the Wycliffite Gospels, were as much a part of the process of Englishing the Bible as Tyndale's complete printed version,

even though the intention of the translator and the function of the translation may have been very different.

Contextualising the translations is as important as being aware of the difficulties of inappropriate critical vocabulary. Modern terms of definition are not always suitable to describe processes in other periods of history where the norms were very different from ours, and their use can be extremely misleading. For example it has been assumed that translating the Scriptures into English is synonymous with giving general access to the text, and while that may be the case today, it certainly was not true in the Middle Ages. The problem revolves around the definition of the term "literacy" whose significance has changed through the centuries and has to be analysed according to the context of its application. The present-day definition of literacy is "the ability to read and write",²⁴ but as Michael Clanchy points out, "the automatic coupling of reading with writing and the close association of literacy with the language one speaks are not universal norms but products of modern European culture".²⁵

When Augustine brought Christianity to England in the sixth century, and with it learning, those who could read at all could read Latin and were usually monks. Literacy was closely associated with the knowledge of Latin rather

than the vernacular, and the first literature written by English men was written in Latin. One of the most prolific of the early men of letters was Aldhelm (640-709), "the most important and influential Southumbrian author of the early period",²⁶ but there were many others. Among the monks Latin was the means of communication and literary expression. There was no lack of written literature but the literature was not written in the vernacular. A vernacular Scripture was therefore not a liturgical necessity unless there were considerable numbers of people who read Anglo-Saxon but not Latin, and this does not seem to have been the case.²⁷ This concept of literacy as defined in Anglo-Saxon times puts a new perspective on the attempts made in the sixth century by Bede, in the tenth century by Alfred and by Aelfric in the eleventh to translate parts of the Scriptures into the vernacular, and also on the activity of Anglo-Saxon sermon writers like Wulfstan who made deliberate attempts (as did Aelfric) to refine the language in his writing by the use of alliterative metrical prose. The access argument does not account for the industry of these writers. There was another impetus at work to do with the upgrading of the vernacular, the raising of the status of the vernacular culture by the translation into it of a high status text.

The status of the target language and the status of

the text are considerations which have particular relevance in the pursuit of an understanding of the processes of Englishing the Bible. In Anglo-Saxon times, Latin was the high status language with classical pedigree suitable and worthy of the sacred word. Anglo-Saxon was considered to be of lower status and did not have the vocabulary to sustain a translation of the Scriptures in exegetical terms. Ironically the New Testament Gospels had been written in just such an unsophisticated language, Koine Greek, but were soon transferred into the many Latin texts which were edited by Jerome into the Vulgate. Latin became the language of the Scriptures, and its high status, coupled with the high status of the text, made translation into a low status language such as Anglo-Saxon unsuitable and therefore unlikely.

Anglo-Saxon was just beginning to establish itself as a literary alternative to Latin when the arrival of William the Conqueror and his Norman court, by inserting Norman French into the linguistic canon, produced not only a reorganisation in the hierarchy of languages, but also caused a considerable shift in the direction in which the vernacular was developing. The influence of French upon Anglo-Saxon changed it almost beyond recognition. This shift in language had the curious effect of separating the literary and translation activity which had taken place

before the conquest from the recognisably English writing which came after. The reason for this seems to lie in the fact that Middle English is accessible with perseverance to the modern reader but Anglo-Saxon is a different language and needs effort and a good glossary to make it accessible.

This language barrier has influenced the attitude of some scholars towards early English Prose writing to such an extent that they do not consider it worthy of more than a passing mention as an influence on the development of English prose. George Krapp, for example, maintains that "Old English Prose is in no sense the source from which modern English prose has sprung".²⁸ His study of *The Rise of English Literary Prose* begins in the fourteenth century and claims Wyclif to be "the first intelligent writer of English prose". Richard Jones takes the second half of the fifteenth century as his starting point,²⁹ well after Wyclif, and James Mackintosh considers Thomas More to be "our earliest English prose writer".³⁰ This is not a particularly old-fashioned view of English prose since a 1987 *History of English Literature* omits all the early literature apart from *Beowulf* and continues with Middle English ballads.³¹ If English Prose begins with Wyclif or More, what of the numerous twelfth and thirteenth century texts which appeared in the vernacular as well as in French and Latin versions? These texts were almost exclusively

religious in content and formed part of a tradition of religious vernacular writing from which a vernacular version of the Scriptures was a not unexpected progression.³² R. W. Chambers has convincingly argued the case for the continuity of English Prose from Anglo-Saxon times³³ and in a study of the translation of the Bible into English it is essential to take the development of the language into consideration. Since the fortunes of Biblical translation are closely allied to the fortunes of the vernacular, it is important to get an overall view of the latter in order to be able to trace the development of the former. If Bede translated part of the New Testament into the English of the day as early as the seventh century, then this is part of the story. A shift in the language does not retrospectively invalidate what was produced before the shift.

The fourteenth century has been chosen so often as the natural starting point for a study of Bible translation on the basis that Wyclif and his followers were the first to complete a translation of the whole text and that they translated it into what we can recognise as English. Beginning at this point, however, apart from devaluing the partial translations which went before, necessarily connects the English Scriptures with religious conflict because of Wyclif's outspoken stand on other church issues.

His reputation as a reformer weighted the subsequent view of his support for a vernacular Bible and his influence in its translation. This less well documented part of his life was retrospectively reconstructed as his exclusive occupation and aim, whereas it was in fact just one aspect of a many-sided career. Concentrating on one man, narrowing the focus exclusively on to Wyclif denies that there was a process at work at that time, not just in England but in Europe also, in which the vernacular was being raised in status through translation, and disallows the idea that this process would have eventually involved the translating of part or all of the Scriptures into English, quite possibly in the fifteenth century, whether Wyclif had instigated it or not.³⁴

In his general introduction to G.R. Owst's *Preaching in Medieval England*, G.G. Coulton says that "the historian, whatever his subject, is as definitely bound as the chemist to proclaim certainties as certain, falsehoods as false, and uncertainties as dubious".³⁵ This observation has particular relevance to the history of the Bible in English, since there are many areas where assumptions have been made, either by contemporary writers or by editors and scholars, and been accepted as fact through the years. For many years it was assumed that Wyclif was sole author of the fourteenth century English Scripture until closer

study of manuscripts revealed other names. Daniel Waterton was the man who, in 1729, suggested that John Purvey might have been responsible for the later version of the Wycliffite text and the prologues on translation which accompanied it.³⁶ The 1850 Forshall and Madden edition of both versions and prologues supported the claim, and it is often presented as fact even though the idea is based on assumption rather than hard evidence.

Conversely, although William Caxton tells us that John Trevisa, a professional translator, "englisshed" the Bible, among other books, for Thomas, Lord Berkeley,³⁷ this piece of information is generally not accepted as fact. The text has not survived, unless it is the revision of the first Wycliffite translation attributed to Purvey,³⁸ and in the light of Caxton's other mistakes over dates, it is assumed that it never existed even though the information is repeated in the Preface to the 1611 version.³⁹ It is quite possible that Trevisa translated part of the Bible into English, since he had both the skills required and the patronage necessary to do so, but in default of a text or proof of its existence we shall never know for certain. Contemporary sources cannot always be relied upon but have to be taken into account. However, danger of misinterpretation of the information available arises when surmise is represented as fact or when possibilities are

dismissed out of hand.

It is true that contemporary writers may not have the overview of events of the later historian; they may be biased in their thinking like William Fulke, quick workers prone to error under pressure like William Caxton, or particularly enlightened for the position they held and for the age they lived in like Thomas More, and so not representative of the general trends. Nevertheless, to whatever degree they reflect the age, their writings are the closest available evidence as to what was actually happening at the time and so have to be considered, even though they may sometimes serve to confuse rather than clarify the position. Thomas More, for example, was under the impression that "the hole byble was longe before his (Wyclif's) dayes by vertuous & well lerned men translated into y^e englysh tonge".⁴⁰ He even remembered seeing English Bibles in the houses of his friends and says that these Bibles were licensed by the Bishops for use by lay people. A contemporary account which, one would think, would throw light on the position of the English Bible of the time, but More's statements have caused more controversy than they have resolved. What were the translations to which he referred? Were they unrecognised Wycliffite translations, privately commissioned translations, or were there other English Bibles in circulation which did not attract the

publicity of the Wycliffite version because their translators were not so well known and not so unorthodox in their views? There is some evidence that there were other translations in circulation at the end of the fourteenth century but their influence is assessed by Margaret Deanesley as negligible, "judging from the solitary or infrequent manuscripts which have survived to us, compared with the very large numbers of the Wycliffite manuscripts".⁴¹ Where events are not so well documented and in the absence of definite information, the literary historian must take on the role of explorer rather than recorder.

The vulnerability of manuscripts makes any assessment of the range or popularity of a text difficult, since its survival may be due to chance rather than widespread distribution. Equally a popular text may have been completely lost through some accident of fate, worn out through constant use or replaced by a printed version and so discarded. It could well be the case that only the least used manuscripts have survived and the most well-used ones destroyed. Early manuscripts were kept in the monastery libraries and depended on the industry of the monks for their duplication and preservation. Only texts deemed suitable or worth recording would have been copied. Caxton, on the other hand, printed what he knew would sell, and so

by following his enterprises we have a better idea of which texts were popular.

External conditions, physical and political, have been shown to have considerable bearing on the quality and quantity of literary texts and their availability. At the end of the eighth century, for example, the Viking raiders destroyed the monasteries on Lindisfarne and at Jarrow. The loss of these libraries was such a serious blow to the culture of Northumbria that it decided Alcuin, "a learned cleric, an excellent teacher.....head of the Cathedral School at York"⁴² to leave England and take his talents to the court of Charlemagne where he would have access to the texts necessary to his work. War was the main obstacle to the "sense of permanence"⁴³ that Alfred was striving after in the tenth century in order to establish a civilisation in England. In the preface to his translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, he relates how "before it was all ravaged and burnt, the churches throughout all England stood filled with treasures and books".⁴⁴ Raiding Danes are not usually counted as a negative factor in the progress of Anglo-Saxon literature but in fact they had a serious effect through the destruction of texts and the diversion of literary energy. In the same preface, Alfred writes about his hopes for increased learning in the country "if we have peace".⁴⁵ War was a threat to Alfred's cultural

revival just as it was a positive contributory factor to the rise of the vernacular in Wyclif's time through the wave of nationalist feeling it engendered. During Henry VIII's reign, political uncertainty was not conducive to creativity in the field of literature; the dissolution of the monasteries meant oblivion for many books and manuscripts. Civil unrest, plague, war and the difficulty of life in general were not favourable to the establishment and maintenance of a developing literary culture.

Given the difficult conditions and the different priorities of the early centuries, literary development is understandably sketchy, its continuity frequently broken, its movement depending more on individuals than general trends. Nevertheless by the first part of the thirteenth century a considerable body of early vernacular literature was circulating which was certainly considered by sixteenth and seventeenth century scholars to be worth preserving as part of the English literary heritage. The first Anglo-Saxon book to be printed was Aelfric's *Sermon on Easter Day* in 1567. The Anglo-Saxon Gospels followed in 1571 printed "at the suggestion and expense of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury".⁴⁶ Junius and Marshall printed another edition in 1665. Some texts had found their way into Cathedral libraries⁴⁷ or had been presented to the Universities. Manuscripts which might otherwise have been

lost were rescued and collected by individuals like Parker⁴⁸ in the sixteenth, Franz Junius in the seventeenth and Robert Cotton⁴⁹ in the eighteenth century. Parker was also responsible for the publication of the *Chronicles* of Grafton, Stow and the Holinshed collection.⁵⁰ The Cotton collection suffered damage and some of manuscripts were destroyed by fire in 1731. Those which had by good fortune already been printed were not permanently lost, but the disaster underlines how vulnerable a text was when there were few copies in existence and how final the effect of a non-literary influence like fire or, in earlier times, a Viking raid could be.

Another aspect of the story of how the Bible was translated into English is bound up in the oral tradition of stories, psalms and prayers which began when Christianity was first established in England and continues today. The oral contribution is, of course, virtually impossible to quantify as what little information we have comes from indirect sources such as Bede's account of the making of Caedmon's Hymn or the runes on the Ruthwell Cross⁵¹ in Scotland which contain the earliest written reference to the story of the *Dream of the Rood*. It is only when we trace the progress through centuries of the several versions of the Rood story, or of texts such as *Erthe upon Erthe*, a poem which was set down at several different

points in time, that we see glimpses of the effects of a strong oral tradition.

The oral tradition of stories and prayers existed as a separate dynamic long before the issue of a vernacular Bible became inextricably bound up with religious politics. With the advent of state intervention on the question of vernacular Scriptures comes the problem of trying to assess how far official policy was observed by the majority of the population. Government and Church proclamations were not always a reflection of what was actually happening among the ordinary people, as the need to repeat or modify the rules witnesses. Change was slow owing to the remoteness of areas, the unwillingness, ignorance or inability of the local people to enforce it. Most of the documentation states the official intention but not the degree to which it was obeyed by the people. Similarly the official translations were those imposed on the people through the Church, so that support for them was obligatory. The Geneva Bible is the best example of an unofficial translation which was supported by public popularity partly because of the good scholarship contained in the text and partly because of the practical convenience of the way in which it was presented.

The political aspect of the vernacular Bible issue

means that there is very little evidence of private translations done as a language exercise, for the intellectual enjoyment of the translator or for private use. It is difficult to believe that scholars did not use the Latin text of the Scriptures in this way. Sermon writers and preachers must have been constantly translating from their source text. Boethius's sixth century work *De Consolatione Philosophiae*⁵² was translated by Alfred the Great, Chaucer and Elizabeth I among others; it was almost a standard translation text. It does not seem unlikely that parts of the Scriptures should have been translated in the same way by people less well-known than King Alfred or Richard Rolle, who are both reputed to have translated the psalms, as did King James I and Milton, or John Cheke, tutor to the young Elizabeth, who translated St. Matthew's Gospel.⁵³ Private translations are not so well documented and did not seem to cause so much controversy as those intended for general lay consumption, perhaps because of the status of the translators or, more likely, because those translating for the people had some political motive for so doing.

The emphasis on religious polemic since the Reformation has been the result of looking back historically through the eyes of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century commentators in whose interests it

has been to reconstruct history according to the balance of their own opinions. Protestant enthusiasm has delivered us either heroes or villains in the persons of our English Kings and Queens, according to their perceived religious leanings, and there has had to be a considerable re-assessment of Reformation history in recent years in order to redress the balance.⁵⁴ Henry VIII, for example, is generally regarded a champion of reform when he was in reality most orthodox and conservative in matters of religion.⁵⁵ Mary was cast unequivocally as a villain on account of her religion just as Elizabeth was made a heroine for the same reason. After her death Elizabeth's acknowledged weaknesses were reconstructed as strengths first by Fulke Greville and then by William Camden⁵⁶ to provide a contrast with James I when he proved somewhat too flexible in his religious views. Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials* have been used as direct sources sometimes without sufficient regard for the bias of their authors. Only Thomas Fuller in *Worthies of England* displays any degree of objectivity.

Historians were not the only section of the community to allow religious enthusiasm to colour their work. Walter Scott, born in 1771, wrote romantic novels around the turn of the century which had considerable influence on the attitudes of their audience because of

the way in which history was portrayed. In *The Monastery*, for example, he describes in Gothic terms his idea of the Roman Catholic struggle to suppress the distribution and study of the Bible by lay people. Unfortunately Scott, as Una Pope-Hennessy confirms,⁵⁷ had no great knowledge of the subject nor was his research particularly thorough. The result was a romantic fiction presented as an historical reconstruction. In one passage he depicts the Sub-Prior of the monastery "high fraught with zeal" because of an "unauthorised intrusion into the priestly function, by study of Sacred Scriptures". He prepares to make the Lady of Avenel reveal, on her death bed,

what she knew of the dark mystery of iniquity, by which heresies were introduced into the most secluded spots of the very patrimony of the church herself - what agents they had that could thus glide, as it were unseen, from place to place, bring back the volume which the church had interdicted to the spots from which it had been removed under her express auspices; and who, by encouraging the daring and profane thirst after knowledge forbidden and useless to the laity, had encouraged the fisher of souls to use with effect his old bait of ambition and vainglory.⁵⁸

Scott's evocative vocabulary, of which this passage is typical, the "dark mystery of iniquity", for example, or the "daring and profane thirst after knowledge", the "agents ...that could thus glide unseen", sets the idea of lay access to the Bible into a highly dramatic context. This kind of Romantic presentation fictionalised the popular conception of the context of Bible translation and

highlighted one aspect to the exclusion of any other.

In the nineteenth century with the establishment of the Bible Societies, there began a movement to make the Scriptures physically accessible to the ordinary people. Groups like the Gideons⁵⁹ distributed free English Bibles, and the enthusiasm of individuals like George Borrow for translating the Bible into the languages of the Iberian Peninsula and travelling around Spain on a donkey selling them, captured the imagination of those who read the accounts of his adventures.⁶⁰ It also reinforced the link between the translation of the Bible and differences in religion. In *The Bible in Spain*, Borrow says he went to Spain selling Testaments in 1836 "in the humble hope of being able to cleanse some of the foul stains of Popery from the minds of its children".⁶¹ He considered the vernacular Bible to be a revolutionary weapon in a religious war, and certainly not the product of a literary evolution which had taken centuries to complete.

In the same century, editors like Henry Baber re-emphasised the access argument and turned the translation issue in retrospect into a simple crusade, with appropriate heroes and villains, for public accessibility to a previously restricted text. Wyclif is the hero, even though his involvement in the translation project emerged as

peripheral rather than central. In his 1810 introduction to the Wycliffite New Testament,⁴² Baber transfers the contemporary line of argument to the medieval text, pursues exclusively the question of access denied and ignores all the other aspects of the translation conditions which prevailed in Wyclif's time. He writes:

As the Latin tongue became a dead language, the Romish hierarchy were too crafty to encourage any translations of the sacred volume which would place the key of Divine knowledge in the power of the people. They plainly saw, that as long as they had the keeping of this treasure in their own hands they could impose upon mankind, for doctrines of revelation, whatever articles of faith they pleased, and thus pursue their schemes of interest, with less fear of contradiction.⁴³

The question was not nearly so simple as Baber makes it sound. He has superimposed nineteenth century ideas onto a medieval debate. Latin was far from dead in Wyclif's time, it was the main scholarly language in use, as his own works witness,⁴⁴ and it continued to be widely used by scholars until well after Milton wrote his Latin works in the seventeenth century.⁴⁵ The vernacular, on the other hand was struggling for recognition as a literary medium. Literacy was not widespread, so that the readership of even an English Bible was considerably restricted. The pejorative adjective "Romish" was first used by Tyndale in 1530,⁴⁶ and so is used anachronistically here. "The key of Divine Knowledge" was not always in the hands of the clergy,

as many of them were very poorly educated,⁶⁷ and the idea of common lay people having any sort of power, religious or political, was not thought of in the Middle Ages. Baber has used the medieval situation to support one aspect of contemporary religious polemic that he wishes to emphasise and in doing so has obscured the historical context of the original situation.

On closer study it becomes evident that the Wycliffite translation was not done specifically for the ordinary people in the same way that Luther's was in the sixteenth century.⁶⁸ Wyclif was a theologian and philosopher rather than a champion of the people. On the other hand, it is certainly true that there was a great deal of opposition to the idea of the Bible in English as the Oxford debate of 1401 witnessed,⁶⁹ but then there was a great deal of opposition from the church authorities to any idea proposed by Wyclif as he was constantly exposing bad practices, criticising the misuse of power and denouncing the Pope. He also held unorthodox and heretical views on transubstantiation.⁷⁰ However, the great upsurge in translation activity of all kinds in the fourteenth and fifteenth century coupled with the rise in the use and status of the vernacular made a Bible in English inevitable at some point, irrespective of the activities of either the Lollards or the Roman Catholic Church.

Wyclif's wish to see the Bible in English has to be set in its medieval context. It was less to do with access and more to do with the establishment of a rule of law in the face of corruption in the Church and unreliability in the Government. It was a political move, the thinking behind which is reflected in the medieval theories of authorship and authority.⁷¹ Parts of the Bible were already woven into much medieval literature in anecdotal form⁷² and stories from the Old and New Testaments were well known. Its direct translation was an attempt to open the eyes of the Church and the state to the law of the Scriptures and so effect reform, rather than a mere attempt to popularise an English version of the text.⁷³ Opposition arose from the fact that for centuries the law had been safely codified in Latin, defined by patristic exegesis and kept unchanged and intact. Besides, reform presupposes error and large institutions are notably resistant both to admitting responsibility and to change.⁷⁴ The text had become a symbol of Church authority and if translated into English the context of that authority would be altered. But the Latin-Christian culture had reigned supreme in England in default of a strong host culture. As the vernacular language and culture developed and literacy spread, it was inevitable that the positions should eventually be reversed.

On a practical level, there was sufficient realisation of the difficulties involved in translation and sufficient concern for orthodoxy for there to be a genuine fear of heresy, through heresy, schism and through schism, insurrection. Living in a modern, relatively democratic and tolerant society makes it difficult for us to comprehend the grave importance assigned to orthodoxy in religious matters in the Middle Ages and after. All authority, spiritual, intellectual and monetary was invested in and exercised by a formidable combination of church and state. Heresy was looked upon with the same severity as treason and at times became synonymous.⁷⁵ Heresy was the fear uppermost in Henry VIII's mind when considering authorisation for Coverdale's English Bible. William Fulke, the Protestant commentator, writing some fifty years after the event in 1583, recalls how the king became impatient with the Bishops, who had taken a long time to consider the translation and still showed no signs of reaching a decision. Eventually the reluctant Bishops admitted that there were no heresies "that they could find" maintained in the translation, at which Henry is said to have replied "If there be no heresies, for God's sake let it go abroad among our people".⁷⁶ Fulke's anecdotal style accentuates a positive attitude towards vernacular Scripture on Henry VIII's part which is not supported by the official recorded proclamations of his reign.⁷⁷ It does faithfully reflect

his horror of heresy, however, which is verified through other sources, not least his own tract against Luther. The isolation of the religious element and the emphasis on the struggle for access has simplified what is in reality a many stranded affair. The act of translating the Bible has tended to be viewed primarily from a doctrinal perspective rather than as a literary process; a process which in fact began in Anglo-Saxon times, increased momentum in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was crystalised in the King James version of 1611. It is a process which has continued, albeit with varying impetus, to the present day.

Given the difficulties of inadequate early sources and the biased evidence of the later historiographers, it would be unwise to suppose that any study of the translation process could be definitive. Within the limits of a single thesis it is impossible to cover in depth every influence on the English Scriptures, nevertheless this study aims to give the subject a new perspective by balancing the religious context with literary and linguistic considerations and by applying translation study theories. "Translation it is", says the preface to the 1611 version, "that openeth the window, to let in the light".⁷⁹ This thesis hopes to open some new windows on the history of those processes of translation.

References to Chapter One

1. The Polysystems theory was first put forward by Itamar Even-Zohar in a series of papers in the 1970s *Papers in Historical Poetics* (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects 1978) and developed by Gideon Toury in *In Search of a Theory of Translation* (Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics 1980)
2. The work of the Manipulation school is defined by Theo Hermans (ed) in the introduction to *The Manipulation of Literature* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm 1985)
3. See Andre Lefevere *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London and New York: Routledge 1992)
4. Michael Swanton *English Literature before Chaucer* (London: Longman 1987) p.75
5. Augustine *Christian Instruction* translated by Fr. J Gavigan *The Fathers of the Church, St Augustine vol 2* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press 1966) p.80
6. Joseph Wilson Trigg *Origen, The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church Part One* (Atlanta: Knox 1983, London: SCM 1985) p.82
7. Louis Kelly *The True Interpreter* (Oxford: Blackwell 1979) p.1
8. *Christian Instruction* p.73
9. *Christian Instruction* p.74
10. "Language as Temporality" by Eugene Vance in *Mimesis - From Mirror to Method, Augustine to Descartes* edited by John Lyons and Steven Nichols (Baltimore: University Press of New England 1982) p.26
11. Jerome *Preface to the Translation of the Chronicle of Eusabius Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers vol 6* St. Jerome edited by Phillip Schaff and Henry Wace (Michigan: Eerdman 1979) p.483
12. Jerome "Letter to Pamachius" no. lviii Schaff and Wace p.113
13. Although Jerome's Vulgate was complete and in use in Europe, the copy of the Bible given by Gregory to Augustine for use in England was the older *Vetus Italia* considered to be the best of the other Latin texts available. It took a considerable time to make a complete copy of a Bible and consequently the distribution was very slow.
14. The verse epic *Beowulf* is the example which springs most immediately to mind. "The sole extant text, found in British Library MS Cotton Vitellius Axv, was copied in late West Saxon koine c.1000, but linguistic fossils embedded in the text strongly suggest that an

- Anglian (i.e. Northumbrian or Mercian) written version existed sometime in the eighth century; and the story materials must have been circulating for some time previously." Swanton p.321
 Similarly the full text of *The Dream of the Rood* "is found only in the eleventh century Vercelli Book, but extracts from the poem, or an earlier version of it, were carved on the side of an impressive sculptured stone preaching cross at Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, c.700." Swanton p.323
15. Andre Lefevere *Translating Literature - The German Tradition* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum 1977) p.8
 16. From the introduction to *The New Testament and Psalms* pocket Gideon version (Gideons International) p.11
 17. Jerome produced the Vulgate version in two sections, the New Testament first, followed considerably later by the Old Testament.
 18. "The English Versions (to Wyclif) by William A. Craigie, in *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* edited by H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1954 edition) p.129 describes Cuthbert's account of Bede's last days during which the translation of St. John's Gospel was completed. Also quoted in *The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels* edited by Joseph Bosworth (London: Reeves & Turner 1888) p.xii
 19. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History* Book 4 ch. XXIII edited Thomas Miller EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1890)
 20. *The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter* edited Karl Bulbring EETS (London: Kegan Paul French & Trubner 1891) Preface p.v
 21. *The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels* p.ii
 22. *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch* edited by S.J. Crawford EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1969 edition)
 23. Derek Wilson *The People and the Book* (London: Barrie & Jenkins 1976) p.21
 24. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford 1956) 5th edition
 25. Michael Clanchy *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066 - 1307* (London: Arnold 1979) p183
 26. Greenfield and Calder *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: University Press 1986) p12 and 13
 27. *The Fifty Earliest English Wills 1387-1445* edited by Frederick J. Furnivall EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1882, 1964)
 28. George Krapp *The Rise of English Literary Prose* (New York: Ungar 1963) p.vi-vii
 29. Richard Jones *The Triumph of the English Language* (Stanford California: Stanford University Press 1953)

30. James Mackintosh's *Miscellaneous Works* vol 1 1846 quoted in "The Continuity of English Prose" by R.W. Chambers in Harpsfield's *Life of More* (London: Oxford University Press 1932) EETS p.lii
31. Alastair Fowler *A History of English Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell 1987)
32. Texts such as *Sawles Ward, Hali Meidhad, Ancrene Wisse, De Wohnunge of Oure Louerde, Genesis and Exodus, Vices and Virtues*, and the Lives of St. Katharine, St. Margaret and St. Julian.
33. R.W.Chambers "The Continuity of English Prose" in Harpsfield's *Life of More* (London: Oxford University Press 1932)
34. Margaret Deanseley *The Lollard Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1920) p. 227
35. G.G. Coulton's introduction to *Preaching in Medieval England* by G.R. Owst (New York: Russell & Russell Inc. 1965 edition p.vii
36. *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse* edited by Alfred Pollard p.xxi introduction. (London: Constable 1903)
37. "Proheme to Polychronicon" in *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton* EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1928) p.67
38. Alfred Pollard puts this forward as a theory in the introduction to *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse*.
39. "Preface to the King James' Bible" printed in *The King James Bible Translators* by Olga Opfel (London: McFarland 1982)
40. "A Dialogue Concerning Heresies" from *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* edited by Lawler, Marchador and Marius (Yale: Yale University Press 1981) Vol 6 Part 1 p.314
41. Deanseley p.299
42. A. C. Partridge *A Companion to Old and Middle English Studies* (London: Deutsch 1982) p. 49
43. Kenneth Clark *Civilisation* (London: Murray 1969) p.14
44. *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* edited by Henry Sweet EETS (London: Trubner & Co. 1871) Preface p.4
45. *ibid* p.6.
46. *The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels* edited by Joseph Bosworth (London: Reeves & Turner 1888) preface p.xvi
47. The best example is the Exeter Book, which at time of writing is on display at Exeter Cathedral Library.
48. See V.J.K. Brook *A Life of Archbishop Parker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1962) p.341
49. See Kevin Sharpe *Sir Robert Cotton 1586-1631* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979) p.48 - 59
50. See Brook above.
51. Now housed inside a church near Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire, this preaching cross was broken up by

- iconoclasts but has since been restored.
52. Queen Elizabeth's Englishings of Boethius *de Consolatione Philosophae* edited by Caroline Pemberton EETS (London: Kegan Paul, French, Trubner 1899)
 53. *The Gospel According to St. Matthew and part of the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark* translated by Sir John Cheke edited by James Goodwin (London: Pickering & Deighton 1843)
 54. *Elton Reform and Reformation - The New History of England* (London: Arnold 1977)
Alistair Fox and John Guy *Reassessing the Henrician Age* (Oxford: Blackwell 1986)
 55. Henry wrote, or had written on his behalf, a tract against Luther called *Assertio Septem Sacramentum* (1521) for which he was commended by the Pope. He was very wary of allowing the Bible in the vernacular for fear the text would become debased.
 56. Christopher Haig *Elizabeth I* (London: Longman 1988) p.167
 57. Una Pope-Hennessy *Sir Walter Scott* (London: Home and Val Thal Ltd 1948) p.60-79
 58. Walter Scott *The Monastery* (London: Border Edition 1898) p.89.
 59. *The New Testament and Psalms* pocket version published by the Gideons dates the beginning of their movement as 1899. p.46
 60. David Williams in *A World of His Own - the double life of George Borrow* (Oxford: University Press 1982) p.ix Preliminary, writes that in one year, "just short of 20,000 copies" of *The Bible in Spain* were sold by John Murray.
 61. George Borrow *The Bible in Spain* (London: John Murray 1901) p.103
 62. Henry Knighton, writing *Leycestrensis Chronicon* in 1392, states that Wyclif "evangelum transtulit de Latino in Anglicam linguam, non angelicam". *Chronicon Henry Knighton* edited by Joseph Lumby (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode 1889) Vol. II p.152. This is probably why Henry Hervey Baber names "John Wiclif DD." as the translator of the New Testament, but modern scholarship has shown it to be unlikely that he did any of the actual translating, although there is plenty of evidence that it was done under his influence. Many people had a part in the project (see *The Lollard Bible* by Margaret Deansley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1920,1966) ch.10 for a full discussion).
 63. "Memoirs of the Life of Doctor Wiclif" in *The New Testament* translated by John Wiclif DD. edited by Henry Hervey Baber (London: Hamilton 1810) p.xx

64. Wyclif's main Latin works were *De Dominio Divino* (1373), *De Mandatis Divinis*, *De Dominio Civili* (both 1377) *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* (1378), *De Ecclesio*, *De Officio Regis* and *De Potestate Pape* (all 1379), *De Eucharistica* (c1380), *De Simonia*, *De Apostasia* and *De Blasphemia* (all 1381). *Sermones Quadraginta* and a commentary on the Bible were written in the years between 1373-81.
65. Milton wrote several works in Latin prose; *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1651), *Defensio Secunda* (1654) and *De Doctrina Christiana* (begun in 1652) among them. He also composed Latin Elegaic verses for various occasions including one in memory of his friend Charles Diodati, *Epitaphium Damonis* (1625)
66. Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1933)
67. See G. R. Owst *Preaching in Medieval England* (New York: Russell & Russell Inc. 1965) p.28-31
68. F. F. Bruce *The English Bible* (London: The Lutterworth Press 1961) p.15 describes the original version as being "of little value for ordinary people" owing to its strict conservation of Latin word order and idiom.
69. See Deanesley op. cit. p.290 et sequens
70. Wyclif's views on transubstantiation were put forward in his tract *De Eucharistia* (1380)
71. See A.J. Minnis *The Medieval Theory of Authorship* (Menston: Scolar Press 1984)
72. For example in the oral tradition of the Miracle Plays which were re-enactments of the Old and New Testament stories, and in the textual rewrites from the Bible such as the *Ormulum*, *Cursor Mundi*, Osbert Bokenham's *Legends of Holy Women*, and in the several Lives of Christ.
73. See Margaret Deanesley's pamphlet "The Significance of the Lollard Bible" (Athlone 1951)
74. At the Second Vatican Council in the 1963 under the auspices of Pope John XXIII the Roman Catholic Latin Mass was replaced by Mass in the vernacular but not without opposition from within the church (both priests and laity) from those who wished to retain a more traditional form of worship. In the Church of England there was similar controversy at the introduction of the revised prayer book which was only resolved by keeping open the possibility of using both old and new forms.
75. After 1580 when the Pope excommunicated Elizabeth I and encouraged her deposition Jesuit priests were executed not for heresy as Protestants had been in Mary's time, but for treason, as to be Catholic was necessarily to be against the Queen.

76. William Fulke *A Defence of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holy Scripture into the English tongue* written in 1583, edited by C.H.Hartshorne The Parker Society (Cambridge:The University Press 1843) p.98. Also quoted by F.F. Bruce in *The English Bible* (London: Lutterworth Press 1961) p56.
77. In 1584 Henry issued a proclamation restricting the reading of the vernacular Bible to certain sections of the community.
78. Preface to the version of 1611 in *Records of the English Bible* edited by Alfred J. Pollard (London: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press 1911) p.349

Chapter TwoTHE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VERNACULAR AND TRANSLATION ACTIVITY
FROM BEDE TO ALFRED

Translation activity concerned with the transfer of the Latin text of the Scriptures into English began as soon as the text arrived in England. We owe most of our knowledge of the period to the work of one of the scholar/historian monks of Jarrow, the Venerable Bede. In the 730s he wrote *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*¹ which subsequently gained him a reputation as "the first modern historian".² He had access to and made extensive use of the original records, kept at Canterbury, of the mission sent by Pope Gregory, and in the preface to the work sets out his sources and methodology in the manner of a reliable historian. The number and spread of the manuscripts of this work, ranging from contemporary copies to medieval printed editions, witnesses its importance through the centuries as a source of information on the early church and on life in Anglo-Saxon times.³

Before the arrival of Augustine and his followers, the Christian influence on England had been through the Irish monasteries whose schools "by the sixth century... were the

most famous in Europe".⁴ The spread of the religion had been peripheral and spasmodic, and the intention of Pope Gregory's mission was to convert all the English peoples and bring them under the wing of the Roman church. Even at that early stage in the church's history there was the idea that the Christianity originating from Rome was orthodox and that Celtic Christianity was out of step, since the calculation of Easter was done slightly differently. Bede's *History*, while giving due respect and praise to the priests of the Irish community who helped sustain the mission's impetus, reflects the conflict between Roman and Celtic tradition.

Under the auspices of Augustine, education in England was improved with the founding of the study centres in the monasteries. These monasteries were the only source of learning, and as the Christian literature was in Latin, those who were literate could mostly read Latin. Most of the earliest literature written by English people was written in Latin, but this is not to say that there were not other languages in evidence. It was natural that Bede should write the *History* in Latin as it was meant for a wide audience, but in the first chapter he describes how at the time of writing there were five languages in use in Britain; English, British (Welsh), Irish, Pictish and Latin, "quae meditatione scripturarum ceteris omnibus est

facta communis".⁵ Latin became the common means of literary communication through the arrival of Christianity.

Augustine was also aware of the language problems involved in his mission. Bede tells us that at one point on the journey to England the party stopped and he returned to Gregory to ask if they could give up the mission rather than go to a barbarous, fierce and unbelieving nation "cuius ne linguam quidem noscent".⁶ In a letter which Bede quotes, Gregory told them not to be afraid of "maledicorum hominum linguae"⁷ and advised them to obtain "de gente Francorum interpretes."⁸ Through the Frankish interpreters they made contact with the Kentish King Ethelberht and received his permission to preach to the people. The preaching must have taken place in Anglo-Saxon for the people to understand, and as preaching is the expounding of the Gospel and the Gospel was in Latin, the act of expounding was in itself a kind of translation.

Another example of the flexibility of the linguistic context into which the text was introduced occurs when Bede records how, when King Oswald of Northumbria later wished to revive Christianity during his reign, he sent for a bishop from Ireland⁹ where he had spent time as a child. The Bishop Aidan, who came in response to his request, "anglorum linguam perfecte non nuerat".¹⁰ The King, who

spoke Irish, acted as interpreter when the Bishop preached the Gospel and translated the sermons from Irish to English. In another chapter, Bede describes how the Lindisfarne Monks would visit the villages to preach and how the villagers would gather eagerly to hear the word of God.¹¹ In a non-literate society the oral aspect of the language was far more central than the written text. It provided a literary tradition that was in its way as important as the recorded literature, and in many cases provided the basis for its later development.

Sermons, delivered in the vernacular, became part of the oral tradition in that they were the means of communicating the Gospel stories and other Scriptural writings to the people. Augustine's aim was not to replace the Anglo-Saxon culture with a Christian one but "to harmonise Christian teaching with the heroic tradition".¹² The successful harmonisation was expressed in the early Old English religious poetry of which *The Dream of the Rood*¹³ is the obvious example. Here Christ is portrayed as an Anglo-Saxon hero, "as in contemporary iconography or as seen by Ambrose or Cynwulf, he is a young and confident champion, striding from afar".¹⁴

Once Augustine was established at Canterbury, Gregory sent monks, vestments, relics and "codices plurimos"¹⁵ to

help with the founding of more monasteries where the teaching and study of the Scriptures and other Latin writings could be pursued. Schools were set up and attracted some scholars of good reputation, among them Bishop Theodore, "vir et saeculari et divina litteratura et Graece instructus et Latine".¹⁶ The study of secular classical works encouraged their imitation and the development of a significant body of Anglo-Latin literature; but while Latin took a firm hold as the language of the educated and the international means of scholarly communication, the vernacular continued to expand in the oral tradition of poetry and song. The earliest documents written in Anglo-Saxon could well have been the set of laws (now lost) that Ethelberht is said to have left when he died. According to Bede these were "conscripta Anglorum sermone".¹⁷ Bede's note that the laws were in English together with the lack of contemporary vernacular manuscripts indicates that English was not normally used as a means of recording. This has given rise to the assumption in our text based society that as a language it was not held in much esteem; yet it was used as the language of negotiation upon at least one important occasion.

At the Council of Whitby, called to try and settle the long running dispute between the Celtic and Roman ways of calculating Easter,¹⁸ an interesting situation arose.

Agilbert,¹⁹ a Gaul by birth who had studied in Ireland and represented the Roman point of view on the question, asked if his priest Wilfred could speak for him as "ille melius ac manifestius ipsa lingua Anglorum quam ego per interpretem potest explanare quae sentimus".²⁰ A group of Bishops discussing a Church matter at a Church council might have been expected to do so in Latin, especially as there were language differences between them, but English was the language of oral communication on this occasion.

With the arrival of Christianity and the Scriptures in Anglo-Saxon England, monastic and scholarly life was established and developed using Latin as its main language. Preaching took place in the vernacular, as did the composing and reciting of poems and songs in the mead halls and also in some of the monasteries in spite of the disapproval of some of the later scholar/abbots.²¹ The earliest written record of an Anglo-Saxon song is ironically in a Latin paraphrase by Bede when he tells the story of the religious poet Caedmon.²²

Bede tells us that Caedmon lived at the Whitby monastery²³ at the time of the Abbess Hild. He had no skill with the harp and is said to have avoided having to sing at feasts by slipping away to be with the animals. One

night as he slept in the cowshed he had a dream²⁴ in which a voice asked him to sing "principiam creaturum".²⁵ Caedmon sang, and when he awoke he found that he was able to translate passages of sacred history or doctrine "sacrae historiae sive doctrinae sermone" into "carmen dulcissimum". Bede gives the first few lines of what is known as Caedmon's Hymn of Creation, which in several of the manuscripts of the *History* has been glossed in Anglo-Saxon or West Saxon, indicating that the poem was widely known.²⁶ Bede shows that the multi-lingual context in which he was used to working has made him aware of the theoretical aspects of translation by commenting on his own paraphrase: "Hic est sensus non autem ordino ipse verborum quae dormiens ille canebat; neque enim posunt carmina quamvis optime conposita, ex alia in aliam linguam ad verbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri".²⁷

If it were not for Bede's record we should have no knowledge of Caedmon, since all that survives of his work, or at least all that can be safely attributed to him is the nine line hymn Bede quotes. His other works, mentioned but not quoted by the historian, include the whole history of Genesis, Exodus, the life of Christ and "de aliis plurimis sacrae scripturae historiis".²⁸ Other manuscripts containing religious poetry on the themes outlined by Bede,

once thought to have been the work of Caedmon, have turned out to be the work of different hands at different times. Although this is disappointing from the point of view of increasing knowledge about the first documented English Biblical poet, it shows that the tradition he began was continued and developed by others after him to the extent that Biblical verse accounts for a substantial part of the body of extant poetic manuscripts.²⁹

The act of translating the Scriptures into Anglo-Saxon poetry was the beginning of a natural assimilation of Christian literature into the host culture. Since the host culture was pre-eminently an oral one, listening, as to songs, stories and sermons, and speaking, as in storytelling, performing songs or preaching, held the position that reading and writing do today as the instruments of communication. They performed the same function but did not leave the same tangible evidence of literary activity as a text did. Early English Biblical poetry belonged to a tradition that was as fluid and flexible as speech itself, consisting of themes worked and reworked in different ways, sometimes over a considerable length of time. We are told that Caedmon did not learn to read and write; he learnt the material for his poetry as Bede says "audiendo, "rememorando" and "ruminando".³⁰

Recording these themes for posterity was not yet important in so fragile and uncertain an existence. Plague, war and disease, all of which feature in the *History*, made life precarious, and the nature of the oral tradition made the definition of a piece of literature as a text irrelevant. This does not mean that Caedmon's work and the work of those like Cynwulf, who followed his lead, has no place in the build up towards a vernacular Bible. On the contrary, they were the very beginnings of the take-over of the text into the vernacular culture. Until that had taken place, the real Englishing of the Bible could not begin.

When the Scriptures arrived in England there was not a vernacular prose tradition or even a written tradition into which they could be assimilated. The only way into the host culture was through the poetic tradition, and what Caedmon did was to take an already established poetic formula and use it as a vehicle for Bible translation. The *Creation Hymn* is Christian in content but "intrinsically Germanic"³¹ in genre. The Christian content of the poetry bridged the gulf between the monastery schools and the tradition of the people, made poetry respectable and "writable, beyond its previously exclusive cultural boundaries in the native, oral tradition".³² Caedmon's initiative may account for the Psalms being the earliest and most often translated section of the Bible since they

were in verse; it certainly explains why it was not considered strange for scholars like Bede to be familiar with Anglo-Saxon poetry.

On Bede's death in 735, Cuthbert, one of his pupils, wrote an account of his death to a fellow teacher, Cuthwin, in a neighbouring house. The text of this letter is often appended to the manuscripts of the *History*. From this letter we have more information about Anglo-Saxon poetry and about an early vernacular translation of St. John's Gospel which unfortunately has not survived. Cuthbert describes Bede's last illness in which the sick man repeated a verse about death "in nostra quoque lingua, ut erat doctus in nostris carminibus".³³ Interestingly, Cuthbert quotes the poem in its original form and does not paraphrase in Latin as Bede had done with Caedmon's poem, presumably because his letter had a specific reader whom he knew would be able to read the Anglo-Saxon.

Cuthbert also tells us that Bede was in the process of translating the Gospel of St. John into English and was anxious to finish it before he died. "In nostram linguam ad utilitatem ecclesiae Dei convertit".³⁴ It has been suggested that "as St. John is the last of the four Gospels, the three preceding had most likely been translated",³⁵ but there is no record of this by Cuthbert

and no mention of it by Bede when he lists his other works in the *History*. He may have omitted to mention the translation of St. John, but it is unlikely that he would have left out a project so great as the translating of the complete Gospels.

As the text has not survived we have no way of knowing its function. It could have been a gloss to help pupils with Latin, an aid to preaching, a text for a convert, perhaps of noble birth, who could read Anglo-Saxon but not Latin. It may have been used to read the Gospel to the unlettered people in the oral tradition. Perhaps parts of it were learned by heart. A complete Anglo-Saxon translation of the Gospels appeared as a text in the tenth century, but could have been around earlier in oral form. It is difficult to imagine that Bede's Gospel was meant to replace the Latin text as an English version in its own right, or that its readership would have been extensive, as most of those who were educated could read Latin and would not need a vernacular text. Whatever its function it was the first recorded direct translation of part of the Bible into English, written by a scholar well versed in Latin and Greek and Scriptural exegesis, and "doctus" in Anglo-Saxon poetry. In the light of the information that Bede and Cuthbert provide, we need perhaps to re-adjust slightly the idea of the total dominance of Latin. What seems to emerge

from a close inspection of the evidence is that there was vernacular activity surrounding the Bible but that a great part of it was oral and is consequently impossible to document. There was, however, at least one recorded Anglo-Saxon translation of part of the Gospels in the eighth century and considerable development of Old English poetry on Christian religious themes.

The progress of the Englishing of the Bible naturally depended heavily on the fortunes of the English language. A century and a half after Bede in the reign of Alfred the Great there was a considerable increase in the status of the Anglo-Saxon language and a significant input into the vernacular literature. This was contrary to the trend in the rest of Europe, but part of the history of early English prose which has been called "a record of unprecedented decisions to compose in the vernacular".³⁴ The time lapse between Bede's achievements and those of Alfred was not due entirely to a lack of scholarship, as the schools had flourished in various parts of the country at various times, but more to the destructive effect that the repeated Viking attacks had on the literary landscape as well as the physical one. Lindisfarne and Jarrow were first attacked in 793 and 794³⁷ not long after Bede's death, and the monks were eventually forced to leave with their precious relics which

included the remains of St. Cuthbert³⁸ and the as yet unglossed Lindisfarne Gospels, and look for safety elsewhere.

The Danes began to attack the East Coast in 835, and returned most years until in 865 they decided to settle in England permanently and even occupied York for several months. The destruction of books and manuscripts was only one aspect of the literary devastation that the Vikings caused. The unsettled monastic population was no longer in a position to promote and maintain learning, and the teachers³⁹ who had contributed extensively to the development of both Anglo-Latin and Anglo-Saxon literature went to the Continent to continue their studies. This effectively brought an end to the copying of manuscripts for which "only monasteries offered the necessary order, peace, time and motive"⁴⁰ and to the written Latin literature which had flourished in Bede's time and after. The oral tradition of songs and poetry fared better, as it existed through the people, was carried with them and did not depend on texts.

Asser,⁴¹ Alfred's contemporary biographer, tells how the young Alfred "ad duodecimum aetatis annum, aut eo amplius, illiteratus permansit".⁴² But as Fuller comments, writing four centuries later, "And did not he run fast, who

starting so late came soon to the mark?"⁴³ In spite of his lack of letters, or perhaps because of it, his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon poetry was excellent. Asser tells us that the future King was very fond of English poetry; "Saxonica poemata die noctuque solers auditor"⁴⁴ and relates an anecdote in which the boy wins a book of poems from his mother for being able to recite the text. This incident shows that the oral tradition was thriving even though constant war had caused decline in the learning centres of the monasteries, and also, incidentally, that there were Anglo-Saxon texts in existence.

When Alfred became King in 871 on the death of his brother, he was still too occupied with repelling the Danes to be able to put his mind to his own education or to the literary education of his subjects. A considerable part of Asser's *De Rebus Gestibus Alfredi* is taken up with descriptions of the movements of the "exercitus paganorum",⁴⁵ the pagan army which harried England for the best part of a century, but even in the context of war Alfred appears as a devout and scholarly man. His biographer tells us that he knew the psalms very well and devoted time to prayer, but as a young man could not achieve what he most wanted, a literary education, because "illo tempore lectores boni in toto regno Occidentalium Saxonum non erant".⁴⁶

In later life, when bargaining with the Danes had won peace, the king set about restoring not only his own education but also the literary fortunes of the English people. Gradually Alfred established a court in which learning was given a high priority. He set aside a considerable portion of his own day for study and prayer and was anxious that others should do the same. He insisted that his judges should learn to read⁴⁷ and encouraged young men to study while they had the opportunity. He kept a notebook on his person in which he wrote and translated into Anglo-Saxon anything of value that he encountered in his work. Asser mentions this handbook at several points in the account of Alfred's life⁴⁸ and William of Malmesbury, writing in 1125, speaks as if it were still available to be consulted; "Qui enim legit manualem librum regis Elfredi...."⁴⁹ but it is unfortunately now lost.

The reciting of "Saxonicos libros" and "maxime carmina Saxonica"⁵⁰ already formed a major part of the King's programme for himself and his people, and he was also accustomed to listen to the recitation of the Divine Scriptures, as Asser puts it, "a recitantibus indigenis"⁵¹ literally "by reciting native speakers". It is unclear from the Latin whether the recitations were performed in the vernacular or not, but Asser does state that the speakers were "indigenae" that is "natives".⁵² This means that one

of two processes was in operation; either the "indigenae" were familiarising themselves with the Latin text and learning it by heart, or the Scriptures were being recited in the vernacular. In both cases the juxtaposition of Scriptures and vernacular is interesting. The Biblical text is being treated in the same way as an important Anglo-Saxon work in the oral tradition, being performed in the same way as the heroic poems were performed, allotted the status of a piece of Anglo-Saxon literature. It was into this very active oral tradition that Alfred began the introduction of Anglo-Saxon texts translated from Latin.

Asser records the arrival of several scholars who were to help in Alfred's work; Waerferth from Worcester, "in divina scilicet scriptura bene eruditum", Plegmund the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Ethelstan and Werwulf, both "eruditos". Waerferth, at the request of the king, had already translated some of the *Dialogues* written by Pope Gregory into Anglo-Saxon for the first time, "primus....in Saxoniam linguam".⁵³ Asser had presumably read Waerferth's translation, as he describes the work as "sensu ex sensu ponens, elucubratis et elegantissime interpretatus est".⁵⁴ One of Alfred's children, Ethelweard, set up a school in which "linguae libri, Latinae scilicet et Saxonicae assidue legebantur".⁵⁵ The point of interest here is the new position of Anglo-Saxon in the education and study system.

It is far more prominent in Alfred's day than in Bede's time, owing to the decline of Latin learning and the continuity and strength of the oral tradition. The King intended to improve learning and establish a national literature using Latin texts as the scholarly input and the vernacular as the means of expression. In the school Latin and Saxon had equal prominence, and Waerferth had already begun what was to be a considerable programme of translation organised by and contributed to by Alfred.

Gregory's *Pastoral Care* or *Regulae Pastoralis Liber* written in 591, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (731), Boethius's *Consolations of Philosophy* (524) and Augustine's *Soliloquies* (386-7) were the main works translated into Anglo-Saxon by Alfred and his helpers. In what appears to be the earliest English translator's preface, the preface to *Pastoral Care*,²⁴ Alfred sets out to explain his reasons for turning to translation, his method of working and the process of distribution of the texts. He begins by recalling how in earlier times England had both knowledge and prosperity; how the general decay in scholarship and social order meant that Latin was no longer used or understood; and how even before the churches were ravaged and burnt, the people could not make use of the books available since they were not written in their own language. Alfred wonders why these books had not been

translated before, then answers himself with the reflection that the scholars of the time could not have foreseen the general decay in learning and had assumed that Latin would always be high in status and accessible. It is evident from the *Preface* that Alfred looks at the problem with a different perspective because he is a king and not a bishop or abbot. Augustine, missionary to England, set about teaching Latin to give access to the main Christian texts; Alfred, one of the leaders of the English people, has no hesitation in using the vernacular as his medium and wonders why it has not been done before.

Forðy me dyncð betre, gif iow swa dyncð, þæt we eac suma bec, ða þe nidbedyrresta sien eallum monnum to witanne, þæt we þa on ðæt gedeode wenden þe we eale gecnawen maegen & ge don swa we swiðe eade magon mid Goddes fultume, gif we þa stilnesse habbað... 57

The decision to translate into Anglo-Saxon was the easy part of Alfred's project. The main difficulty was the lack of a written literary tradition on which the translations could be styled. Caedmon used an existing genre for poetry; there was no suitable written prose tradition available to Alfred. His task was to establish one which was both acceptable in the vernacular and capable of containing the philosophical and didactic material he wished to convey. His thorough knowledge of and love for Anglo-Saxon literature put him in a position to be able to translate into the Anglo-Saxon culture as opposed to merely

providing access to the Latin one. He made a start towards an Anglo-Saxon prose style which was taken further later by such writers as Aelfric and Wulfstan. At the end of the *Preface* which is constructed with considerable care and balance, he echoes the style of an Old English riddle by personifying the book: "Siððan min on englisc Ælfred kyning awende worda gehwelc, & me his wrieterum sende sud̄ & nord̄".⁵⁸ This gives the text a familiar Anglo-Saxon ring while retaining the formal nature of the introduction; makes it a particularly Anglo-Saxon piece of writing instead of merely a copy of the Latin style of preface.

To everything he wrote, Alfred gave his individual as well as an Anglo-Saxon character, using his own set of strategies. The translations were not direct, literal translations; they were rather adaptations of the content to suit the Anglo-Saxon context. His *Boethius*, for instance, was "a radical adaptation of the Latin"⁵⁹ and included some of his own examples to make the text clearer to the reader. He did not feel obligated to keep exactly to the original. He expanded some parts, contracted or omitted others, and left his personal stamp on the translation by his expressly Christian interpretation of the material. He was interested in the ideas of the text rather than in its word for word transmission. The finished product was more of a reworking in the oral poetic tradition than a close

translation; more on the lines of a text plus a commentary than a transference of the original into the Anglo-Saxon language.

The relevance of Alfred's activities to the process of Bible translation is twofold. Firstly he presented the vernacular as an acceptable and necessary medium for religious and secular literature and demonstrated its capabilities; and secondly he was instrumental in expanding the literary tradition to the point where vernacular sermons, Bible commentaries, lives of Saints and devotional books were accepted and developed as a major component of that tradition. There would be an even more direct link between Alfred and Bible translation if the West Saxon prose translation of the first fifty psalms in the Paris Psalter could be safely attributed to him;⁴⁰ as it is, the tradition which began with William of Malmesbury that they were Alfred's work has come under question with the advances of modern scholarship.⁴¹ Whoever was responsible for their translation and for the metrical translation of psalms 51-150 which complete the Psalter part of the manuscript, had already begun the process of Englishing the Psalms, for the translations "undoubtedly had independent existences before they were combined in this manuscript".⁴² The eleventh century Paris Psalter is unique among the extant manuscripts of glossed Psalters in that the Old

English is not inserted interlinearly, but placed in a separate column beside the Latin. Another point of interest lies in the fact that the Latin text of the psalms in the Psalter was not the one used for the translation. This seems to indicate that there were independent vernacular translations around in Alfred's time which, following the oral tradition, did not come to be written down until later, but nevertheless formed part of the Englishing process. This pattern is repeated in the case of the West Saxon Gospels whose six extant manuscripts are believed to represent a single version, now lost, which originated in the tenth century.⁴³

References to Chapter Two

1. Bede *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* translated by Bertram Colgrave edited by Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1969) An edition based on a consensus of manuscripts (of which there are 160 extant) but mainly on the Leningrad ms.
2. Helen Waddell *The Wandering Scholars* (London: Constable 1927, 1980) p.42
3. For a detailed account of the distribution and dates of manuscripts in England and throughout Europe see the "Textual Introduction" Colgrave and Mynors pp.xii - lxxiv
4. Waddell p.31
5. Bede p.16
6. Bede p.68
7. Bede p.70
8. Bede p.72
9. The words Bede uses are "ad maiores natu Scottorum" which is translated in some English editions of the *History* as Scotland. The names he uses for various the peoples do not necessarily correspond with the present-day use, for example "British" is what we now call Welsh. The situation is further confused by the fact that the Irish monks came to England by way of Iona, which was Aidan's home before he was summoned to help Oswald.
10. Bede p.220
11. Bede p.311
12. A. C. Partridge *A Companion to Old and Middle English Studies* (London: Deutsch 1982) p.69
13. It is interesting to note the number of occasions in the Bible when the device of the dream is used as a channel of communication between God and Man, and to compare the use of the dream in Old English literature. Caedmon received his gift for poetry in a dream, Bede makes frequent use of dreams in his stories about the Saints and in this poem the Dream is the vehicle for the entire content.
14. Swanton p.98
15. Bede p.104
16. Bede p.330
17. Bede p.150
18. The question of how to calculate Easter seems to take up an extraordinary amount of space in Bede's *History*. The problem was not so much one of calculation as the two methods were not so very different. The real issue was whether communities followed the Roman method and

- so accepted Roman authority or whether they retained their independence (which must have been quite easy to do in those days of difficult travel and communications) and kept to their own interpretation of the parts of Scripture containing the information needed for the calculation of Easter.
19. Agilbert appears in another part of the *History* in an episode which again highlights language difficulties. King Cenwealh, who could only speak English, found after a while that he could not stand the "barbarous speech" of his bishop any longer and employed Wine, another bishop who could speak English, to share his duties. Agilbert was so upset at this that he went home to Gaul.
 20. Bede p.301 "...he can explain our views in the English tongue better and more clearly than I can through an interpreter."
 21. It was Alcuin, a scholar/abbot of the late eighth century who wrote to the Lindisfarne monks questioning the fact that they enjoyed listening to English secular poetry instead of more appropriate religious readings and asked the now famous question, "What has Ingeld to do with Christ?" Quoted in Swanton p.25
 22. Bede p.414
 23. There is a modern (1898) monument to Caedmon on the clifftop near the site of Hild's monastery, of which only buried ruins remain. The visible ruins are of a later date.
 24. The fact that Caedmon receives his gift in a dream suggests that it is of divine origin see note 21.
 25. Bede p.416
 26. Bede p. 417 note
 27. Bede p.416 "For it is not possible to translate verse, however well composed, literally from one language to another without some loss of beauty and dignity."
 28. Bede p.418
 29. "Scriptural Poetry" by Geoffrey Shepherd in *Continuations and Beginnings* edited by Eric Stanley (London: Nelson 1966) pp 11-14 gives an account of the Exeter Book manuscripts, the Vercelli Book and the Cotton MS Vitellius and an approach to evaluating their impact.
 30. Bede p.41
 31. Maryjane Osborn "Translation, Translocation and the Native Context of "Caedmon's Hymn", *New Comparison* 8 (1989) 13-21.
 32. Osborne p.20
 33. Cuthbert's letter to Cuthwin in *Bede's Ecclesiastical History* edited by Colgrave and Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1969) p.580

34. Bede p.582
35. *The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels* edited by Joseph Bosworth (London: Reeves and Turner 1888) p.xii
36. Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York and London: New York University Press 1986 edition) p.38
37. Partridge 1982 p.94
38. Bede p.443. According to the note on p.496 of the same book, a case was made for the Gospels and a stone cross in honour of St. Cuthbert on the orders of Aethelwold, who was Bishop of Lindisfarne in 721. These were taken from place to place with the other relics when the monks were forced to move from the island.
39. The most famous of these was Alcuin who left for Charlemagne's court in 782. He was followed by two of his pupils Hwita and Frithugils. Greenfield and Calder p.22 and 24
40. Michael Alexander *Old English Literature* (London: MacMillan 1983) p.33
41. Asser was a Welsh Bishop enlisted by Alfred to help with his education. He wrote the biography, which may well be unfinished, in Alfred's lifetime. The only surviving manuscript was destroyed in the eighteenth century but had fortunately been printed in the sixteenth by Matthew Parker. It has at times been considered to be a twelfth century forgery owing to some material which was inserted at that time with the intention of proving that Alfred founded Oxford (which would therefore be the older of the two earliest universities). It is now generally agreed to be genuine, except for the inserted material, because the Welsh details given by Asser which could not have been reproduced by a forger. For a more detailed discussion of the text see the introduction to Asser's *Life of King Alfred* edited by William Henry Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1904) whose text "has been established by a minute collation of the existing transcripts and editions and of the early compilers who embody matter derived from this work." Intro. p.xiii and xiv. This is the Latin text I have used, the translations are my own.
42. Asser p.20 "...until he was twelve, or even older, he remained unable to read."
43. Thomas Fuller *The Worthies of England* edited by John Freeman (London: Alan & Unwin 1952 edition) p.24
44. Asser p. 20 "...He used to listen to Saxon poetry day and night"
45. Asser pp.5, 17, 25, 34, 36, etc.

46. Asser p.21 "At that time there were no good teachers in the whole of the kingdom of the West Saxons."
47. Asser p.94
48. Asser p.75
49. William of Malmesbury *Gesta Pontificum* edited by N. Hamilton (London: Longman, Trubner 1870) book 5 p.332, p.333
50. Asser p.59
51. Asser p.60
52. Lewis and Short *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford 1917) p.934
53. Asser p.63
54. Asser p.62 "...putting sense for sense it is clearly and most elegantly translated."
55. Asser p.59. "...books of the Latin and Saxon languages were assiduously read."
56. *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* edited by Henry Sweet (London: Trubner for EETS 1871). This edition has the Cotton manuscript facing the Hatton manuscript with a nineteenth century translation below. I have used this translation unless otherwise stated.
57. Sweet p.6 Cotton ms. "Therefore it seems better to me, if ye think it so, for us also to translate some books which are most needful for all men to know into the language which we can all understand, and for you to do as we very easily can if we have tranquility enough." Sweet has ignored "mid Goddes fultume" - with God's help - and rather lessened the effect of "stilnesse" by not rendering it "peace".
58. Sweet p.8 Cotton ms. "Afterwards King Alfred translated every word of me into English, and sent me to his scribes south and north."
59. Greenfield and Calder p.47
60. David Fowler *The Bible in Early English Literature* (London: Sheldon Press 1977) p.94 is cautious. "The origin of the translations is obscure, but it has been suggested that the prose portion, at least, may have been the work of King Alfred himself."
61. William of Malmesbury *Gesta Regum Anglorum* liber ii section 123 "Psaltorum transferre agressus vix prima parte explicare vivendi finem fecit." Quoted by Minnie Cate Morrell *A Manual of Old English Biblical Materials* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press 1965) p.137
62. Morrell p.137. I have found this book indispensable for its detailed descriptions of manuscripts and synopsis of critical thinking on their provenance and relevance.
63. Morrell p. 185 and 186 quotes Skeat's findings on the subject in the introduction to his edition of St Luke's Gospel ppvii - ix

Chapter ThreeTHE PRACTICE OF GLOSSING: THE WRITINGS OF AELFRIC

It would seem appropriate at this point to make a more detailed study of the practice of glossing Psalters and Gospels, and to consider the significance of glossing in relation to the translating/Englishing of the Scriptures. Glossing is the most basic form of translation and has been particularly useful in providing linguistic information on Old English dialects and shifts in word forms. Its function in the process of Englishing the Bible has not been fully explored; it has been considered to be a study aid or an aid to learning Latin¹ rather than an end in itself or the first steps in translation. Certainly the glosses alone do not constitute a major trend towards separate English Scriptures, but in view of the number and spread of the extant manuscripts, particularly of the glossed Psalters, and various points of interest concerning the relationship of the glosses to the Latin text, their contribution to the overall picture has to be taken into account.

If the process of the translation of a text were to be defined in stages, the first stage might be an interlinear gloss, the second a dual text, the third an independent

rendering in the target language. All three of these stages are represented in various ways among the extant fourteen glossed Psalters and two glossed Gospel manuscripts which cover the period from the eighth to the twelfth century. The oldest extant glosses are to be found in the Blickling or Morgan Psalter of the eighth century, where there are about twenty which are "apparently contemporary with the Psalter itself, being written in the the same red ink as that used for the rubrics".² The remainder of the glosses are later. Even as the scribe was copying the Psalms he found it desirable to make a note in Anglo-Saxon of some of the Latin words, a fact which in a small way supports the evidence already presented that Latin was not quite as all-pervasive as it would seem. Not everyone was bi-lingual in Latin; some aid to translation was needed as early as the eighth century if the dating of the Blickling Psalter is correct. The addition of further glosses after the tenth century follows the trend already noted of less emphasis on Latin and a move towards the vernacular.

The Vespasian Psalter is an eighth century copy of the Roman Psalms "in a beautiful uncial hand"³ with a ninth century gloss in the Mercian dialect. The ornamentation is exceptional and the gloss carefully inserted in a "minute pointed insular hand".⁴ The decision to gloss such a manuscript cannot have been a casual one, and the fact

that the glossing was done so carefully and in keeping with the original manuscript means that it was intended to be an integral part of the text. A similar situation arises in respect of the Lindisfarne Gospels whose origin and history can be better substantiated than most manuscripts from independent sources. A Vulgate version copied in the eighth century and beautifully illuminated, it was not glossed until about 950 by Aldred, who wrote a note to that effect at the end of John's Gospel.⁵ It is possible that his gloss may not have been original. One study of the Lindisfarne manuscript states that the wording of the colophon "quite probably implies that he copied it from some other source that has not come down to us".⁶ Whether it was his own work or a copied gloss is impossible to say with any certainty, but it would be interesting to know what prompted Aldred to undertake such a venture. It was not as if manuscripts of the Gospels were easily obtained or replaced, and the addition was intended to be a permanent one. The Lindisfarne manuscript was highly revered by the monks for its association with St. Cuthbert; they had carried it carefully with them when forced to escape from their monastery at Lindisfarne; almost lost it in the sea when trying to embark for Ireland.⁷ It was among their most treasured relics. It is difficult to imagine the decision to alter the character of the text by inserting Anglo-Saxon annotation being taken lightly.

In the case of both the Vespasian Psalter and of the Lindisfarne Gospels, there must have been some pressing reason for a gloss to be considered necessary; an awareness, perhaps, that skills in Latin were deteriorating, or a desire to "modernise" the manuscript and make it more relevant to the contemporary liturgy. Whatever the function of the gloss, the effect was to change both the nature of the text and the relationship of the text to the vernacular. In one sense the glossing of the Gospels makes a statement about the development of the text's pedigree and signals the taking on of a dual personality, since what was an exclusively Latin manuscript before glossing exhibited permanent Anglo-Saxon connections after. The glosses are physically an integral part of the text and, although usually in smaller script, share the same highly ornamented and exalted presentation as the main Latin writing. The status of Anglo-Saxon must have been increased by its inclusion in such a manuscript, and the function of the manuscript itself must have altered as a result of the gloss.

The Rushworth Gospels, which originated in Ireland in about 800,⁹ were glossed shortly after the glossing of the Lindisfarne manuscript by two priests, Farman and Owun, who worked on the project at the same time. A suggestion⁹ has been made that Farman had already translated Matthew's

Gospel when the Lindisfarne gloss came into his hands, and having decided to use it he asked Owun the scribe to complete the work. There is also the possibility that it was not the actual Lindisfarne manuscript that was used, although historically this is feasible, but a copy, now lost, of the original translation used by Aldred. Lack of manuscript evidence means that suggestions are all that can safely be made, but we have to remember that negative evidence does not preclude the existence of texts, it means only that they are not available to us for analysis.¹⁰

Farman's Matthew "is marked by a considerable freedom of translation; it is more than a word for word gloss",¹¹ whereas Owun's is a straightforward copy of the Lindisfarne gloss. It seems that an independent decision was made to gloss the Rushworth Gospel manuscript and a start made on the work before the Lindisfarne gloss became available to the glossator. In Farman's work there is already a departure from the utility aspect of glossing and a move towards translating meaning as opposed to jotting down equivalents. In Owun's work there is an unexpected shift in function of the gloss. Made for one text, the Lindisfarne gloss is used to gloss another, ostensibly the same but of different origins and therefore likely to have different readings at certain points.¹² The same curiosity occurs in the glossed Psalters. Many of the glosses are

copies of or derive from earlier glosses, but in the case of the Salisbury Psalter, the Gallican version of the psalms has an interlinear gloss of the Roman version. The Old English gloss was transferred in its entirety from its original source text as if the translation were a textual unit complete in itself. In the case of the Paris Psalter, which has already been discussed, the translated text was also physically separated from the Latin text it represented.

The effect of glossing depends largely on the type of readership that the text has. A study aid to learning Latin for the novice monk or a note of the possible meanings as a help towards commentary for the scholar are both functions which retain the superiority of the source text. Should the reader have no Latin, however, the gloss works in a different way, and in spite of the subordinate position of the Anglo-Saxon words, they become the central reference point. One only has to look at an interlinear gloss in which one language is familiar and the other not to see how the familiar language becomes foregrounded. A separate translated text is the natural next step. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the glosses were introduced with one function in mind but owing to changes in outside circumstances had an unexpected effect on the development of independent translations of parts of the Scriptures.

The Cambridge, Royal and Lambeth Psalters, have contemporary glosses, written in the case of the first two in the same hand as the Latin text. The Psalter and the gloss came as a combined unit, the vernacular gloss at this stage was as much a part of the text as the Latin. In the case of the eleventh century Cambridge Psalter, the gloss is written in red in the same size letters as the Latin and "given parity with the text". It is "not properly an interlinear gloss, as in other copies".¹³ The copier obviously perceived the vernacular text as having at least equal importance with the Latin as is shown by the use of the same size letters, or possibly more importance, as the red lettering certainly makes the gloss stand out from the source text.

The presentation of the Royal and Lambeth Psalters indicates their use as study texts. The Lambeth in particular is remarkable for the independence of its gloss and for the fact that there are 1400 double, 60 triple and 3 quadruple glosses.¹⁴ This is interesting from the point of view that the detailed exegesis, which was presumably the work in hand of the glossator, had the unlooked-for effect of stretching the vernacular to encompass the range of the source language, a necessary step before the text could be properly Englished.

The practice of glossing may have been intended as no more than an aid to understanding and memorising the Latin text, but the actual effects were rather more significant. Anglo-Saxon became an integral part of the text albeit in a subsidiary capacity; Latin's central and previously exclusive role was changed and made more flexible according to the readership of the text. The gloss came to be used as an independent text, was copied as such and transferred as a separate unit from the source text; in some presentations it was given equal status with the Latin. Given this context, it is hardly a surprise to find that there were also independent translations of the Gospels in Anglo-Saxon circulating in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, and that those translations are probably offspring of an even earlier text.¹⁵

The six extant Gospel manuscripts in the West Saxon dialect are interestingly not based on the Vulgate. The Vulgate was the accepted text for the Scriptures throughout Europe and although it had taken some time to reach the further corners of Christendom there is reason to assume that it would have been well-established in England at the time of the appearance of the vernacular Gospels. The Latin original used for the translation is considered to have been a mixture of a text developed from Alcuin's revision of the Vulgate and the Anglo-Saxon-Irish type.¹⁶ This

demonstrates the idea that in England at least there existed a number of Latin texts of the Scriptures other than the Vulgate, some of which were in use until the conquest. The Gospel translations appear as independent texts without the Latin and were produced in all likelihood as a result of the literary and ecclesiastical revival begun by Alfred in the ninth century and taken up by the Benedictine reformers of the tenth.

The idea that vernacular Gospels were widespread at that time has to be balanced with the conclusion drawn by Walter Skeat after examining all the manuscripts that "although no one of them represents the original manuscript of the West Saxon Gospels, all are representative of a single version".¹⁷ It would be easy to make a case for the relative insignificance of these translations by considering them, since they appear to have a common source, as a localised phenomenon unrelated to the mainstream scriptural activity, but taking them in conjunction with the earlier glossing of the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels and the evidence of the glossed psalters, they cannot be marginalised in this way. They represent a particularly English version of the Gospels in more ways than one.

Firstly the Latin text on which they are based is a

unique reflection of the influences on Anglo-Saxon Christian tradition: Aldred the Anglo-Latinist's textual revision of the Vulgate, the Irish schools and the earliest Latin Scriptures to arrive with Augustine and his followers. Secondly they exhibit specific Anglo-Saxon characteristics which although illustrating the incapacity of the language of the time to cope with the subtleties of the Latin, nevertheless give the translations an indisputable Anglo-Saxonness. They are undoubtedly Anglo-Saxon Gospels as opposed to Gospels translated from the Latin.

The most obvious and most quoted Anglo-Saxon characteristic is the formation of compound words to interpret words for which there was no simple direct equivalent. The disciples are "leorning-cnihtas", treasure is "gold-hord", the sabbath is "rest-daege", the pure in heart are "claen-heortan".¹⁸ The compound words, of which each element was familiar, comfortably conveyed the sense to the Anglo-Saxon reader in a way in which invented words could not. What a pity the translators of the Rheims Bible in 1582 did not use the same technique instead of retaining unintelligible latinate vocabulary. Another Anglo-Saxon characteristic, less quantifiable and more subjective than the use of compounds, is to be found in the structure and sound of the language used. Even if the Anglo-Saxon words

of the West-Saxon Gospels are no longer familiar to the modern ear, the cadences of the phrases are echoed by the later English versions and are still recognisable if we listen hard enough. Someone familiar with the Gospels would surely recognise the rhythm and structure of this: On fruman waes word, and ðaet word waes mid God, and God waes ðaet word.¹⁹

Or this: Min God, min God, to hwi forlete ðu me?²⁰

Or this: Faeder ure, ðu ðe eart in heofonum,
si ðin nama gehalgod²¹

The problem with a translation of the Gospels at this point in the history of English was the fact that the written language was still at an early stage of its development and was not sufficiently well-established either in terms of the actual form it took or in terms of its status as the foremost medium of literary communication. All languages change as they develop and in doing so can make a translation out of date or dated almost as soon as it is completed. The 1611 King James Bible, for example, was for centuries the standard English translation of the Scriptures but was eventually revised as parts of it were considered to have become unintelligible. But when the Gospels were written down in Anglo-Saxon, it was still not even clear which of the several dialects was to become the main literary language; there was no prospect or intention of the translation having a similar literary or linguistic

impact to the Authorised version. The text was only as successful as its distribution and readership, and as the former relied in pre-printing days on a laborious hand-copying process and the latter was comparatively small, the translation has not been held to be significant as a stage in the process of Englishing the Bible.

I would like to put forward a case for the importance of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels being more than in their interest as a sample of the language, and consider them rather as an early first draft of part of the same text from which a polished English translation emerged in 1611 after many rewritings and revisions. The Englishing of the Scriptures may be considered in the same way as the development of a language or of a literature; not as the effort of any particular individual, but as the product of an evolutionary process to which individuals make contributions but over which they have limited control, and in which, as in most things, providence and politics both play a part.

Each translation, each draft is a product of past practices and has a bearing directly or indirectly on future procedure. Just as a literary text is analysed in the context of other literary texts, Scriptural

translations take on a new perspective when analysed more in the context of other Scriptural translations and less in the light of their religious and political background. The Anglo-Saxon Gospels need to be considered in the context of the oral vernacular tradition of which they are a written representation. This oral tradition had existed from Bede's time, consisted of the learning by heart and the public speaking or performing of stories, and legends, and did not rely on the written text for its preservation. The process of Englishing the Scriptures began in this oral setting. Stories from the Bible became included in the canon of heroic literature, there were also constant references to the Gospel stories in vernacular sermons, and quotations from the Scriptures which had to be turned into English for the purpose of teaching. Alfred continued the tradition of reciting the Scriptures and upgraded the vernacular into an acceptable means of literary communication. The written text became a more important element of recording and some of the traditional oral stories began to find expression in manuscript form as well as in performance mode. Existing Gospel texts were glossed and psalms were translated into English. By the tenth century the collective memory of the Anglo-Saxon people contained sufficient vernacular material on the Bible for an attempt to have already been made at Englishing part of it within the limitations of a language not yet fully equipped with exegetical vocabulary.

The Anglo-Saxon Gospels are an expression of the readiness to assimilate the text into the host culture and an illustration of the gradual switch, over centuries, from the flexibility of collective memory to the permanence of a written text.

Further substantiating the rise of vernacular religious prose there appeared in addition to the Gospels in the tenth century two collections of homilies, the Blickling and Vercelli manuscripts. These are interesting for their textual representation of what had always been a strong oral vernacular tradition, preaching, as well as for being the earliest examples of what was to continue as a literary tradition until well into the seventeenth century, sermon writing. Both homiliaries draw on earlier sources and have a strong Anglo-Saxon style.²² They contain several Lives of Saints, which were popular for their narrative as well as for the ideal of Christian living which they portrayed, and some straightforward sermons on particular themes.

The Homily for Holy Thursday in the Blickling Collection is interesting on several counts, not least because it contains a date as a reference point. Of the last age of the world the author says that "nigon hund wintra & lxxi"²³ have already passed at the time of

writing. This places the homilies shortly before the vernacular religious writing of Aelfric and Wulfstan, a representation of "the synthetic tradition of vernacular preaching before the watershed of the monastic revival".²⁴ The same homily is also an example of how the Latin Scriptures were used and quoted as authority for teaching, and translated and explained as part of the didactic process. The author of the same homily quotes the words of Jesus first in Latin; "Sed accipietis virtutem supervenientes Spiritus Sancti in vos" and follows the quote immediately with an Old English rendering; "Ac ge onfoþ þaem maegene Halges Gastes se cymeþ ofor eow".²⁵ The Latin is presented as the original words of Christ, with the quote prefixed every time with "þa cwaep he to him" or "Da cwaep he" or "He cwaep". The fact that Jesus and his disciples spoke Aramaic and the Gospels were first recorded in Greek has no bearing on the status of the Latin text in the Anglo-Saxon context. The Scriptures came to England in Latin and therefore the Latin text was the historical original. The status of the Latin Bible as authority remained paramount, but familiarity with the content allowed more flexibility in the use of the vernacular to express what it contained. For example, in the Homily on the Feast of Saint Martin the writer uses only the first few words of the Latin quote to remind his audience which part of the Gospel he is thinking of, the rest he expounds

in the vernacular:

Gemunde he þæt Drihten bebeað on þaem godspelle,
de crastino non cogitare, þæt se Godes man ne
 sceolde be þan morgendaege þencan, þylæs þæt
 waere þæt he þurh þæt aenig þara goda forylde,
 þe he þonne þy daege gedon mihte, & da weninge
 hweder he eft þæs mergendaeges gebidan moste.²⁶

The cue "de crastino non cogitare" is the authority for what follows: the substance of the Homily is in Anglo-Saxon, but the function of the Latin tag is to remind the listener or reader of the authenticity of the source of the teaching.

Scriptural Authority was to become an important political issue in the fifteenth century; the question of authorship was also one which complicated the attitude towards Bible translation in medieval times. At the end of the tenth century, however, these areas of difficulty were only just beginning to be explored; the main problem remained the perceived inadequacy of Anglo-Saxon prose as a vehicle for such a high status text. In the work of Aelfric and his contemporary Wolfstan, "the two most eminent writers of prose in any vernacular before the twelfth century",²⁷ we see the results of a conscious effort to upgrade the vernacular, to give to English a range of expression and embellishment equal to Latin which would allow the translation of the Scriptures from one

language to the other on equal terms. Wulfstan was instrumental in collecting and copying reference works for the use of the clergy as well as being an eminent and prolific sermon writer himself. He had his own style of vernacular rhythmic prose of which the most famous and compelling example is the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. In this rousing speech he exhorts the English to give up their sinful ways and save themselves from "Goddess yrre"²⁸ which he believes is presenting itself in the form of the pillaging Danes. Wulfstan's many vernacular works did not include translations of the Scriptures as far as we know, but they were certainly instrumental in raising the status of Anglo-Saxon and demonstrating its capacity as a vehicle for religious writing.

Aelfric (c955 - c1020) is described as "the author of homilies in Anglo-Saxon, a translator of Holy Scripture and a writer upon many miscellaneous subjects".²⁹ He produced a quality of Old English prose which was "unique in the European vernaculars of the time".³⁰ Educated at Winchester, he later became a teacher at Cerne Abbas in Dorset where he wrote the greater part of his works before being made Abbot of Eynsham in Oxfordshire. His literary production was varied and included a volume of Homilies, a further volume of Saints' lives, a Latin Grammar and glossary, translations into Anglo-Saxon of several parts

of the Old Testament, the Latin dialogue known as *Aelfric's Colloquy*, glossed in Anglo-Saxon, which has been so valuable for historical information about the time, and several pastoral letters.

There are other Anglo-Saxon versions, Bede's *de Temporibus* for example, or Basil's *Hexameron*, which have been identified as the work of Aelfric but which are not signed by him. Aelfric's position as "the most accomplished and prolific prose writer of his day"³¹ stems first of all from the fact that he accepted the movement towards written vernacular instruction, and secondly from the fact that he was aware of the importance and impact of style. He translated Homilies that he had written himself in Latin into English for the benefit of those who had no access to Latin, and he deliberately cultivated a prose style based on the refinements of Old English Poetry. His mastery of Latin had given him a knowledge of the rhetorical devices available to the prose writer but he did not make use of these in his bid to produce a polished vernacular prose style. He turned instead to the devices used in the traditional Anglo-Saxon poetry, alliteration and rhythmic patterns, stylistic devices which every listener and reader of Anglo-Saxon would have recognised and appreciated as a mark of specifically literary language as opposed to what has been called "the prose of

utility".³² The result is best described as rhythmic prose, defined as "a loosely metrical form resembling in basic structure and principles the alliterative verse of the Old English poets, but differing markedly in the character and range of its rhythms and in strictness of alliterative practice, and altogether distinct in diction, rhetoric and tone".³³ The resultant writing gave status to the content through its elevated style without obscuring the meaning or allowing for ambiguities as poetry does. It was an obvious attempt to upgrade the target language to make it a quality vehicle for the important message it was to transmit. English was at last as capable of containing the philosophy and theology as the Latin language; it was an unfortunate turn of fate that the priority of languages in England was shortly to be reorganised by the Conquest.

The interest of Aelfric's work in relation to the fortunes of the Englishing of the Bible is not limited to the upgrading of the language. A combination of exegetical writing and translation experience gave him an awareness of the possible dangers of direct translation, particularly of the Old Testament, in a situation where the readers did not have the historical or theological perspective of the difference between the Old Law and the New. Aelfric's sense of responsibility towards the reader made him reluctant to embark on translations, and he set out his reservations in

the prefaces to his work. His attitude demonstrated the concern he had for the souls in his care and was in no way related to the defensive position adopted by the Church in Wyclif's time when for political reasons, the English Bible signified a threat to the Church's authority and a challenge to its bad practices.³⁴

There are two prefaces to Aelfric's translation of his *Lives of Saints*, one in Latin and the other in Old English. The Latin preface retains a formal impersonal structure in which the author justifies his aims and methods and explains exactly how he has approached his task. In contrast, the less formal personal address to Aethelwerd in Anglo-Saxon first greets his friends and then continues in rhythmic prose to give a brief outline of the content of the translation. The two pieces of writing have a contrasting tone. In the first Aelfric speaks with authority and confidence but is nevertheless eager to be justified in what he has done; in the second it is the teacher who speaks gently and simply to his pupils/friends, anxious that they should benefit from his work.

The Latin preface opens with Aelfric explaining that he has translated the book "ad usitatum Anglicam sermocinationem,³⁵" although in actual fact he employs his unique rhythmic style of prose. What he means is that the

language he uses is clear and uncomplicated, recognisable by speakers of Anglo-Saxon in the same way that Luther, translating in the sixteenth century, wished the German of his Bible to be recognisable by the ordinary German speakers. The language is important as the book may be studied "sive legendo, seu audiendo"³⁶ and therefore must suit the listener as well as the reader. Aelfric always has his readership in mind and displays integrity as both teacher and translator. He is not concerned, as some of the later Scriptural translators were, with defending a doctrinal position or defining an area of authority, his aim is to increase the knowledge and faith of his readers while safeguarding them from error and misinterpretation.

Respect and care for the subject matter makes Aelfric cautious about its translation: "Nec tamen plura promitto me scripturum hac lingua, quia nec convenit huic sermocinationi plura inseri; ne forte despectui habeantur margarite christi".³⁷ There are several conflicting points to be considered here. Aelfric's awareness of language makes him feel compelled to upgrade the Anglo-Saxon to help it meet the status of the source language but he is also concerned about target language accessibility. He translates "simplici et aperta locutione quatinus proficiat audientibus".³⁸ There is a sense in which the use of simple language simplifies the content of a text to an

unacceptable level in the same way that overcomplicated language can obscure meaning to an unacceptable level. The use of rhythmic prose is Aelfric's way of overcoming the loss of status problem without making the language too difficult. He does not want the status of the sacred word to be in any way diminished, nor does he feel comfortable about a proliferation of religious writing in English for similar reasons. There is also the question of those mysteries which remain beyond human understanding, subtle points "quae non conveniunt aperiri laicis, nec nos ipse ea quimus implere".³⁹ He thinks it inappropriate to burden the laity with difficulties of interpretation which have yet to be solved by the experts.

All these considerations serve to make Aelfric both a cautious pioneer in the field of Scriptural translation and a careful translator. He has already experienced Jerome's problem, "nec potuimus in ista translatione semper verbum ex verbo transferre"⁴⁰ and so has tried to translate sense for sense. Again he is on difficult ground, for what seems to be a reasonable theory of translation in most situations is not always an easy course when dealing with religious literature. Translating sense for sense implies interpretation on the part of the translator, a kind of intervention between the source text and the reader which in the area of Biblical translation can be viewed

as a diversion of the Divine Inspiration, a changing of the Word. The heavy responsibility of such work was not to be undertaken lightly, and Aelfric realised this and voiced his misgivings in the Latin preface to his translation of the *Lives of Saints* already quoted as well as in the Anglo-Saxon Preface to his translation of Genesis. It is an interesting point that the debate of 1401 against Bible translation echoed many of his feelings, but for very different political motives and in a very different religious context.

In spite of his caution, Aelfric translated Genesis as far as the story of Isaac and does not seem to have been the only person involved in Scriptural translation "for þam þe sum oder man þe haefde awend fram Isaace þa boc op ende".⁴¹ What worries him most about translating the Old Testament is that "sum dysig man"⁴² might take it literally and not realise the spiritual and allegorical meanings that may not be evident in the "nacedan gerecednisse".⁴³ It was this idea of the "naked text" that the medieval church found so difficult to come to terms with in later translation attempts. Although Aelfric's Genesis is "a clear and literal rendering of the first twenty-four chapters",⁴⁴ most of the rest of his work consists of homilies and paraphrases which avoid the problem of direct translation and include the necessary exegetical material

for orthodox interpretation.

Towards the end of the *Preface to Genesis* Aelfric expresses the Scriptural translator's dilemma:

heo is swa geendebyrd swa swa God sylf hi gedihte
 ðam writere Moyse, we ne durron na mare awritan on
 Englisc þonne ðæt Leden hæfd, ne ða endebyrdnyse
 awendan, buton ðam anum, ðæt ðæt Leden & ðæt
 Englisc nabbað na ane wisan on ðaere spraece
 fandunge.....⁴⁵

God is the author of the passage, he dictated it to Moses, therefore Aelfric dare not add to it or change the order of words except where it is absolutely necessary. This may make for a restricted and oddly phrased translation but absolves the translator from any charges of unorthodoxy. Nevertheless Aelfric is concerned for his readers and goes on to say that anyone who teaches or translates from Latin to English must always keep to the natural order of English "elles hit bid swyde gedwolsum to raedenne ðam ðe ðæs Ledenes wise ne can".⁴⁶

In Aelfric's work in the field of Bible translation there is a definite progression from the idea of making the text accessible in Anglo-Saxon, as the glosses did, to making it into an Anglo-Saxon text. Aelfric experienced all the problems of a translator looking for the best way to express a text into a different target culture and language as well as all the restrictions he felt obliged to observe

because of the sacred nature of the material. It is hardly surprising that like Jerome he felt reluctant to undertake the venture and was relieved to be able to stop. "Ic cwede nu ðæt ic ne dearr ne ic nelle nane boc aefter ðisre of Ledene on Englisc awendan", he tells Aethelwerd at the end of the preface, "& ic bidde de, leof ealdormann, ðæt ðu me ðaes na leng me bidde".⁴⁷

Recorded evidence of activity in the field of Bible translation is sporadic and fragmented in this early period of English development, and at first glance reveals little structure or pattern which could be said to constitute a significant movement towards an English Bible. Taking the evidence in the context of Englishing the text, however, and giving full consideration to the oral tradition, which although more difficult to substantiate, remains crucial to the position of the vernacular, it is easier to define the processes which were at work. The Scriptures arrived with and maintained a centrality unrivalled by any other text. Their status and the status of the language which conveyed their message was at first unmatched by the vernacular but gradually Anglo-Saxon prose grew in stature through writers like Alfred and Aelfric until it became a competent vehicle for philosophy and theology.

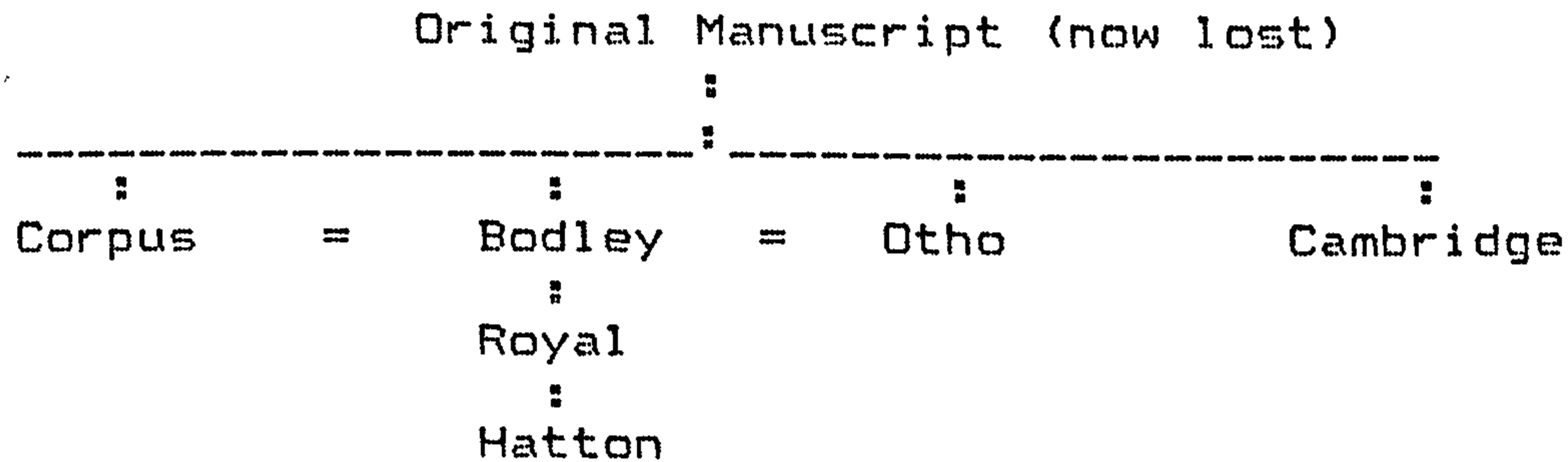
From the introduction of the text into England there

was vernacular activity surrounding the teaching and preaching of its content. Stories from it were soon assimilated into the oral poetic tradition, the characters made into Germanic heroes and Christianity given traditional Anglo-Saxon poetic form. The Bible and the vernacular were far more closely linked than is generally recognised but in a mainly oral context. The oral tradition took on the relative stability of the written text only in the tenth and eleventh centuries when literature which had been in circulation for years began to find expression in a written form. The process of Englishing the Bible began with Bede and Caedmon and progressed through Alfred and Aelfric. Indirect translations in the form of paraphrases and poems did not present any doctrinal or status difficulties. Glossing was not a problem because the source text remained the primary source of reference. The main difficulty lay, as Aelfric found, in the production of an English source text, a "naked text", the unsupported direct translation with no commentary, no alternative readings. Aelfric was aware of the need for a workable theory of translation which would not conflict with the restrictions imposed by the status and authority of the source text. The practicalities of direct translation were fraught with difficulties that would take centuries to overcome; nevertheless the process of Englishing had begun.

References to Chapter Three

1. Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York and London: New York University Press 1986 edition) p.6, describe the young novice's initiation into the monastery at the age of seven and outline the things he would have been taught to enable him to join in the Divine Office. The Psalms had to be learned by heart; "His teacher would have aided memorization by means of literal explanations: hence, presumably the complete Old English interlinear glosses of Latin texts in many Anglo-Saxon psalters."
2. Minnie Cate Morrell *A Manual of Old English Biblical Materials* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press 1965) p. 132 quotes Sweet's date; "first half of the eighth century, or possibly earlier." from *The Oldest English Texts EETS* (London: Oxford University Press 1885) p.122
3. Morrell p.51
4. Morrell p.51
5. David Fowler *The Bible in Early English Literature* (London: Sheldon Press 1977) p.89
6. Janet Backhouse *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (Oxford: Phaidon Press 1981) p.17
7. Morrell p.161
8. Morrell p.176 tells us that "the manuscript was executed by a scribe named MacRegol, whose name appears on the last page", who has been identified with Birr in Queen's County, Ireland.
9. Morrell in a note to p.177 names Murray and Skeat in favour of this theory.
10. Peter Clemoes in his article "Late Old English Literature" in *Tenth Century Studies* edited by David Parsons (London: Phillimore 1975) p.103 - 104 reminds us of "the dangers of drawing conclusions from negative evidence when we remember that this great poem (The Battle of Maldon) has survived only because the solitary, imperfect manuscript to outlive the Middle Ages had been copied in the early eighteenth century before it was destroyed by fire in 1731: circumstances such as these should remind us vividly on what slender chances our knowledge depends."
11. Morrell p.177
12. Morrell p. 175 note 2 "The text of Rushworth is not so close to the Vulgate as that of Lindisfarne".
13. Morrell p. 86 note 3 quotes Kerr's catalogue p.11
14. Morrell p.112

15. Morrell p.186 reproduces Skeat's pedigree.



16. Morrell p.186
17. Morrell p.185
18. *The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels* edited by Joseph Bosworth (London: Reeves & Turner 1888) p.96, 26, 292, 16 respectively.
19. The opening words of St. John's Gospel, Bosworth p.441
20. Matthew 27.46 "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Bosworth p.156
21. Matthew 6.9 "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name" Bosworth p. 24
22. Greenfield and Calder quote the description of the vision of St. Paul from the Homily on the Dedication of St. Martin's church as being "remarkably similar to the description of the haunted mere in Beowulf." p.73
23. *The Blickling Homilies* edited by R. Morris EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1963) p.119
24. Greenfield and Calder p.71
25. *The Blickling Homilies* p.119
26. *The Blickling Homilies* p.213
27. Greenfield and Calder p.95
28. *Old English Verse and Prose* selected by Roger Fowler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1966) p.39, p.41
29. *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* edited by Charles G. Herberman 16 vols (New York: Encyclopaedia Press 1907) vol 1 p.171
30. Peter Clemoes "Late Old English Literature" in *Tenth Century Studies* edited by David Parsons (London: Phillimore 1985) p.111
31. Swanton p.319
32. Ian Gordon *The Movement of English Prose* (London: Longman 1966) p.43
33. *The Homilies of Aelfric* edited by J.C. Pope EETS 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press 1967) vol 1 p.105
34. David Fowler p. 149

35. The Preface to *Aelfric's Lives of Saints* edited and translated by Walter W. Skeat 2 vols EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1881) vol 1 p.2 "into the usual English speech"
36. Preface to *Lives of Saints* p.2 "either by reading or hearing it read"
37. Preface to *Lives of Saints* p.2 "I do not promise however to write very many in this tongue because it is not fitting that many should be translated into our language lest peradventure the pearls of Christ be had in disrespect."
38. Preface to *Lives of Saints* p.4 "by means of such simple and obvious language as may profit those that hear it."
39. Preface to *Lives of Saints* p.2 "...which ought not to be laid open to the laity; nor indeed are we ourselves quite able to fathom them."
40. Preface to *Lives of Saints* p.4 "Nor am I able, in this translation, to render everything word for word"
41. Aelfric's "Preface to Genesis" in *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch, Aelfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament and his Preface to Genesis* edited by S.J. Crawford EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1922,1966) p.76 "for some other man has translated from Isaac to the end of the book" translation David Fowler p.99
42. Preface to Genesis p.76 "some foolish man"
43. Preface to Genesis p.77 "naked text"
44. David Fowler p. 102
45. Preface to Genesis p.79 "it is ordered just as God dictated it to the writer Moses; and we dare write no more in English than the Latin has, nor change the order except only when the Latin and English do not agree in linguistic expression." translation David Fowler p.101
46. Preface to Genesis p.79-80 "or else it will be very misleading to read for anyone who does not know the order of Latin." translation David Fowler p.101
47. Preface to Genesis p.80 "I say now that I dare not and I will not turn any book after this from Latin into English and I bid thee dear alderman not to ask me to any longer." translation David Fowler p.102

Chapter FourTHE CONTINUITY OF ENGLISH RELIGIOUS PROSE
DURING AND AFTER THE CONQUEST.

The capacity of the English language to accommodate the written Scriptures was always dependant upon the development of the vernacular and upon the continuing tradition of religious prose writing. It is evident even from the restricted information available that in Anglo-Saxon times the work of Bede, Caedmon, Cynewulf, Alfred, Aelfric, Wulfstan and other anonymous contributors resulted in the establishment of a vernacular written tradition of religious texts.¹ This tradition was not lost during the years of the Conquest, but continued and flourished quietly, strengthened and enriched later by interchange with French texts. By the fourteenth century this tradition of religious writing with its heavy dependance on the Scriptures for material and the frequent use of Biblical quotations as authority for the content was very much a part of vernacular literature. It is arguable that a complete Scriptural translation was always going to be a natural progression from what had gone before. The Wycliffite Bible did not so much make "a dramatic appearance, like a mountain among foothills",² but was

rather a gathering, in a presentation out of kilter with contemporary literary trends, of already available material. The controversy it caused has altered the perspective of its place in the development of Scriptural translation. The Wycliffite version has been since acclaimed as an exercise in making the Bible accessible, but in fact the content of the text was not altogether inaccessible. The contemporary controversy was a result of the presentation of that content as a political statement about authority; as a challenge to what stood for that authority.

Until R. W. Chambers argued in his early twentieth century introduction to Harpsfield's *Life of More* for the continuity of English prose,³ the Anglo-Saxon era had been considered as a separate and unconnected period of development, and the Conquest as a non-productive period in vernacular literature. Chambers quotes Mackintosh's declaration that Thomas More is "the father of English prose";⁴ George Krapp's assessment that "if English Prose must have a father, no-one is so worthy of the title of respect as Wiclif",⁵ and follows with his own view that "if English prose has any known father, that father is Aelfred Aethelwulfing",⁶ There are two interesting points which arise out of these observations. The first is the need felt to give the entire credit for the begetting of English

prose to one individual, and the other is the desire to discover a definitive point at which English prose began, when it is quite possible that one does not exist. What was not taken into account is the fact that literature had evolved, like language, over generations and that generations had taken part in its evolution. Thomas More may have shaped and extended the boundaries of English prose but he did not invent it singlehandedly any more than Wyclif or Alfred did. This need to define and categorise literary trends, coupled with the polemics of the Reformation and the retrospective selection of evidence to support a particular religious position, has distorted the overall picture and resulted in a misrepresentation which "has obscured the whole history of English prose".⁷

Changes in the language have been a major factor in fragmenting the historical perspective of the progress of the vernacular. There are several surveys of English literature which take as their starting place the point at which the language is beginning to be accessible to the modern reader.⁸ The impression that little of merit or consequence was produced until the fifteenth century has clouded the idea of a continuous evolutionary process at work with regard to vernacular literature in general and Scriptural translation in particular. The reality of the

progress of the vernacular and of Biblical translation is rather different from the common perception.

As a result of the Conquest a whole upper layer of English society became French speaking. French was inserted into the language hierarchy, Latin was re-inforced as the unopposed main scholarly language and English placed in a position of competition with French. An eleventh century poem from the *Worcester Fragments* laments the loss of the great English teachers and the secondary nature of the language's contemporary position:

Deos laerden ure leodan on Englisc,
 Naes deorc heore liht, ac hit faeire glod.
 Nu is þeo leore forleten, and þet folc is forloren.
 Nu beoþ oþre leoden þeo laereþ ure folc.⁹

At the beginning of the twelfth century William of Malmesbury was using Latin to give his impression of the state of England at the time. According to him, there was hardly an Englishman left in the positions of authority and the country was being plundered by strangers:

"Nullus hodie Anglus, vel dux, vel pontifex, vel abbas; advenae quique divitias et viscera corrodunt Angliae; nec ulla spes est finiendae miseriae. Cuius mali causam tempus est, sicut dudum spopondi, ut sermo noster paucis absolvere temptet".¹⁰

The English language was in any case in a state of flux; Anglo-Saxon was becoming archaic and the attempt to

preserve it by nationalist writers was never a serious threat to the changes that were emerging.¹¹ Dialects were diversifying written English to the extent that there no longer existed a single literary vernacular. In spite of these conditions, there is sufficient evidence to justify the thesis that the use of English for religious prose was indeed continuous and progressive, and that religious narrative prose made the transition from Anglo-Saxon more easily than other literary forms like the epic poem by retaining some Anglo-Saxon characteristics and carrying them over into the next generation of vernacular religious tradition. Religious language in any case tends towards the archaic as present-day hymns witness and is always behind contemporary literary usage (the second person singular form "thou" now exists only in prayers and hymns and among certain religious communities who have deliberately preserved it). At the time of the Conquest religious language remained static in the familiar tradition and was slow to reflect the linguistic changes.

During and after the Conquest the monasteries continued to produce scholarly work in Latin and added French where their abbots were replaced by Frenchmen. The attempt at Worcester and Rochester monasteries to promote Anglo-Saxon was shortlived; nevertheless the copying in English of manuscripts of Homilies, Psalters and the

Anglo-Saxon Gospels was continued into the twelfth century. The Royal and Hatton Gospel Manuscripts were copied in the twelfth century, and the Bosworth Psalter was altered from the Roman version to the Gallican version "by twelfth and thirteenth century hands".¹² This indicates that the earlier vernacular works were still in active use and being preserved for further use. It also confirms that linguistic change was neither so sudden nor so swift as to warrant the separation of the Anglo-Saxon texts from the vernacular literature which came after.¹³

There was continuity also in the tradition of religious legends and poems which did not come to be written down until they had enjoyed many centuries of circulation as spoken literature. The most spectacular example is the story which started life in English as the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Dream of the Rood*. Twelve lines of this poem are inscribed in runic characters on the Ruthwell Cross in Scotland, which is dated 750.¹⁴ The complete poem was being copied, from an earlier written version now lost, as *The History of the Holy Rood Tree* in the twelfth century. It reappears c.1300 incorporated into the *Cursor Mundi* and was subsequently reworked and recopied in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁵ Embedded in the vernacular tradition, this poem illustrates how strong that tradition was even in the face of an evolving

language.

The continuity of the use of English was maintained during and after the Conquest in the speech of the majority of the population. French was spoken at Court and among the nobles, but "there is no explicit evidence that the Norman Conquest caused French to become an alternative to English as the mother tongue of the mass of the people".¹⁶ In fact, given the feelings of resentment engendered by invasion and conquest as already demonstrated in the quote from the Worcester Fragment and the chronicle of William of Malmesbury, it is more likely that conditions favoured the flourishing of the native language. An extract from the chronicle of Robert of Gloucester describes how French had entered into the upper echelons of society but English survived among the ordinary people:

Ac lowe men holdeþ to Engliss, and to hor
owe speche yute. Ich wene þer ne beþ in al
þe world contreyes none þat ne holdeþ to
hor owe speche, bote Engeland one.¹⁷

The main means of oral communication was still English, and this meant that the church continued to preach to the majority of the people in the vernacular. The chronicles also continued for a while in English, in the Peterborough manuscript until as late as 1154,¹⁸ demonstrating that the use of the vernacular for historical

prose was by no means suddenly abandoned. When Wulfstan, abbot of Worcester, died in 1095, his biography was written in English by Colman his chaplain who was also responsible for a vernacular biography of Gregory the Great. English was an unusual choice of language for biographies, particularly those of religious figures, and showed that a positive approach towards vernacular literary prose was still in evidence at the beginning of the twelfth century. Both books were translated into Latin by William of Malmesbury, and only the Latin of Wulfstan's Life has survived;¹⁹ the English was lost when it was sent to Rome as part of the support for Wulfstan's beatification. Eventually the English chronicles ceased because of the rapidly changing language, but the written Homiletic tradition identifiable in Colman's work continued unbroken, albeit in more than one dialect, throughout the Conquest and after. "Even when the old literary dialect has been lost, the homiletic prose continues; though the medium changes there is no break in the tradition itself".²⁰

Many of the twelfth and thirteenth century Homilies²¹ which have been preserved in manuscript form are copies of earlier versions modernised by the scribe or scribes as they copied. Consequently the accurate dating of these works is almost impossible, but the fact that they were in use and were reworked, extended and grouped in different

compilations is sufficient to show the continuation of the tradition. The Homilies vary in their style, their use of Scripture and the extent to which Latin is quoted as authority for the content. The Homily for the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost²² in Richard Morris's collection is a retelling of the Parable of the lost sheep from the Gospel of Luke, the beginning of chapter fifteen. The writer indicates this at the beginning of the Homily by the words "Erant appropinquantes, et cetera" and then continues entirely in Old English, keeping so close to the original story that the homily is in effect a translation into Anglo-Saxon from Latin.

After the opening quote in Latin and a further authentication "þæt hali godspell us seid..." the writer keeps phrase for phrase to his source, the Vulgate version, extending only when he felt clarification was needed. For example "ut audirent illum" in the Vulgate becomes "wolden his lare gehiran" and "si perdirent unam ex illis" becomes "Gif he forlist an para sceape". The economy and subtlety of the Latin syntax makes the insertion of "his lare" and the repetition of "sceape" desirable in order to make the meaning absolutely clear. Verse five, "et quum invenerit eam, imponit in humeros suos gaudens" is rendered "Gif he hit þan gemet he hit berd an his eaxlum to þara eowde oder falde blissiende". The insertion of "to þara eowde oder

falde" makes clear what is happening and lays the stress on the homecoming of the lost soul in a way which the Latin does not. These, however are very minor shifts of emphasis in what is essentially a straightforward translation, though not announced as such. At the end of the parable, the words of Jesus summing up the significance of the story read as if they are the writer's own words: "Ich sege eow þat mare blisse biþ an hefene be anun synfulle man gif he his synnen mid dedbote bereused þan him si be nigon and hund negontie rihtwisen þe ne beofiad nanre ded bote." The writer, having set out presumably to write a homily in the vernacular, has allowed the words of the Gospel to speak for themselves and produced instead a translation. It is not taken from the Anglo-Saxon Gospels which were in circulation from the tenth century, although there are naturally similarities; it is a twelfth century Englishing of part of Luke's Gospel.

In contrast, the sermon on the Lord's Day *In Die Dominica* is full of quotes in Latin, yet not always from the Scriptures. The writer, relying heavily perhaps on a Latin original, uses Latin to lend authority to what he is saying and cleverly extends that authority to cover points of his own which are not directly from the Scriptures. The Homily opens with a Latin quote expanded into Old English.

Then follow several quotes which are directly translated into the vernacular: "fiat lux et facta est lux. Beo liht and hit wes liht. Ex hac enim die relique dies sumpserunt exordium. Of þisse dei nomen alle oder heore biginninge." The following quote, however, is extended in the translation to suit the purpose of the writer. "Dies in qua convenit plebs ad ecclesiam ad predicandum et celebrandum" is expounded as "Sunne dei ah efri cristen mon nomeliche to chirche cum þe ahte for to techen þe folke godes hesne to done. þe lewede godes hesne for to heren and hom to gode bidden".²³ There is constant use of the phrase "in die dominica" which is late Latin dating from the fourth century,²⁴ and in a Scriptural context is an anachronism, since the Gospels have the Jewish Sabbath as their point of reference. Here we have an example of a use of Latin which does not confirm the authority of the argument by quoting the Scriptural source, but which merely by its presence lends status to the vernacular and authority to the substance of the text.

One of the most famous vernacular pieces of the early twelfth century is *Sawles Ward* or *The Soul's Keeping*, an extended sermon on the text of Luke 12:39. The text is quoted in Latin at the beginning of the sermon but there are not many Latin references in the main body of the work. The sermon differs from the usual Homily in its length, its

vivid descriptive passages and in the personification of certain elements of the argument; Wit, Prudence, Spiritual Strength, Moderation, Righteousness, Fear and Love of Life. It also continues the tradition of rhythmic and alliterative prose begun by Aelfric and Wulfstan while anticipating the allegorical style of John Bunyan in the seventeenth century. The description of Hell is not directly from Scripture but from the medieval mind, written in the style of Revelation:²⁵ " þe lade helle wurmes tadden ant froggen þe freotep ham ut te ehnen, ant te nease, gristles, ant sniked in, ant ut neddren, ant eauraskes, nawt ilich þeose her ah hundert siþe grisluke et mud".²⁶ The tone is formal but accessible, the language vivid but tries to relate to things within the reader's experience; the adders and water frogs for example, are "not like these here, but a hundred times more horrible."

Sawles Warde shares a number of features with other vernacular writings which were also products of a late twelfth century religious revival²⁷. The Lives of St. Katharine, St. Margaret and St. Juliana, the *Ancrene Riwe* and *Hali Meidenhad* or *Meidhad* known collectively as the Katharine Group, are written like parts of *Sawles Warde*, "in a rhythmical prose, much like the rhythmical alliterative prose used by Aelfric".²⁸ They also exhibit elements of mysticism inspired by the study of the Song of

Solomon, or Song of Songs as it is sometimes known, in the Old Testament. The idea of mystic union with Christ as expressed in the Song of Songs was introduced into the vernacular by way of the Latin works of St. Anselm, St. Bernard, Hugo of St. Victor and Richard of St. Victor, all of whom were writing in the twelfth century.²⁹ Before this breakthrough the erotic language in the Song of Songs had presented a problem of interpretation which until it was solved made a sustainable translation of this part of the text very difficult. The Katharine Group introduced the mystical vocabulary into the vernacular and through the popularity of the texts the tradition of lyrical meditations was extended.

Four shorter pieces *þe Wohnung of Ure Lauerd*, *On Dreison of Ure Louerde*, *On Lofsong of Ure Louerde*, and *On Lofsong of Ure Lefdi*, written at about the same time, exhibit similar mystic language. They are known collectively as the Wooing Group and are all lyrical meditations for use in prayer. *þe Wohnung of Ure Lauerd*, for example, a celebration of Christ's love, begins "Ihesu swete Ihesu, midrud, mi derling, mi drihtin, mi healand, mi huniter, mihaliwei. Sweter is munegunge of þe þen milden o mude".³⁰ The subject and style are repeated in the opening of *On Dreison of Ure Louerde*³¹ and are later to be found in the fourteenth century writings of Richard Rolle.³² This is

language inspired by the Song of Songs, "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue",³³ from which the mystical poetry of Donne and Herbert in the seventeenth century also took its inspiration. Meditation for private prayer found a natural medium in the vernacular since Latin was more formal and less spontaneous. Rolle chose to write sermons and treatises in Latin and meditations and poems in English. Julian of Norwich, a fourteenth century anchoress, wrote an account of her mystical experiences *Revelations of Divine Love*³⁴ in English, and found the language capable of sustaining not only the mystic images of her "showings" as she called them, but also the philosophical analysis of their meaning. The early Middle English mystical writings were the beginning of a vernacular tradition which explored and extended the language to the point where the poetry, theology and erotic mysticism of the Song of Songs could be accommodated.

The similarity of the content and style of the Katharine Group has led to the theory that a single author may have been responsible for all five works, but as evidence is inconclusive the idea must remain a theory.³⁵ The texts were all written with the same readership in mind, namely educated women who did not read Latin. The Saints' Lives were to provide inspiration and example; the

Ancrene Riwe was a set of rules written originally for three sisters who wished to live as anchoresses but was revised c1230 as *Ancrene Wisse* for a larger community of women; *Hali Meidhad*, the only one of the group which has no extant Latin original, was "propaganda for the various nunneries",³⁶ continuing the theme of the virtue of giving up worldly pleasures in order to be closer to God. Although based on Latin texts, the works were written in the vernacular religious tradition. The Life of St. Maragaret, *Seinte Marherete* is "not so much a translation as a free adaptation of its Latin original"³⁷ and in its vivid descriptions is "far superior". The adaptor(s) of this and the other Lives is freed from the restriction of the source text "by the fact that he is using a prose which has behind it a long literary history. He is no innovator self-consciously using a new medium for the edification of the ignorant, but the inheritor of a prose tradition which goes back to pre-Conquest times".³⁸

Although the Katharine group was written for a fairly restricted audience, the writer(s) seemed to be aware of a wider application of the text. The Life of St. Juliana was written for "Alle leawede men þe understonden ne mahen latines ledene".³⁹ The writer of St. Margaret's Life makes a scriptural appeal: "Hercneþ alle þe earen + herunge habbad".⁴⁰ The popularity of the texts probably lay as much

in their entertainment value as in their didactic purpose. They may not retain the same appeal today, but in medieval times the drama of, for example, St. Margaret's struggle with evil, her triumph over the devil, her torture, martyrdom and passage to heaven in the hands of the angels provided an adventure story unparalleled in contemporary literature which could be safely read for moral edification and provided "the authentic *frisson* that Gothic novels later developed".⁴¹

Hali Meidhad's aim is to exalt and encourage virginity for Christ's sake; to promote the mystical union with Christ as a desirable alternative to marriage. It is addressed to women, and uses as part of its argument unfavourable descriptions of the married state with the emphasis on the possible trials and difficulties rather than on any positive aspect. It draws on several patristic writings on virginity which were common sources in medieval works on the subject. The structure of the piece is homiletic and the tone persuasive and forceful: the authority for the content of the text is taken from both the Old and New Testament.

The treatise opens with a Latin quote from Psalm 45, "Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui"⁴² which the

writer proceeds to expound in close detail. He then turns to the New Testament to reinforce the argument, translating as he goes. "Non omnes capiunt verbum istud. Ne underneomed nawt quod he, þis ilke word alle. Qui potest capere, capiat. Hwa se hit mei underneomen, underneome."⁴³ Conscious of the importance of the authority of his source, the author is often quite deliberate in his translation, for example when he cites part of St. Paul's Epistle on marriage he is careful to draw the reader's attention to the fact that the translation is direct: "Seinte Pawel biluked in ane lut wordes: Tribulationes carnis et cetera: þæt is in Englisch, þeo þæt pulliche beod schulen derf drehen".⁴⁴ Ironically he quotes only two words of the actual passage to which he is referring, the "et cetera" accounts for the rest. Scriptural quotes are usually only given a short Latin tag, as in the Homilies, either because the audience is so familiar with the text that the words are immediately recognisable or, more likely, because they have no Latin and therefore a few Latin words are sufficient to indicate that the source has a Latin original and therefore the required status of authority. The writer of *Hali Meidhad* selects those quotes which will support the theme; the dreariest possible picture of married life is depicted and all possible persuasive skills employed to further the "propaganda exercise". The argument is not given its full context either in the words of the psalm,

which ironically is thought by modern biblical scholars to have been written to celebrate a marriage, or in St. Paul's discussion of marriage in Corinthians chapter seven, which is far less one-sided. *Hali Meidhad* is interesting as a demonstration of how the selective use of Scriptural quotes can be used to further a particular point of view. It is not difficult to imagine a context in which those espousing a different opinion might make use of a complete vernacular text of the Scriptures to present another side to the argument.

The last text in the Katherine Group, *Ancrene Riwe*, is connected in style and language to the others. Its popularity seems to have been greater if the number of copies and translations is taken into account, as well as the way in which it was carefully re-read and corrected in succeeding centuries.⁴⁵ The work is a set of rules requested from the writer in the same way that English Scriptures were requested from Aelfric in earlier times. The opening remarks of the author echo Aelfric's letter to Sigweard:⁴⁶ "Ant ye mine leove sustren habbed moni dei icravet on me after riwe".⁴⁷ The rules provided are part homily, part meditation, part practicalities. They cover the details of the daily life of an anchoress and give glimpses of the problems of medieval life, using the Scriptures and the writings of St. Bernard and St. Anselm

as a basis for the teaching. Some idea of the importance of the work can be gathered from the fact that the English original was translated into French and Latin when the usual direction of linguistic movement was from French and Latin into English.

Vernacular writing in France was strong, and in the early part of the thirteenth century sermons written in French, probably by the Bishop of Paris, Maurice de Sully, were being translated into the Kentish dialect. There also appeared the first of many English versions of a French treatise called *Somme des Vices et des Vertues* written by Friar Lorens in 1279. *Vices and Virtues*⁴⁸ begins as a detailed account of the individual vices and virtues and turns into a dialogue between the Soul, the Body and Reason. The author makes frequent use of Latin quotes and translations as well as patristic writing to support his evidence. He quotes St. Jerome,⁴⁹ St. Augustine⁵⁰ and "hali write" regularly. The use of the dialogue as the vehicle for instruction anticipates Rolle, Trevisa and More in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the use of personification of various elements of the argument emerges later in seventeenth century literature.

There were several strands to the vernacular religious literature of the thirteenth century. The copying of

earlier important texts was a major aspect of the continuing and developing of the Homiletic tradition. The Homilies depended heavily on the Scriptures for material and authority; the Scriptures also formed the basis of the mystic writings which expanded into lyrical meditations and prayers. Familiarity with the Bible was a prerequisite of both speaker/writer and listener/reader, and for those who were unable to read Latin the knowledge of Scriptures had to be gained second hand from Scripture based texts. The connection between the Scriptures and vernacular writing was established with Alfred and Aelfric, continued through the years of Conquest and expanded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when English regained its status. The Lives of the Saints provided example and encouragement as they had in Anglo-Saxon times: the Lives of Christ based on the Gospels were an extension of this tradition. Instructional literature providing a guide for living was also Scripture based, and through church reforms was to become a specialised genre providing the illiterate (that is, those unable to read Latin) clergy with a key to the Latin liturgy and theology.

Besides the extensive secondary use of vernacular Scriptures through homilies, meditations and commentaries, there were also verse translations of parts of the Old and New Testament. The earliest of these was the *Ormulum*, a

verse translation of the Sunday Gospels arranged as a Gospel Harmony. It was written about 1200 by an Augustinian called Orm and has not been afforded a great deal of status in the history of Bible translation probably because it survives only in a single manuscript.⁵¹ A much later Gospel Harmony, of the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century, found in the Pepyes manuscript of Magdalen College Cambridge,⁵² was not even recognised as such until the beginning of the twentieth century. So well established are the credentials of the Wycliffite Bible that earlier partial translations, Scripture related texts, metrical versions or secondary vernacular sources of the Bible have not been fully valued for their contribution to the Englishing process.

Genesis and Exodus, a mid-thirteenth century metrical version in rhyming couplets, covers Genesis, Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It relies mainly on Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* as its source⁵³ and embellishes some of the Old Testament stories with anecdotal details. A contemporary shorter poem also has the Old Testament as its source. *Jacob and Joseph*, a minstrel-like retelling of the story of Joseph in Genesis differs in some points of detail from the original but in general is a paraphrase of the Bible story. At the end of the thirteenth century the enormous *Cursor Mundi* or *Pe*

*Cours of þe Werlde*⁴ appeared. This too was a metrical version in rhyming couplets, this time of the complete Bible; thirty thousand lines of Biblical narrative combined with legends. It begins with the seven ages of the Creation, ends with the coming of the Kingdom and includes traditional medieval expansion of Bible related material as well as practical "details". The legend of the Holy Rood is woven into the story at appropriate points, together with attempts to quantify in human terms by using popular medieval numbers, the vision of the after-life. It takes, we are told, seven thousand seven hundred years to travel from Heaven to Hell at a rate of forty miles per day:

..... fro erþe to heuen
 Is seven þousand year & hundrides seven
 Bi iornees who so go hit may
 Forty myle eueryche day.⁵⁵

This version of the Bible is a product of the medieval mind in so many ways. The use of verse as the medium of conveyance facilitates the type of activities most often employed at the time, learning by heart, reciting and reading aloud. The stories and legends are recounted in a familiar style with all the traditional miraculous accompaniments and the authentication of considerable background information coupled with a source of high status, the Bible. The thirteenth century was also important for Church reforms which were destined to generate vernacular instructional literature not intended

primarily for use by the laity but by a certain section of the clergy. Poorly educated, sometimes illiterate priests as well as absentee clergy were a considerable worry to the Church, and several measures were taken to try and re-establish the teaching requirement of the priest's function and at the same time improve the standard of learning of the parish priest. Insisting that the incumbent of a living preached at least four times a year to his people also had the added advantage of ensuring his presence in his parish rather than elsewhere, at least at the major feasts of the Church. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 made yearly confession compulsory for the faithful: this idea was re-inforced by Robert Grosseteste's Constitutions in the mid thirteenth century and Archbishop Peckham's Constitutions of Lambeth in 1281, which "remained the basis of all future legislation on the subject until the Reformation".⁵⁴ The result was a whole genre of penitential and instructional vernacular literature, much of it translated from the French, over the next two centuries.

Grosseteste's Constitutions required the parish priest to fulfill certain obligations towards his people. Briefly these were: to know and frequently expound the Ten Commandments; to recite the Divine Office; to read and understand the Scriptures well enough to give answers to those who require them; to visit and administer the

Sacraments to the sick; to instruct and examine children and adults in the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Creed, and the Sign of the Cross; to understand the main points of the Faith as expressed in the Creed and the Quicumque vult.⁵⁷ The basic nature of the standard required gives us some idea of the level at which a number of the Parish priests were functioning, and the fact that the Constitutions were reiterated some forty years later shows that the problem was not quickly solved. The Scriptures, or at least the relevant parts of the Scriptures, needed to be available in a simplified form for the benefit of the less well-educated clergy.

Since priests who did not know the ten commandments were unlikely to read Latin or French, the handbooks produced to help them were necessarily in English. Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne*, a translation of the *Manuel des Pechiez*, was one of the earliest such texts to appear, in 1303. Around 1340, Dan Michel translated or copied a translation of the French *Somme des Vices et des Vertues*.⁵⁸ He called it *Agenbite of Inwit*, that is, the Prick of Conscience, and in the medieval tradition did not feel it necessary to disclose his source text, although he clearly outlines his purpose in writing it:

þis boc is ywrite
 vor englisse men, þet hi wyte
 hou hi ssolle ham-zelue ssrive
 and maki ham klene ine þis live⁵⁹

The book covers the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly sins and the twelve articles of the Creed; it discusses good and evil, vices and virtues and is a handbook for living in much the same way as the *Ancrene Riwe* was a guide to the enclosed way of life, although it does not share the earlier text's charm. Dan Michel's work lists the pitfalls of life without suggesting pragmatic strategies but nevertheless "in its modest way synthesises classical and Christian morality much as Dante had done".⁴⁰ It is interesting for its exposition of the Lord's Prayer, as the Latin phrases are one by one explained rather than translated. This echoes the procedure of one of the twelfth century homilies on the Lord's Prayer⁴¹ and contrasts with the later fourteenth century *Lay Folks' Mass Book*⁴² and John Myrk's fifteenth century *Instructions for Parish Priests*,⁴³ both of which have a fairly close translation, in verse, of the same prayer. A reflection of the move away from commentary towards translation perhaps, or simply the result of the differing functions of the texts.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, English as a literary medium was gathering momentum. French political influence had ended in 1244 when it was forbidden to hold land in both England and France,⁴⁴ so that the only linguistic legacy of the Conquest was in the syntactical

influence on English prose and in the borrowings and translations of French texts which formed a significant part of the body of English literature. English was used as the official language in the Law Courts from 1362⁴⁵ and as a medium for teaching in the schools by 1385.⁴⁶ English Literature in one form or another was opening up to larger sections of the population. The Old English tradition of story-telling and singing was taken up by the minstrels' songs; the miracle plays had begun to grow out of the reciting of the church services for Easter and Christmas and although not yet written down were entertainment and a part of folk culture, not always appreciated by the clergy. Religious writing no longer monopolised the vernacular. There had already been secular poems of merit like *The owl and the Nightingale*; there were legends like *Havelock the Dane* or *King Horn* which continued the Old English saga tradition; and from the early fourteenth century romances like *King Alisaunder*, *Sir Orfeo* and *Sir Laudevale* abounded: competition for and distraction from the religious works. Devotional and instructional religious literature increased encouraged by the competition⁴⁷ and with the assurance of a wider audience. The mystical writings of Richard Rolle of Hampole (c1300-1348), Julian of Norwich (c1343-1416) and Margery Kempe (born c1373) were available in the vernacular and seem to have been popular, judging by the number of extant manuscripts. There were at least six translations or

partial translations of the psalms available in the fourteenth century, a stanzaic Life of Christ and a verse meditation on the Life and Passion of Christ as well as short pieces such as the often copied Maidstone Penitential Psalms.⁶⁸

The number of Psalters in various forms illustrates the proliferation of devotional texts in English and reflects the exegetical influence predominant in medieval translations. Richard Rolle's presentation of the psalms gives the Latin text first as the authority, the English text comes next as a direct translation and the line by line commentary completes the package. There are many fifteenth century copies extant.⁶⁹ The contemporary West Midlands Prose Psalter also demonstrates considerable exegetical influence in its translation, whereas the slightly earlier metrical Surtees Psalter flows less easily because of the need to be both literal and metrical. There are striking similarities between the wording of the Surtees Psalter and Richard Rolle's translation of the Psalms. This has led to speculation that both writers used the same Latin gloss.⁷⁰

All the activity in vernacular religious writing represented measurable progress towards an English capable of accommodating a vernacular Bible. The complete

Scriptures exhibit differing styles and forms; the collection of texts which constitutes the Bible includes many themes and comprises chronicles, histories, legends, homilies, mystical writings, songs, theological tracts, prophecies, proverbs and of course the Life of Christ. By the latter half of the fourteenth century, examples of all of these types of writing were available in the vernacular and many were partial Biblical translations in various forms. Why then was the Wycliffite translation received with such controversy? The political and religious struggle has been emphasised to the extent of obscuring all other issues. In order to see what place the first complete close translation of the Bible into English has in the process of Englishing the Bible we have, as well as keeping the political and religious perspective in view, to look more closely at the medieval tradition of exegesis and at the position of translation theory in the Middle Ages. And, most importantly in the context of Wyclif as a challenger of authority and the complete vernacular Bible as part of that challenge, we have to look at the medieval idea of *auctor* and *auctoritas*.

References to Chapter Four

1. The early oral tradition became a part of the later written one to the extent that poets like Caedmon have to be considered as having contributed to both.
2. David Fowler *The Bible in Early English Literature* (London: Sheldon Press 1977) p.148
3. R. W. Chambers "The Continuity of English Prose" in Nicholas Harpsfield's *Life of More* EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1963 edition)
4. Mackintosh's *Miscellaneous Works* vol 1 1846 pp 412-13 quoted by Chambers p.lii
5. George Krapp *The Rise of English Literary Prose* (New York: Ungar 1963 edition) pp vii-ix
6. Chambers p.lvi
7. Chambers p.cviii
8. Krapp's study begins with Wyclif in the fourteenth century; Alastair Fowler *A History of English Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell 1987) makes a brief mention of Beowulf and continues with the Middle English Ballads; Richard Jones *The Triumph of the English Language* (Stanford California: Stanford University Press 1953) begins in the fifteenth century.
9. "These men taught our people in English
And their light was not dim but shone brightly.
Now is their teaching abandoned and the people
deprived of it
Now there are others who teach our people.."
From the Worcester Fragments quoted in *Early Middle English Texts* edited by Dickens and Wilson (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes 1951) p.2 The translation is mine.
10. William of Malmesbury *Gesta Regum* vol 1 (London: Longman, Trubner 1870) p.278 translated in Dickens and Wilson p.2: "At the present time there is no Englishman who is either earl, bishop or abbot. Strangers prey upon the riches and vitals of England, nor is there any hope of an end to this misery."
11. Michael Clanchy *From Memory to Written Record* (London: Arnold 1979) p.166 relates that the Monasteries of Worcester and Rochester were "concerned to preserve a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon".
12. Minnie Kate Morrell *A Manual Of Old English Biblical Materials* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press 1965) p. 127
13. J. Bennet and E. Smithers in the introduction to *Early Middle English Verse and Prose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1968) p.xxi consider as a "fallacythe implicit or half-conscious assumption that there is such a thing as Middle English, isolable from Old English."

14. David Fowler p.124
15. *Legend(s) of The Holy Rood* edited by Richard Morris EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1871) contains eleventh, fourteenth and fifteenth century versions.
16. Clanchy p. 167
17. From the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester quoted in Dickens and Wilson p.14
18. Dickens and Wilson p.3
19. R.M. Wilson *Early Middle English Literature* (London: Methuen 1968 edition) p.113
20. R.M.Wilson p.108
21. *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* edited and translated by Richard Morris EETS First Series part 2 (London: Oxford University Press 1868)
22. Morris 1868 p.242
23. Morris 1868 p.139
24. Souter *A Glossary of Later Latin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1947) p.112
25. Book Of Revelation ch.9
26. Morris 1868 p.251
27. *Middle English Literature* edited by J.A.W. Bennett (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1986) p.275
28. R.M. Wilson p.123
29. Frances Mack discusses this in more detail in the introduction to *Seinte Marherete* EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1934, 1958 edition)
30. Morris 1868 p.268 "Jesu, sweet Jesu, my love, my darling, my Lord, my Saviour, my honey drop, my balm! Sweeter is the remembrance of thee than honey in the mouth."
31. Morris 1868 p.183
32. J.A.W. Bennett compares *þe Hohunge of Ure Lauerd* with the opening lines of Rolle's *Cantus Amoris*: "Jesu my dere and my drewry, delyte art thou to sing Jesu my myrth and melody, when wilt thou come, my King?" p.303
33. Song of Solomon 4:11 King James Bible
34. Julian of Norwich *Revelations of Divine Love* edited by Roger Huddleston (London: Burns Oates 1926)
35. This theory is discussed in more detail in the introduction to *þe Liſlade and Te Passiun of Seints Iulienne* edited by S.R.T.O. D'Ardenne EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1968) p.xli
36. R.M.Wilson p.121
37. Frances Mack p.xxix
38. R.M.Wilson p.118
39. S.R.T.O. d'Ardenne p.3 "for all unlearned men who cannot understand Latin".
40. Frances Mack p.4 Also Luke 8:8 "Listen all you who have ears to hear"
41. J.A.W. Bennett p.281

42. *Hali Meidhad* edited by Bella Millett EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1982) p.1
43. Bella Millett p.9
44. Bella Millett p.18
45. *Ancrene Wisse* edited by J. R. Tolkien EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1962) p.xvi section 5 and p.xviii section 6
46. Aelfric's "On the Old and New Testament" in *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch, Aelfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament and his Preface to Genesis* edited by S.J. Crawford EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1966 edition) p.16 "Thou hast oft entreated me for English Scripture..."
47. Tolkien p.5 "And you my beloved sisters have often asked me for a rule."
48. *Vices and Virtues* edited by F. Holthausen EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1888)
49. Holthausen p.120
50. Holthausen p.120 and p.122
51. For a detailed commentary on the *Ormulum* see J.A.W. Bennett p.30-33
52. This text was discovered in to be a medieval Gospel Harmony in 1902 by Miss A.C.Paues. *The Pepysian Gospel Harmony* edited by Margery Goates EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1922) p.xi
53. *The Bible in Early English Literature* by David Fowler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1977) p.127
54. *Cursor Mundi or þe Cours of þe Werlde* EETS vol 1 no date or place of publication in the text.
55. *Cursor Mundi* p.37
56. *Preaching in Medieval England* by G. R. Owst (New York: Russell and Russell 1965) p.145
57. *Robert Grosseteste* edited by D.A. Callus (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965) p.168 lists the Constitutions in more detail.
58. *Ayenbite of Inwit* edited by Pamela Gradon EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1979)
59. Pamela Gradon p.5
60. J.A.W. Bennett p.264
61. *Old English Homilies of the Twelfth Century* edited by A. O. Belfour EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1909) p.25
62. John de Thoresby *The Lay Folk's Mass Book* edited by T.F. Simmons EETS (London: Trubner & Co. 1879) The Lord's Prayer p.46
63. John Myrk *Instructions for Parish Priests* edited by Edward Peacock EETS (London: Trubner 1868) The Lord's Prayer p.13
64. Ian Gordon p.45
65. J.A.W. Bennett p.461

66. Ian Gordon p. 46 says that "Higden writing in Latin in about 1330 noted that in England French was the language of children's education. Trevisa, writing an English translation in 1385, is impelled to add a note that the situation is "somedel ychaunged": in all the grammar schools in England children are taught in English."
67. In the same manuscript as the *Pepysian Gospel Harmony* edited by Margery Goates is a piece written "to turn man from romance and gestes wherein he "leseþ mychel of his tyme". quoted from the above p.xi
68. *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500* by J. Burke Severs (Connecticut: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 1970) p.388
69. Severs p.386
70. Severs p.385

Chapter FiveAUCTORITAS, EXEGESIS AND MEDIEVAL TRANSLATION THEORY

Important in the overview of the position of the Bible in medieval England is the theory of authorship and authority as applied to the Scriptures and by extension to vernacular literature. The Bible had arrived in England with its credentials as an authoritative text firmly established. It had the authority of great age, historical perspective and Christian and Jewish tradition as well as the status of being written in a classical language. Its human authors were men of stature, but its inspiration, being Divine, went beyond even their standing. The fact that it was the word of God gave it supreme authority. It was also revered as the source of all knowledge, since it contained philosophy, ethics, logic and theoretical science from which Origen maintained that the Greeks had derived their theories.¹ The secular classical works were used as preparation for the study of the Bible, and the Scriptures themselves were considered as a kind of text book, for "all artifices found in secular books were found in the Bible also: schemata, tropes, modes of verse and prose and even fables".² Since the ultimate authority of the Bible was God, the *auctoritas* of both the individual writers of the

separate sections, whether Solomon, Job, David or the Evangelists, and the Scriptural commentators was guaranteed. Thus there existed a layering of authority over the Bible which covered the text itself and the textual commentary.

In the exegetical process it was not always helpful to focus on the human writer, especially if there were problems of interpretation. Solomon's Song of Songs had seemed out of place until twelfth century commentaries began a tradition of mystical writing by interpreting as the reflection of mystical union with God what had appeared at first to be erotic poetry. The Psalms, which were central to the liturgy, had also presented problems of authorship and interpretation until Augustine put forward the idea of David in the Old Testament as a parallel to Christ in the New Testament,³ a theory which made sense of David's role as King and priest. The written interpretation came, through a strong tradition (from Jerome and Augustine in the fourth century through Bede, Bernard, Anselm and the Victorines to Nicholas of Lyra in the fourteenth) to be an essential part of the text. The commentary came to have more prominence than the role of the human *auctor*, whose part in the process was considered, as St. Gregory had defined it, like that of a pen writing a great epistle,⁴ a necessary implement but not of itself important.

Nevertheless, the authority of both the human author and of the commentator/interpreter had to be deferred to since the inspiration of both was divine. To detach the text from its commentary was to peel away a layer of its authority, and to present the text in the vernacular without the Latin original was to take away the status and authority enshrined in the source language. Worst of all in the eyes of the medieval church, presenting the vernacular text with neither the original nor a commentary would be to shift the authority and responsibility for interpretation from writer to reader with all that implies of variation and possible deviation from orthodox readings.

The commentators who had interpreted the Bible were respected scholars who had devoted years to its study. Not only were they thoroughly familiar with the Latin text but also with other writings the subject. Their *auctoritas* came from their position as clergy, their status as learned men, and the fact that they worked in a language with historical pedigree and status. The fourteenth century vernacular reader had no such credentials for interpretation. An English Bible without explanation or commentary could only, according to Henry Knighton "fit vulgare et magis apertum laicis, et mulieribus legere scientibus quam solet esse clericis admodum literatis et bene intellegentibus...".⁵ Aelfric had expressed similar misgivings centuries earlier,

but at a time when the incidence of literacy was far less and when the gap between scholar and layperson was considerably greater.⁴ He also worried about the "subtilia... quae non aperiunt laici, nec non ipsa ea quimus implere".⁷ If the learned Fathers during years of study had struggled with subtleties of interpretation, how could a person cope whose scholarship did not even extend to reading the Bible in Latin?

The Anglo-Saxon translators had solved the problem by interweaving commentary with translation. Aelfric's paraphrase of Genesis gave the flexibility for commentary as the text progressed; Alfred used the same strategy when translating Boethius's *Consolations of Philosophy*, he included his own material and edited out what he thought was unnecessary. Chaucer's *Boece* follows a similar pattern, text interwoven with commentary until the two are difficult to separate.

Commentary and translation were closely linked in the early attempts to English parts of the Bible. Translation itself is exegetical in the sense that the meaning of the source text has to be extracted before it can be expressed in the target language: where the meaning is obscure or ambivalent, paraphrase can result of which extensive use leads to commentary. The later commentaries,⁸ although not

intended as such, could be regarded as the first step in the process of translation of which exegesis is a prerequisite. Translation has a specifically hermeneutical function with regard to the Bible because the text is essentially a teaching one, and whereas the responsibility of the medieval translator towards other texts was minimal, in the case of the Scriptures it was considered a "positive duty, not just a literary task", to convey meaning without corruption.⁹ Translation and commentary have a similar function: they are both means of opening up a previously closed text, of giving access to a text which was formerly inaccessible. The medieval tradition of translation was flexible and wide-ranging: adaptation, compilation and commentary were all included in the translator's work. As Rita Copeland describes it: "The elasticity of medieval translation becomes the norm" so that "vernacular translation evolves within the tradition of textual commentary".¹⁰

The rise of the vernacular forced the consideration of these problems of translation in a way which they had never had to be considered before. Despite the fact that it had been used in restricted literary traditions for centuries, English was a relatively new medium for most people in the Middle Ages as the majority of the population had not been exposed to texts in any form. The scholars had been used to

working in Latin, and for them not only did English lack the historical permanence and pedigree of Latin, but writing in the vernacular "often meant popularisation, adaption to a new audience of less sophisticated taste".¹¹ Upholding the status and authority of the content of the Bible when used as a source text for vernacular writing was very important, and one way of maintaining it, as was illustrated in the study of medieval homilies and penitential literature, was to use Latin quotes or tags from the Scriptures to contextualise the material and provide its authentication. Alternatively, commentary interwoven with the source text acted as a bridge between source and target language, or the presentation of dual text provided visible authority to which the reader could refer through an intermediary if necessary.¹²

A further way of transferring the text from source to target language while retaining the authority of the teaching was to act as *compiler*. Retelling the Old Testament stories or harmonising the Gospels constituted a reorganising of already available material, an editing process rather than a translating one. Most medieval authors acted as compilers as part of their literary function. The idea of text as property was not a medieval concept, nor was the idea that the compiler/translator had a responsibility to preserve the integrity of the source

text.¹³ Translations were not always acknowledged as such, often no distinction was made between the source text and the writer's additional material.¹⁴ While this approach to texts in a present day context might be regarded as unstructured and even dishonest in a literary dimension, in medieval practice it was a perfectly acceptable norm. It became a convention to deny being the *auctor*/author, and to take on the lesser responsibility of *compiler*/compiler, so implying that the work had a greater authority through being written in a previous generation or in another more scholarly language.

The literary context of the fourteenth century (leaving aside the political complexities) was not yet one where a complete translation of the Bible, in the newly upgraded vernacular, without source text or commentary, could have integrated happily with contemporary trends. Previous direct translations had been few and partial, the tradition of interweaving authoritative commentary or presenting the source text with the translation had meant that the question of direct translation had not been fully addressed. The complexity of the problem presented by lack of a coherent translation theory was not fully understood even by those who attempted the first complete translation into English; almost as soon as it was completed a revision of the first version was found to be desirable. The legacy

of translation theory left by the early translators had not been helpful; Bede, Jerome and Augustine¹⁵ had highlighted problems, but not suggested solutions. Patristic translation theory had not always been interpreted in a consistent manner¹⁶ and the strategies employed did not always demonstrate a strict adherence to the theories proposed. In addition the Latin text of the Scriptures had taken on a status unlike that of any other literary text. Jerome's editing of the many Latin versions into the Vulgate had been deemed necessary at the time so that every scholar should have the same reconstructed "original" from which to work. The fact that the first writing of the New Testament had been in Greek, taken down from Aramaic speech, had long been forgotten. Latin was the language of angels¹⁷ and the only tongue fit for the Scriptures. The one text in the one language was a way of creating unity out of a varied and at times puzzling collection of texts which was the Christian heritage, and indirectly of preserving that unity among the people of the church. Preserving the text in Latin was also a way of retaining its exclusivity. Translating or adapting parts of the text into the vernacular did not threaten the position of the whole text. To translate the whole text into a vulgar tongue however, was to jeopardise the position of the original by introducing an alternative and opening up possibilities of a change in function. The function of the

Vulgate and the Latin commentaries was specifically hermeneutic and didactic. A vernacular translation embodied the hermeneutical function in the process of translation thus shifting the exegetical responsibility to the translator, and leaving the didactic function to the response of the reader.

The orthodox stance adopted in the 1401 debate¹⁰ by William Butler and Thomas Palmer after the Wycliffite version, was expressed more in terms of the political and social implications of an English Scripture than in terms of the literary theory of a change in function of the text. There were several movements in the fourteenth century which, although not evident at the time to the opponents of the English Bible, can be seen in retrospect to have made the appearance of a Bible in the vernacular far less of an anomaly than it seemed to them or to the later nineteenth century commentators. The first of these movements was the change in emphasis in the interpretation of the Scriptures, a move away from the traditional scholastic commentary towards a more basic, less complex exegetical system.

Early Old Testament Biblical exegesis had concentrated mainly on the allegorical aspect of the writing, and as a consequence a commentary was essential for the revelation of significance. There were four levels of interpretation:

allegorical, tropological, anagogical and literal. The allegorical took precedence until the Franciscan Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century highlighted the need to know and understand the text primarily in its literal meaning.¹⁹ In the early fourteenth century, the French exegete Nicholas de Lyra (1270-1340) wrote a comprehensive commentary called *Postillae* in which he made extensive use of the Jewish commentators. The Jewish tradition of exegesis was far more literal and supported Lyra's aim of putting more emphasis on the "sensus literalis".²⁰ The *Postillae* became the established text book for students of the Bible in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to the extent that the commentary was often studied by University students at the expense of the original Vulgate text. The simplification of the system of decoding made the text accessible to more people, including the literate layperson, who were interested in its application rather than its detailed analysis. The gap between the learned elite and the ignorant illiterate population was gradually narrowing.

The second factor which made a Bible in English a practical possibility in the fourteenth century was the emergence of the vernacular as a suitable and competent vehicle for literature. The rapid increase in literacy (those who could read English) served to promote vernacular

writing, which in turn promoted literacy. "These developments ...realigned the whole nexus of cleric and layman".²¹ Latin was no longer the exclusively acceptable scholarly language; it existed alongside a vernacular which not only began to challenge its position but the position of the elite who used it. The fourteenth century also saw "a marked reaction against the excessive intellectualism and excessive subtlety of scholasticism".²² Nicholas of Lyra's commentary had de-mystified the Bible and foregrounded the literal and literary aspect of interpretation.²³ The mystical writers such as Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love*, Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, and later Margery Kempe, whose autobiography was known as *The Book of Margery Kempe*²⁴ were using the vernacular to describe personal religious experiences which were set as expressions of faith against the structured intellectuality of the theologians. Rolle wrote his complex theological treatises in Latin and chose English for guides to living, meditations and lyrical outpourings of love.²⁵ Julian of Norwich's theology was homespun yet eloquently expressed in English: " It needeth us to have knowing of the littleness of creatures and to naughten all thing that is made for to love and have God that is unmade. For this is the cause why we be not all in ease of heart and soul: that we seek here rest in those things that be so little, wherein there be no rest, and

know not our God that is Almighty, All-wise, All-good. For he is the very rest".²⁶

A contemporary of Rolle's, an unnamed hermit monk of Farne, also upheld the growing feeling that scholars and clergy did not necessarily have a monopoly on the way to salvation. He writes "Let the meek hear and rejoice that there is a certain knowledge of the Holy Scripture which is learnt from the Holy Ghost and manifested in good works, which often the layman knows and the clerk does not, the fisherman knows and not the rhetorician, the old woman has learnt, and not the doctor of theology".²⁷ The nature of the "swine" before whom Aelfric in the tenth century had been unwilling to cast the pearls of the Scriptures had considerably changed. In the fourteenth century the changing nature of society required more people to be literate. Government bureaucracy created by war and the collection of taxes engendered many more civil servants; trade, the keeping of records and the drawing up of legal documents required literacy and numeracy. The demand for books and manuscripts increased,²⁸ the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge expanded rapidly. Graduates were much in demand for both political and religious offices (Wyclif himself worked for the Crown) and between 1307 and 1401 fifteen thousand from Oxford and seven thousand from Cambridge received their degrees. Many others are known to

have attended the Universities and not proceeded to a degree.²⁹ Education was no longer restricted to a small religious elite. The laity was "better informed and more articulate than a century earlier ...vouchsafed by literacy and translation direct access to some of the sources of their faith, and encouraged to view the clergy and the church with greater independence and growing impatience".³⁰ What had not changed, however, was the Church's monopoly of *auctoritas*.

References to Chapter Five

1. A.J. Minnis *Medieval Theory of Authorship* second edition (London: Scolar Press 1988) p.26
2. Minnis p.35
3. Minnis p.45
4. Minnis p.37
5. Henry Knighton *Chronicon Henrici Knighton* edited Joseph Lumby vol 2 (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode 1895) p.152
6. *Aelfric's Lives of Saints* edited by Walter Skeat EETS vol 1 (London: Oxford University Press 1881) p.3 in the Latin preface of which Aelfric states that he will not write very many "in this tongue.....lest peradventure the pearls of Christ be had in disrespect."
7. "subtle points...which ought not to be laid open to the laity, nor indeed are we ourselves quite able to fathom them." Skeat p.3
8. The early commentaries were allegorical and worked on several levels of meaning, whereas the later ones, following the renewed interest in Jewish studies in the fourteenth century turned the concern of the exegete to the literary dimension of the text and brought the literal meaning to the fore. See Minnis p.35.
9. Ian Johnson "Prologue and Practice: Middle English Lives of Christ" in *The Medieval Translator* edited by Roger Ellis (Cambridge: Brewer 1989) p.71
10. Rita Copeland quoted by Roger Ellis in his introduction to *The Medieval Translator* p.6
11. D.J. Burnley "Late Medieval English Translation" in *The Medieval Translator* p.42
12. Richard Rolle's Psalms had both the source text and a commentary to accompany the translation.
13. *Cursor Mundi* the metrical Bible, has additional material not found in the source text, and some verse romances like *Susannah* were based on apocryphal stories of Biblical characters.
14. Dan Michel never mentions that the source text for his *Ayenbite of Inwit* (1340) was the French tract *Somme des Vices et des Vertus*. Trevisa, on the other hand, when translating Higden's *Polychronon* is careful to distinguish between what Higden wrote and his own comments as translator by writing his name in the margin against his own comments.

15. Bede in the *The Ecclesiastical History of the British People* translated by Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1969) p.416 comments on how Caedmon's song loses something in the translation into Latin. Jerome supports "sense for sense" translation in general, but states that in the case of the Holy Scriptures "even the order of words is a mystery". See his letter to Pammachius in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series* edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace vol 6 St. Jerome (New York: Eerdmann 1979) p.113. Augustine in *Christian Instruction* writes at length on the diversity of the translations of the time, both Greek and Latin. This was the context in which Jerome was asked to edit a definitive Latin text. Augustine outlines the problems of translation without suggesting any answer other than that of learning Latin, Hebrew and Greek (chapter eleven). St. Augustine *Christian Instruction* translated by John Gavigan (Washington: Catholic University of America Press 1966 edition)
16. Rita Copeland in "The Fortunes of Non Verbum Pro Verbo" in *The Medieval Translator* has demonstrated that the Cicero/Jerome theory has been interpreted in different ways at different times, and that "patristic translation theory is concerned mainly with recuperating the signified beyond the accidents of human linguistic multiplicity".p.21
17. Henry Knighton p. 152 "...in Anglicam linguam non angelicam" - "into the English language not the language of angels". The pun will not transfer.
18. W.A.Pantin *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1980) p.132
19. Margaret Deanesley *The Lollard Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1966 edition) p.164
20. The Jewish commentator Lyra used was Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, known by the Jews as "Rashi", see David Daiches *The King James Version of the Bible* (Chicago:Archon Books 1968) p.123.
21. Peter Heath *Church and Realm 1272-1461* (London: Fontana 1988) p.157
22. W.A. Pantin p.132
23. Minnis p.39
24. For a more detailed discussion of the texts of the Medieval Mystics see Marion Glasscoe *English Medieval Mystics* (London: Longman 1993)
25. Among Richard Rolle's works are *Ego Dormio* a meditation, *The Form of Living*, written for a recluse, Margaret of Kyrkby, *The Commandment* a sermon and some

shorter pieces, lyrics and meditations on the Passion of Christ. Other pieces were written in Latin and translated into English fairly soon afterwards. *Incendio Amoris* for example was "englished" in 1435 by Richard Misyn. See *The Fire Of Love* edited by Ralph Harvey EETS (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co 1896)

26. Julian of Norwich *Revelations of Divine Love* edited by Roger Huddleston (London: Burns Oates 1935 edition) p.13
27. W.A. Pantin p.252
28. Janet Coleman *English History in Literature* (London: Hutchinson 1981) p.202
29. Peter Heath p.160
30. Peter Heath p.165

Chapter SixTHE WYCLIFFITE VERSION

When Wyclif was at Oxford in the 1360's there was already a considerable vernacular activity with regard to religious texts. Handbooks for the clergy, homilies, psalters and penitential literature were all available in English, as were several extracts from the Bible. The established reference text for the Vulgate Scriptures was the relatively recent biblical commentary written by Nicholas of Lyra, which had made interpretation a more logical and direct process by foregrounding the literal aspect rather than the allegorical.¹ The growing literate population was interested in devotional literature, familiar with the liturgy and followed the homiletic tradition in its written form as well as orally through preaching. With this increase in knowledge the laity was becoming intellectually more aware and better equipped to challenge the poor practices which had grown up hitherto unchecked in the Church.

In the second half of the fourteenth century the resentment felt at the excessive temporal, political and financial power of the Church developed into an attack on its pronouncements on doctrine.² William of Ockham had

already reached the conclusion that the Pope and the church hierarchy had no particular right to legislate on matters of faith. Using the Bible as the source of his argument he concluded that the hierarchy should be "the servants, not the rulers of the faithful" and felt that the clergy's "freedom to do more than enforce God's precepts"³ should be restricted. The supreme authority which the church had always enjoyed was being called to account; the greater authority of Scripture was being used by scholars like Ockham and later Wyclif⁴ not only to highlight abuses but also to support alternative interpretation of Canon Law. Wyclif went further than either Robert Grosseteste or Ockham in that he "advanced to the position so characteristic of the later Reformation of distinguishing between the Bible and the teaching of the Church and its doctors".⁵ Under these circumstances a Bible in English was potentially "a handbook to revolution just as much as Das Kapital came to be in a later age".⁶

Wyclif promoted the Scriptures as a more secure authority than that of the Church and rejected the idea of the Bible's exclusivity. "The New Testament", he wrote, "is full of authority and open to the understanding of simple men as to the points that be most needful for salvation...",⁷ echoing Rolle, the words of the monk solitary of Farne, and the general feeling of the time that

scholars and clergy no longer had a monopoly on the experience or the interpretation of things religious. His conviction that the Bible should be open to all men did not lead him to make any written commitment to its translation: translating the Bible into the vernacular was never mentioned in any of his writings. Although reticence about such a project may have been politically prudent, Wyclif was not a man to allow politics to dictate the expression of his views. It is more likely that "translation was not his prime purpose, but rather a consequence".²⁹

The Wycliffite translation was not part of a crusade to take the Word of God to the ordinary people in their own language in the same way as the nineteenth century Bible Societies set out to do; it was rather the result of a readjustment of authority, the resetting of the parameters within which the laity functioned. The ordinary people already had access to parts of the text, but the translation made under Wyclif's auspices was a complete presentation of God's Word in a language which had the same relationship to its readers as the first texts of the Bible in koine Greek had to the early Christians. Practical difficulties must have restricted distribution to a certain extent as the revised version had a commentary believed to be written by Purvey which was greater in volume than the translated text. The enormity of the physical task and the

expense involved in having copies made meant that some later texts were reproduced in part only and without the gloss. Nevertheless the Wycliffite translation survives today in approximately two hundred and forty manuscripts.⁹ As only a handful survives of the other fourteenth century partial vernacular translations, it might be concluded that the Wycliffite translation had considerably more impact than any other contemporary work of its kind.

Without commentary as some of the copies were, and without the status of Latin, the English text of the Scriptures stood on its own authority. That part of the Church's authority which was embedded in the doctrinal interpretation and linguistic transference of the message of the Bible was severely weakened. Wyclif, by means of something as simple as a translation, challenged the authority and hypocrisy of the ecclesiastical system of his day in terms which could not be ignored, misrepresented or manipulated by those in a position of power. Small wonder that the idea of translation caused such a storm and became such a controversial issue. Those involved in the Oxford debate of 1401¹⁰ brought out the well-worn arguments of the incapacity of the ordinary person to understand the message of the Scriptures without official guidance, but they were also aware of the underlying shift in authority brought about by a vernacular Bible. In his determination, William

Butler outlines at length the hierarchical order of Angels and compares it to the structure of the Church. He talks of "hierarchia ecclesiae militantis" and "ecclesiae triumphantis" and concludes: "constat quod legere scripturam vulgariter translata est actus superioris, et non elicitur neque imperatur a voluntiva personae inferioris ordinis".¹¹

Wyclif undoubtedly had a cause to pursue, that of challenging the Church, but translating the Bible into English was not his main objective. He came to favour the idea of vernacular Scriptures "by the logic of his theological positions"¹² rather than out of concern either for the common people or for the upgrading of the vernacular. Those works which can be safely attributed to Wyclif were written by him in Latin; it was the later Lollards who translated some of his work and used the vernacular for their own as a political gesture. The Wycliffite translation of the Bible was very much a secondary stratagem which has been marketed by interested parties as a primary cause. Nineteenth century protestant writers have been so positive and so polemical in their attitude towards Wyclif and the English Bible of the 1380's that it has been a difficult task to balance the actual rather than the perceived intention and impact upon the medieval scene. His involvement in Englishing the Bible

represents only a very small part of a famous career in ecclesiastical politics during which he combined the role of scholar, philosopher, theologian and diplomat with that of heretic and would-be reformer. It was in this latter capacity that he caught the imagination of the post-reformation anti-Roman Church writers. For them, Wyclif's act of translating the Bible¹³ symbolised his rejection of the Roman Church to such an extent that in spite of his prowess in philosophy and argument, his outspoken attacks on the Mendicant Friars¹⁴ (whose protests at the vernacular Scriptures were the loudest) and his controversial views on theological issues like transubstantiation, he is best remembered for what was a relatively minor part of his programme.¹⁵ The chronicler Henry Knighton, writing closer to the time, gives a rounded idea of Wyclif's talents when he describes him first and foremost as "doctor in theologia eminentissimus in diebus illis. In philosophia nulli reputabatur secundus, in scholasticis disciplinis incomparabilis".¹⁶ Then using a rather startling comparison he says that Wyclif had John Balle as his precursor "veluti Christus Johannem Baptistam".¹⁷

Knighton acknowledges Wyclif's stature most generously in spite of taking the official view of a vernacular Bible: "et sic evangelia margarita spargitur et a porcis conculator".¹⁸ It is his comment on Wyclif's translation

activities that is most commonly quoted, usually in support of the theory that Wyclif himself was the main translator. Knighton also notes how the translation has shifted the balance of power from clergy to laity so that the Church, he feels, is entitled to protest: "gemma clericorum vertitur in ludum laicorum, ut laicis sit commune aeternum, quod ante fuerat clericis et ecclesiae doctoribus talentum supernum. Sicque sponsus ecclesiae conqueritur et cum propheta potest clamare".¹⁹ The Church was likely to protest at most of Wyclif's undertakings, so outspoken and challenging were his views. As he grew older, his ideas became more contentious, some of his doctrines took a heretical turn and his attacks on the Church and its officers became more vicious. This is not to say that his challenges were unwarranted. The abuses in the Church both locally and on a wider scale; the demand for taxes; interference from the Roman hierarchy in English affairs; the Pope's confinement at Avignon and the later schism; all these things caused protest from orthodox members as well as from reformers like Wyclif,²⁰ but Wyclif went further than most in his denunciations. He was unwise enough to defend the killing of the Archbishop Sudbury and the burning of the Savoy Palace during the Peasants Revolt of 1381.²¹ This not only labelled him as subversive but also gave his intentions towards an English Bible a link with the common people and with the idea of revolution, which

gave his contemporary enemies fuel for attack and nineteenth century writers evidence of his association with the cause of the ordinary individual. Wyclif's connections and reforming zeal made him just the figure with whom post-Reformation writers could identify retrospectively, and his involvement with translating the Bible made him the champion of a nineteenth and twentieth century movement which was looking for pre-Reformation credentials. A great deal of supposition and hypothesis has surrounded Wyclif's position and intentions which is only now being dispelled by less subjective studies of the facts. His role in the Peasants' Revolt has been put into perspective to the extent that "historians are now agreed that the great blaze of 1381 was not due in any appreciable degree to Wyclif's influence, and would assuredly have happened if the Reformer had never lived".²² Margaret Aston wrote an article in the 1960's describing the way in which Wyclif had been portrayed with "a great deal of myth" by the Protestant writers of the Reformation;²³ Anthony Kenny complemented her work by an essay which reveals that "the Catholic picture of the Reformer, like the Protestant one, is related only distantly to his actual life and work".²⁴

The effect of Wyclif's activities upon the process of englishing the Bible was both positive and negative. He and the Lollard movement which grew up around his beliefs were

responsible for generating a considerable amount of vernacular writing, including the first complete translation of the Bible into English. On the other hand, owing to his unorthodox and at times heretical views, vernacular writings and translations of the Scriptures fell under suspicion of unorthodoxy and heresy as much by virtue of the language they were written in as by their actual content. The Wycliffite movement highlighted the question of the vernacular Bible, but at the same time set back the evolutionary process of translation by its revolutionary associations.

The rise of the vernacular in England has already been discussed; it was paralleled by a movement towards vernacular Biblical texts in Europe. Richard II owned a Bible in French and his wife Anne of Bohemia, who was thought to be sympathetic to the Lollard movement because of her nationality²⁵ had the Gospels in Latin, German and Czech, as well as in English. At her funeral in 1394, the Archbishop Arundel commended her for her study of the Gospels which he had personally licensed for her use.²⁶ In 1408 the same Archbishop was to forbid the translation of the Bible into English or the reading of any translation made in Wyclif's time or since. John of Gaunt, at one time a friend of Wyclif, stood up in Parliament and defended the idea of a vernacular Bible when Richard II introduced a

Bill to annul the existing translations. His argument was based on the idea that "sithen other nations have God's law, which is the law of our belief, in their own mother language, we will have ours in English, who that ever it begrudgeth".²⁷ The Lollard John Purvey writing a treatise in defence of English translations of the Bible quotes John of Gaunt's words and extends the argument: "And so it was translated in to Spaynesche tunge, Frensche tunge and Alemayne; and other londes also han the Bibel in ther modur tunge, as Italie hath it in Latyn; for that is ther modur tunge, and be many yeeris han had".²⁸ The movement towards vernacular Scriptures in Europe together with the fact that there existed English translations of the Gospels,²⁹ the Psalms³⁰ and the Apocalypse³¹ which were contemporary with the Wycliffite version supports the view that the Lollard translation was "not quite the innovation that is often supposed".³² The publicity it received was due to the extremity of the views expressed by those responsible for the undertaking; there was actually nothing in the translation itself which was heretical. Even without Wyclif, it is quite possible that there would have been a translation of the Scriptures into English during the fourteenth century, but not perhaps for general use.

The impact of the translation on the process of Englishing the Bible was considerable, not least for the

antagonism it aroused against vernacular translations; but the real consequence was the fact that a direct translation of the Bible was thrust on to the literary scene before a contemporary theory of translation had been thought out or the medieval way of thinking altered to accommodate to the changes necessary for the acceptance of such a major undertaking. The Wycliffite translators were all excellent scholars,³³ but they were forced to address the problems of translation in a context in which no-one had ever had to address them before. Cicero, Jerome and Augustine had laid down general principles which were not always helpful in specific situations, and did not always apply to the translating of Scripture. They had no pragmatic strategies for translating into a vernacular which was itself in a state of flux; the Wycliffite group were presented with precise issues which had to be dealt with in a practical and pioneering way. As soon as the first version was complete the need was perceived for revision. The second version resolved some problems but created others: the immense difficulties involved in translating the Scriptures into the vernacular were only just becoming evident.

The revisor and author of the Prologue to the later version is generally considered to be Wyclif's secretary and the longest resisting Lollard John Purvey³⁴ although evidence is inconclusive. Modern scholars are not

unnaturally wary of ascribing work unless the documentary evidence is irrefutable, since over enthusiastic assumptions have already too much distorted the true perspective in this area. Whoever wrote the Prologue devoted chapter fifteen to a discussion of translation issues and gives the reader an outline of the strategies employed and the problems encountered in the making of the translation. By modern standards of works of translation theory it is a superficial document considering the size of the project,³³ but it was the first attempt of its kind to relate a theory of translation to the specific task of translating the entire Scriptures from the Vulgate into English.

The Prologue was written after the translation was made and as a consequence reflects the actual experience of translating rather than the projection of a theory. Chapter fifteen opens with a short justification for having the Bible in English and continues the medieval tradition of self effacement by the author. "For þese resons and opere," the writer concludes the first section, "a symple creature haþ translaid þe Bible out of Latyn into English".³⁴ He continues by describing the various stages in the translation process. The first step was "wiþ diuerse felawis and helperis to gedere manie elde biblis, and opere doctouris and comune glosis, and to make oo Latyn bible

sumdel trewe".³⁷ The establishing of the corrected source text was carefully undertaken, and many Bibles found to be "in Latyn fulfalse" and more in need of correction than "þe English bible late translaid".³⁸ The preoccupation with the accuracy of the "original" resulted from the special nature of the text and from its intrinsic hermeneutic function. The Lollard translators' first difficulty was to establish exactly what they were translating, and their material was limited to the Latin versions of the Scriptures which had always been prone to corruption through misunderstanding and miscopying. To add to their problems, there were places, particularly in the Psalms, where "bi witnesse of Ierom, of Lire and opere expositouris"³⁹ the Hebrew differed from the Latin to such an extent that marginal glosses were considered necessary. The Prologue writer mentions that the Church at that time does not use Jerome's translation of the Hebrew Psalter into Latin but that of another man "þat hadden myche lasse kunnyng and holynesse þan Ierom had".⁴⁰ On this evidence it is easy to see how the establishing of a reliable source text was one of the major difficulties of the practical aspect of Bible translation. The issue came into even sharper focus in the late fifteenth - early sixteenth centuries with the rise of Greek studies and the publication of Erasmus' Greek New Testament. The Wycliffite translators were as well supported by reference manuscripts

as any scholars of the time could expect to be, but it had not been necessary until this time to address the problem of source texts in the context of vernacular translation. Before the entire Scriptures could be Englished safely (from the hermeneutic point of view) and intelligibly (from the literary point of view), considerable development of the available source texts had to take place.

Once the Wycliffite translators had established the source texts as well as they could, the next step was to study them with glosses and commentaries and "opere doctouris as he migte gete, and speciali Lire on þe elde testament þat helpide ful myche in þis werke".⁴¹ The grateful acknowledgement to Nicholas of Lyra's commentary supports the idea that the foregrounding of the literal interpretation of the Bible at the expense of the allegorical had been a turning point as far as vernacular translation was concerned as it altered the text's capacity to be translated into any vernacular. It has to be said that even with the benefit of Lyra's work on the Old Testament, parts of the Wycliffite translation remain unintelligible due to the structure of the Latin, the difficulty of which is emphasised several times by the writer of the Prologue.

The third stage in the process was to "counseile wiþ

elde gramariens and elde dyuynis" as to the best way to translate "hardi wordis and hard sentencis".⁴² Finally the translation itself was made with the help of "manie gode felawis and kunnynges at þe correcting of þe translacioun".⁴³ Throughout this chapter of the Prologue the writer's preoccupation is with access to the content through the target language. Several times he mentions the desirability of the "sentence" being "as opin eifer openere in English as in Latyn".⁴⁴ The hermeneutic function is paramount; the sense, the meaning must be expressed, not merely the words. His several references to the English text's being if possible clearer than the Latin continues the fourteenth century theme of de-mystifying the Bible. The content can be understood by ordinary people if presented in a language which they can understand. Retaining the Latin text not only restricts the readership to a scholarly elite but leaves parts of the text obscure owing to the intricacies of the Latin language. The process of translation is an opportunity to clarify and define meaning in a way that has not been seen as necessary before. Defining meaning for the purpose of commentary need not involve the transference of syntax from one language to another; paraphrase can be used to avoid restricting the meaning of a word; individual words need not be defined. Defining meaning for the purposes of translation involves the same level of understanding but is far more specific in

terms of vocabulary. Unless each word is accounted for syntactically or in a compensatory way, something is felt to be left out; choices of a single target language word must be made to cover a source text word with several nuances. The writer of the Prologue and his helpers discovered these problems and were forced to address them from a position of inexperience. English prose was developing rapidly and being used with skill by contemporary writers, but in the context of translation the ground being broken was proving more difficult to work. Wyclif's reputation for being the Father of English prose does not stand close scrutiny since, as Chambers states, "the first Wicliffite version, written thirty-five years after Rolle's death, is almost incredibly crude".⁴³

The Prologue writer gives several rather obvious examples of syntax which will not translate directly from Latin to English and suggests how they might be accommodated. Ablative absolutes should be translated by a clause, present participles by verb and subject, and conjunctions should be used in a flexible way, not necessarily using the same word every time. He accepts the need to translate sense for sense and "not oneli aftir þe wordis".⁴⁴ Both Cicero and Jerome had reached the same conclusion, but Jerome had made an exception in the case of Holy Scriptures where he felt that "even the order of the

words is a mystery".⁴⁷ Purvey, if it is he, demolishes that theory by giving the often since quoted example of "Dominum formidabunt adversarii eius", which if translated in the Latin word order reads "The Lord shall dread his adversaries" which of course makes nonsense of the meaning and makes Jerome's comment difficult to justify. In the Wycliffite revision it appears "bi resolucion" as "þe adversaries of þe Lord shulen drede him".⁴⁸

Chapter fifteen of the Prologue ends with what seems to be encouragement to future translators. After hints on translating conjunctions and prepositions the writer continues: "Bi þis maner wiþ good lyuyng and greet trauel, men moun come to truþe and cleer translating and trewe vnderstanding of holi writ, seme it neuere so hard at þe bigynnyng. God graunt to us alle to kunne wel and kepe wel holi writ, and suffre ioiefulli sum peyne for it at þe laste! Amen".⁴⁹ Is he perhaps looking beyond his own work to the future translations which were to be inspired and in part based on the groundwork which the Wycliffites had done? Their achievement lay not so much in the quality of the work but in the addressing, however crudely, of the specific problems of translating the Scriptures into English. The Wycliffite versions took their place with the other rough drafts that went into the process of Englishing of the Bible. Theirs was the first complete rough draft in

a lengthy process that was not to be completed satisfactorily until centuries later.

Compared with other vernacular religious prose which was being written at the time, Richard Rolle's for example, Walter Hilton's in "The Scale of Perfection"⁵⁰ or the unknown author's "The Cloud of Unknowing",⁵¹ the Wycliffite versions are certainly unpolished. They not only display the dilemmas faced by translators in making choices but they reveal at times that the translators were unaware of the significance of the choices to be made. A comparison of both versions of John 10:11-18 illustrates these points and shows what difficulties arose from having a Latin text only and no Greek support from which to work. Both versions open with the words "I am a good shepherde"⁵² from the Latin "Ego sum pastor bonus".⁵³ There is no article in the Latin, and as English requires one, a choice has to be made. It is easy with the benefit of hindsight and the experience of subsequent translations to wonder why the translators did not think of expressing the uniqueness of Christ by the use of the definite article; had they had a Greek manuscript the article would have been defined in the source text. The process by which "I am a good shepherd" became in later translations "I am the good shepherd" is a reflection of the way in which the special nature of the text and its hermeneutic function requires a narrowing of the

translation options rather than an expansion of its translation possibilities. It is not surprising to find weaknesses and crudeness in the first complete draft; it took centuries of scholarship, development and editing to produce what is recognised by many as the definitive English version of 1611. What is surprising is the extent of the lack of thought which went into the first version of what must have been a particularly well-known part of John's Gospel. The early version continues: "A good shepherde zyuep his soule for his shep". "Soule" is corrected to "lyf" in the second version, which makes more sense of the parabolic reference and shows more consistency, as in the first translation the two words were used interchangeably in similar contexts. The next passage startles the modern reader by its use of "merchaunt" for the Latin "mercenarius": is it possible that the translator misread the Latin as "mercator"?

Forsoope a marchaunt, and þat is not shepherde,
whos þe shep ben not his owne, seep a wlf
comende, and he lefep þe shep and fleep, and
þe wlf raueship and disparpliþ þe shep.
Forsoope þe marchaunt fleep for he is a
marchaunt, and it perteneþ not to hym of þe shep.

The translator's note to the word, "or hyred hyne",⁵⁴ is incorporated into the later version and "merchaunt" is dropped, showing that on reflection the revisor considered the word less suitable than its given alternative. In

translation terms the use of the word "merchant" for "hired hand" much reduces the effect of the passage as well as introducing a contemporary reference which does not fit into the cultural context. The connotations of the word "marchaunt" to the fourteenth century vernacular reader were not those evoked by the word "mercenarius" in the Vulgate. The translator of the first text of the Wycliffite version was working at the level of equivalence without always taking into account the signified. The source text context of caring for sheep in the hills of Palestine is jolted by the use of a word which creates for the reader an inappropriate image from the target culture. The revisor saw the need to reshape the passage by his alterations and following his own precepts on the flexibility of conjunctions, he replaces the second "forsope" with "and" which improves the flow of the narrative and makes the text less cluttered.

The revision of the early version is an attempt to improve the clarity of the translation and quality of the English. The simple straightforward phrases are left alone: "I knowe my shep and my shep knowen me. As þe fader haþ knowen me and Y knowe þe fader and I poote my lyf for my shep." Their cadences are familiar centuries later. Other phrases are altered for the sake of clarity. For example in the passage "And I have opere sheep þat ben not of þis

folde, and it behouep¹ me to leden hem to", the revisor replaces "to leden hem to" with "to brynge hem togidere", thus clarifying the meaning within the context of the analogy. Similarly in the words "No man takeþ it (my lyf) from me, but I pote it fro myself", "fro myself" is adjusted to "of myself" which helps make the idea clearer. It is an interesting fact that small phrases like this have often caused the translators a disproportionate amount of difficulty. The same phrase in Tyndale's 1526 version is rendered as "I pput ytt away off my sylfe",⁵⁵ and the 1611 version has "I lay it down of myself".⁵⁶ The modern translations have made the meaning explicit by the insertion of "of my own accord" in the New International Version⁵⁷ and "of my own free will" in the Good News.⁵⁸

The Wycliffite group of translators found the narrative of the New Testament conducive to adequate if at times awkward rendering in the vernacular, but the Old Testament prophecies presented a challenge to which the translation competence of the Lollard group and the limits of the changing vernacular could not always quite rise. In many places in the Old Testament translation the later version is little improvement on the early one and the English as incomprehensible to the vernacular reader as the Latin was. The early version of Isaiah 53 begins: "Lord who leeued to oure heering? and þe arm of the Lord to whom is

it shewid?"⁵⁹ The revision simplifies the syntax but takes the reader no nearer to the meaning: "who bileuyde to cure heryng? and to whom is þe arm of þe Lord schewid?" Verse two is even more difficult: "and it shall stezen up as a quik heg biforn hym, and as a roote fro þe þrestende erþe; þer is not shap to hym ne fairnesse, and wee sezen hym and he was not of sizte." The English words are a literal rendering of the Latin which does little to fulfil the hermeneutic function of the translation or to improve the accessibility of the text. The revisor recognises the inadequacy of the first attempt and adjusts the vocabulary in the hope of improving the reading. What he achieves is minimal because the Latin text alone does not adequately express the meaning. Changing "it" to "he" improves the first phrase and shows that the revisor has recognised the meaning and not merely transferred the neuter gender of the Latin word as the early version had done.⁶⁰ The use of "neþer...neþer" gives some shape to the phrasing, but the overall result: "And he shal stie as a zerde bifor him, and as a roote fro þirsti lond; and neþer schap neþer fairnesse was to him, and we sien him and no beholding was" is no discernable hermeneutic improvement on the early version and if anything is stylistically more cumbersome. The final phrase "and we sien him and no beholding was" is no progression from "and wee sezen him and he was not of site". The King James version moves closer to making sense

of it: "and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him".⁴¹ The Good News finds paraphrase necessary to make the phrase intelligible: "He had no dignity or beauty to make us take notice of him".⁴¹

The limited range of source texts available to the Wycliffite translators and the lack of vernacular translation tradition made the project a formidable one. They did not have the benefit of the Greek and Hebrew scholarship of later ages, nor were there other direct vernacular translations with which they could compare their work. Their source texts were imperfect and at times incorrect. Obscurity in the source text does not make for clarity in the target text, and the restrictive nature of the Scriptures in terms of hermeneutic function limits translation possibilities when the meaning is unclear. The conditions under which the translation was made were rushed and uncertain. Nicholas of Hereford, one of the five people responsible for the early translation of the Old Testament, was forced to break off in mid-chapter at Baruch 3:20, and this was noted in the margin by the scribe who made a contemporary copy of the manuscript.⁴² His sudden departure from the translating group coincides historically with his flight to Rome to justify himself against the accusations of heresy made against him. The times were turbulent, as were the personalities involved. The acclaim of later

centuries has therefore far more to do with the political heroism of the enterprise than with the quality of the translation. Vernacular prose had reached greater heights in the works of Rolle, Julian and Hilton, and other partial translations of the Scriptures were already in existence. The fact is, as R.W.Chambers says "Wiclif gets credit for being a pioneer because only on that assumption could the crudity of the Wicliffite translation be explained".⁶⁴

Roughly contemporary with the later Wycliffite version and the prologue attributed to Purvey is the *Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk upon Translation*. John Trevisa 1326-1412, wrote this as the prologue to his translation of Higden's *Polichronicon*. Trevisa was a professional translator or "turner" and chaplain to Lord Thomas of Barkley who commissioned the translations. He is a natural candidate for speculative inclusion in the group of Bible translators⁶⁵ owing to his talent and proximity and an unsubstantiated mention of him in that context by Caxton,⁶⁶ but there is no concrete evidence of his involvement. The *Dialogue*, written about 1387, is ostensibly about translation in general, but in reality it is a text which wholeheartedly supports vernacular Scripture without actually stating the fact. It neatly fits the function of prologue to Higden's *Chronicles*, but also stands independently as a justification for the use of the

vernacular and upholds many of the ideas outlined in chapter fifteen of the Prologue to the later Wycliffite version.

Trevisa begins by saying, through the person of the Lord, that God ordained two remedies for the chaos of Babel, one the use of interpreter/translators and the other the use of a language common to all such as Latin.⁴⁷ When the clerk points out that as the Lord speaks, reads and understands Latin he has no need of translation, the reply reminds us of the Wycliffite group's problems with establishing a reliable source text and with the translation of some of the more difficult Old Testament passages in Latin. The Lord says: "I deny this argument, for though I can speak, read and understand Latin, there is much Latin in these books of Chronicles that I cannot understand, neither thou, without studying, avisement and looking of other books".⁴⁸ Access to the language of a text does not always give access to its content, either in the case of Latin, as Trevisa says here, or in English. Parts of the Vulgate remained closed to the Wycliffite translators in spite of their knowledge of Latin, and so parts of the English translation remained closed to the English reader. A similar situation arose, for slightly different reasons, with the Rheims Bible in the sixteenth century, which was translated into English, but with a

vocabulary intelligible only to the translators.⁶⁹ Translation involves something more than knowledge of the source and target languages; it involves a relationship with the text which not only includes a thorough understanding but a capacity and a will to project that understanding into the target language.

Trevisa's clerk suggests that people who do not understand Latin should either learn it or ask someone to explain the text to them. The Lord gives several reasons why it is not always possible for people to learn Latin and then points out that the difficulty with asking for help is that "the lewd man wots not what he should ask".⁷⁰ By "lewd" he means unskilled in Latin, for this is the same man who is to benefit from the written translation and must therefore be in a position to read English. This is a different kind of person from the "simplices"⁷¹ depicted in Palmer's *Determination* written around the turn of the century. Both Palmer and Butler consider that anyone who is not a member of the clergy is necessarily unworthy and incapable, whereas Trevisa has a far more flexible outlook towards the laity. He presents his "lewd" man not as being unworthy, simply ignorant of Latin, and perfectly able to benefit from the "cunning, information and lore"⁷² contained in Higden's *Chronicles*. In this he echoes the view of Wyclif that "no man was so rude a scholar that he

might learn the words of the Gospel according to his simplicity".⁷³

Trevisa reinforces Purvey's argument that the status of English is no less than other vernaculars which are already in use. "Then what hath English trespassed" asks the Lord, "that it (the Chronicle) might not be translated into English?"⁷⁴ He cites precedents for using English, the work of Alfred, Wyrefrith, Caedmon and Bede, and declares that "English preaching is very translation".⁷⁵ Having made his case for translation, Trevisa shows a translator's insight into the difficulty of the task: "no sinful man doth so well that it ne might do better, ne make so good a translation that he ne might be better".⁷⁶ Aware of the limitations of the translator, he has access to the text as a priority: "I desire not translation of these the best there might be, for that were an idle desire for any man that is now alive, but I would have a skilful translation, that it might be known and understood".⁷⁷

Setting the Wycliffite version into its literary and translation context makes it seem rather less unexpected and revolutionary. It was a reflection of general trends towards using the vernacular and towards shifting authority from clergy to laity, from text to reader. These trends were illustrated in the work of Chaucer and Langland, both

of whom were writing in verse in the vernacular before and during Wyclif's time. William Langland's *Piers the Plowman*⁷⁸ was written first in the 1360's and then revised and expanded later. His work has been called "A Fourteenth Century Apocalypse"⁷⁹ because of the depth and complexities of his exploration of the ways to salvation. According to Skeat, Langland was "a disciple of Wyclif"⁸⁰ and he certainly exhibits Lollard disdain for the practices of friars and pardonners.⁸¹ The writer is well versed in Latin as the frequent and apt quotes show, and "the Bible is the greatest single influence upon our author".⁸² *Piers* too is "lettred a litel",⁸³ sufficiently well to argue with the priest who brings his pardon and quote the Vulgate to him without translating it. The nature and complexity of the text requires considerable intellectual ability and commitment from the reader. This is not an instruction manual or a devotional tract which requires nothing more than to be read; this text does not have built-in reader response. Langland explores questions rather than provides answers and in doing so gives the reader a share in the authority and responsibility for its interpretation.

In the same way *The Canterbury Tales* depict the life and character of the protagonists without authorial comment. Chaucer 1340-1400 also had Lollard associates⁸⁴ and makes no effort to hide the hypocrisy and avarice of

of his own Pardoner in The Pardoner's Prologue. On the other hand he does not condemn it either; his aim is to entertain and he leaves the "reading" to the reader. "Within his imaginative work he takes no responsibility. He throws it onto the reader. We are treated as equals."²³ The work of both Chaucer and Langland reflects the same shift of authority from author to reader as was implied by the act of translating the Scriptures into the vernacular and circulating them without commentaries. For the first time reader response could be individual not predictable and collective. The reader could take responsibility for interpretation instead of having a text structured in such a way as to include or evoke the required response.

References to Chapter Six

1. The importance of Lyra's commentary was in the fact that it made direct translation a possibility. The allegorical interpretations of the Scriptures were complicated and systematised to the extent that they could not possibly be drawn from the text without the help of a commentary. Literal interpretation not only made much more sense of the material, it made more of the material accessible without elaborate commentary.
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3. Gordon Leff *William of Ockham* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1975) p.642
4. Wyclif *de Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* edited by R.Buddensieg 3 vols (no place: Wyclif Society 1905-7)
5. Herbert B. Workman *John Wyclif - A Study of the English Medieval Church* vol 2 (Connecticut: Archon Books 1966) p. 149
6. Derek Wilson *The People and the Book* (London: Barrie and Jenkins 1976) p.x Preface
7. Workman vol 2 p.151
8. Workman vol 2 p.156
9. Anne Hudson *English Wycliffite Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1978) p.164
10. William Butler and Thomas Palmer were the authors of the two most well documented attacks on the vernacular Scriptures. Their determinations are printed in *The Lollard Bible* by Margaret Deansely (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1920,1966) p398 and p.418 respectively.
11. Deansely p.407 "It is well known that to read Holy Scripture translated into the vernacular is a superior act, and neither invited nor required at the desire of a person of the lower order." (my translation)
12. Workman vol 2 p.155
13. Forshall and Maddon, the nineteenth century editors of *The Holy Bible: made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his followers* (Oxford: 1850), enthusiastically give Wyclif the major credit for the enterprise as does Henry Hervey Baber in *The New Testament translated by John Wiclif D.D.* (London: Hamilton 1810).
14. The mendicant friars demanded to be paid for their sermons and often tailored their preaching to their audience in order to please them better, and so get more money. This is very well documented in *Preaching in Medieval England* by G.R. Owst (New York: Russell and Russell Inc.1965) p.87. Wyclif was not alone in condemning this practice, but made himself many enemies by doing so.

15. The balance is only lately being redressed. In Paul Vincent Spade's introduction to Wyclif's *On Universals* edited by Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1985) p.vi he states: "Six hundred years after his death in 1384, John Wyclif's philosophical views are almost entirely unknown to modern scholars except in broadest outline."
16. Henry Knighton *Chronicon Henrici Knighton* edited by Joseph Lumby vol 2 (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode 1895) p.151 "A doctor of theology most eminent in his day. In philosophy he was considered second to none, in scholarly learning incomparable". (The translations from Knighton are mine)
17. Knighton p.151 "...as Christ had John the Baptist."
18. Knighton p.152 "and so the pearl of the Gospel is scattered and trodden underfoot by swine."
19. Knighton p. 152 "the jewel of the clergy is turned into the toy of the laity so that it might be for ever common property to the laity, whereas before it was the higher province of the clergy and the doctors of the church. And thus the betrothed of the church complain loudly and can cry out with the prophet..."
20. Workman vol 2 p.87 quotes Grosseteste's "sharp epistle" to Innocent IV's representative in England.
21. F.F.Bruce *The English Bible* (London: Lutterworth Press 1961) p.13
22. Workman vol 2 p.237
23. Margaret Aston quoted in *Wyclif in His Times* edited by Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1986) p.147
24. Kenny p.147
25. Deanesly p. 278 relates that Anne of Bohemia's father had founded the University of Prague where Wyclif's teaching was well received by John Hus, his pre-reformation counterpart.
26. These were the Gospels glossed in English with "the doctors upon them" i.e. with commentary included. Deanesly p.280 puts forward the idea that they were the glossed Gospels produced by John Purvey before he undertook the revision of the Wycliffite translation. It was considered acceptable for royalty to study the Bible in the vernacular with the appropriate guidance; had not the Wycliffite translation diverted the attention of the fourteenth century Church, there would most likely have been a translation of the Scriptures into English for individual noblemen or perhaps for the use of the court.
27. Deanesly p. 282 Also in H. Wheeler Robinson *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1964) p.148 as part of a later printed version of what probably began life as Purvey's *Determination*. Purvey wrote this treatise *Agens hem that seyn that*

- hooli wright schulde not or may not be draun in to Engliche* as a result of the debate on vernacular translation of the Scriptures between the Lollard Peter Payne and the Dominican Thomas Palmer at Oxford in 1403.
28. Deanesly p.441
 29. The North Midland Gospels. *A Fourteenth Century English Version* edited by Anna Paues.
 30. The Lollards produced a version of Richard Rolle's translation of the Psalms with a Lollard commentary.
 31. Deanesly p.302 There were three fourteenth century Middle English translations of the Anglo-Norman Apocalypse.
 32. J.A.W. Bennett p.337
 33. The Lollard movement began at the University of Oxford where Wyclif studied and taught and spread to other parts of the country as incumbents returned to their parishes and preached Lollard ideas. The intellectual nature of the group was witnessed by the fact that it was church policy to persuade the Lollards to recant by reasoned argument hence Pecoeks extensive vernacular works written in the first instance to counter Lollard doctrine.
 34. Most of the other Oxford Lollards recanted before Purvey. He was eventually persuaded to recant in 1401 but later took up Lollard activities again and for the most part kept a low profile until his death in the 1420's. His authorship of the Prologue and his responsibility for the revision of the first Wycliffite version seem likely but cannot be proved. Margaret Deanesly p.252-267 is confident, Anne Hudson p.173 remains unconvinced.
 35. A modern volume on the same subject, Eugene Nida's *Bible Translating - An Analysis of Principles and Procedures* (New York: American Bible Society 1947) is an extensive study, covers cultural and linguistic difficulties of both the Old and New Testament and is full of examples and prescriptions for translation.
 36. Anne Hudson p.67
 37. Anne Hudson p.67
 38. Anne Hudson p.69
 39. Anne Hudson p.69
 40. Anne Hudson p.69
 41. Anne Hudson p.67
 42. Anne Hudson p.68
 43. Anne Hudson p.68
 44. Anne Hudson p.68. Also on the same page "...to make þe sentence as trewe and open in English as it is in Latyn, eiper more trewe and more open þan it is in Latyn." Again p.69 "I have translaid as opinli or opinliere in English as in Latyn." Once more p.69

- "men migten expoune myche opeliere and shortliere þe Bible in English þan þe elde greeete doctouris han expounid it in Latyn."
45. R.W.Chambers "On the Continuity of English Prose" in *Harpfield's Life of More* edited by Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1932, 1963) p.ciii
 46. Anne Hudson p.68
 47. Jerome's letter to Pammachius in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series* edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace vol 6 St. Jerome (New York: Eerdmans Publishing 1979) p.113
 48. Anne Hudson p.68
 49. Anne Hudson p.72
 50. Walter Hilton *The Scale of Perfection* EETS translated Gerard Sitwell (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne 1953)
 51. *The Cloud of Unknowing* edited Phyllis Hodgson EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1944)
 52. Anne Hudson p.58-59 prints the early and late versions of the Wycliffite translation of John 10 11:18 from which all quotes are taken.
 53. *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine ex Vulgate versione* (1893)
 54. *New Testament Gospels - The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels with the versions of Wycliffe and Tyndale* edited by Joseph Bosworth (London: Reeves and Turner 1888) p.258
 55. Bosworth p.505
 56. *The Holy Bible* authorised King James Version (London: Collins 1937) p.99
 57. *The New Testament* The Gideon's New International Version p.266
 58. *The Good News* p.132
 59. Anne Hudson prints the early and later versions of the Wycliffite translation of Isaiah 53 p.40-41 from which all quotes are taken.
 60. Anne Hudson p.165
 61. Collins King James Version p.614
 62. *The Good News* p.717
 63. Deanesly p.253
 64. R.W.Chambers p.cviii
 65. Alfred Pollard in his introduction to *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse* (London: Constable 1903) discusses the possibility of Trevisa's involvement and hopes for further investigation of the matter.
 66. Caxton's introduction to the printed edition of Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polichronicon* states that besides the Higden Trevisa translated "the byble and bartylmew de proprietatibus reum out of latyn ito englisshe". Caxton's "Prohemye to the

- Polychronicon" from Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton
67. John Trevisa "Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk on Translation" in *Fifteenth Century Verse and Prose* edited by Alfred Pollard (London: Constable 1903) p.203
 68. Pollard p.204
 69. H. Wheeler Robinson in *Ancient and English Version of the Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1940) p.190-195 gives an account of the Latinate and at times incomprehensible vocabulary.
 70. Pollard p. 205
 71. Deanesly p.423
 72. Pollard p. 204
 73. Workman vol 2 p.151
 74. Pollard p. 206
 75. Pollard p. 207
 76. Pollard p. 207
 77. Pollard p. 207
 78. William Langland *Piers the Plowman* edited by Walter Skeat EETS (Oxford: Trubner 1906)
 79. Geoffrey Shepherd "Religion and Philosophy in Chaucer" in *Writers and Their Background: Geoffrey Chaucer* edited by Derek Brewer (London: Bell 1974) p.269. Also Morton Bloomfield *Piers Plowman as Fourteenth Century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 1962)
 80. *Specimens of English Literature* edited by Walter Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1892 edition) p.1
 81. Skeat 1906 Prologue p.3
 82. Morton Bloomfield "The Present State of Piers Plowman Studies" in *Style and Symbolism in Piers Plowman A Modern Critical Anthology* edited by Robert J. Blanch (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press 1969) p.20
 83. Skeat 1906 Passus VII p.84
 84. Derek Brewer "Gothic Chaucer" in *Writers and Their Background: Geoffrey Chaucer* edited by Derek Brewer (London: Bell 1974) p.23
 85. Brewer p.32

Chapter SevenENGLISH ESTABLISHED AS THE WRITTEN LITERARY MEDIUMTHE AGE OF TRANSLATION AND TRANSITIONTHE IMPACT OF PRINTING

The trend towards an increase in the use of English as a written medium, supported by the work of Chaucer, Langland, Trevisa and the Lollards, gained irreversible momentum in the fifteenth century. Spoken English had already replaced French as the language of the upper classes and continued to strengthen its advantage. Parliament was opened with a speech in the vernacular as early as the 1360's; pleading in the lawcourts was allowed in English.¹ The Mystery Plays and Christmas Carols were evidence of the strong vernacular oral tradition; now the written language used for practical purposes began to come into its own. People began to make their wills in English, the earliest surviving one is dated 1387;² in 1442 the Brewers decided to keep their records in English;³ circa 1450 the papers of Godstow Nunnery, accounts, deeds concerning the acquisition of land, liturgical documents and devotional pieces, were all translated into the vernacular.⁴ Correspondence necessary for trade and family business was conducted in the vernacular, news and gossip was exchanged in written English as the extensive Paston

letters⁵ and Stonor family documents⁶ witness. English, with all its variations of dialect, was becoming the common means of written communication.

The development of English and its use in business was paralleled by an important change in attitude towards learning. Literacy became an economic necessity and a social benefit,⁷ which meant that schools were no longer considered to be exclusively for the education of the clergy; the advantages of scholarship were no longer perceived as reserved solely for high achievers or those destined for the religious life. Businesses needed accountants and scribes and looked to the schools to provide them. Education came to be seen as a way of improving possibilities of employment and so became required by and available to a larger part of the population.⁸ The Universities, Oxford and Cambridge, expanded greatly during the fifteenth century and "almost every region of the country provides examples of the foundation of schools by laymen and women of lesser rank".⁹ 1425 saw the opening of the Guildhall library in London for scriptural and religious studies with others at Bristol and Worcester.¹⁰ For the more popular market, the translator and copyist John Shirley (1366-1456) ran a scriptorium in London in which he had copied the most well-known pieces of the time. From a selection of these he compiled anthologies

and miscellaneous collections, sometimes to order, and sold them in his bookshop. His business also had a library section for lending out manuscripts with the following request to his customers:

"And whane ye haue þis booke ouerlooked
 þat ye sende þis booke ageyne
 Hoome to Shirley.....¹¹

School books teaching the alphabet were available, as were text books and dialogues to help with learning French,¹² which was falling out of use, and as literacy grew so did demand for practical information of all kinds. Devotional literature, particularly the Saints' Lives¹³ and the Life of Christ,¹⁴ was still enormously popular, but so were books about fishing and hunting,¹⁵ bringing up children,¹⁶ recipes,¹⁷ legal books,¹⁸ and chronicles.¹⁹ The Church was not the only establishment experiencing a shift in authority owing to access to information in the vernacular, since many areas of knowledge²⁰ were being opened up to more people by the proliferation of texts translated into English from Latin and French and by the increase of readers among the general population. Secular prose now provided competition in an area where where devotional literature had previously held sway unchallenged: the movement was too strong for English not to be accepted as the main written medium.

In spite of this dramatic increase in literary activity and in the literacy of the population, until the 1950s, when the current ongoing process of reappraisal began to revise some of the inherited misconceptions, the fifteenth century was "generally admitted to be the dullest age in our literature".²¹ The emphasis has been laid upon the fact that the age produced "not a single (literary) genius",²² and that the death of Chaucer in 1400 "deprived England at a blow of her one outstanding author".²³ Part of the problem in trying to quantify the value of original vernacular output between Chaucer and Shakespeare is that they provide such monumental literary landmarks and are so well secured in the canon that people like John Gower c1330-1408, Thomas Hoccleve 1368-1426, John Lydgate 1370-1449, Reginald Pecock c1390-1460 and Thomas Malory d. 1469 retrospectively pale into insignificance even though they may have enjoyed considerable contemporary popularity. Being in the shadow of Chaucer and Shakespeare does not entirely account for the fashion of ignoring or actively disparaging certain fifteenth century English writers; some of them have been the victims of a legacy of post-Reformation attitudes towards literary figures of the immediately pre-Reformation era.

Lydgate, as a writer more prolific than Shakespeare and a Benedictine monk, has been the subject of

particularly scathing remarks about himself and his work. In 1802 Joseph Ritson dismissed him as "a drivelling monk",²⁴ in 1931 Philip Henderson referred to the "Lydgatian wastes" and his "interminable verses"²⁵ in spite of the fact that he was popular enough immediately after his death for his poems to be copied by Shirley and set in print by Caxton, and to be described in his epitaph as "qui fuit quondam celebris Brittanæ fama poesis".²⁶ The varying fortunes of Lydgate's reputation is best illustrated by the 1952 edition of Thomas Fuller's *Worthies of England*. Fuller, a moderate but nevertheless writing in the turbulent and unforgiving seventeenth century, was generous enough to describe Lydgate as "both in prose and poetry, the best author of his age". This comment draws a footnote from the modern editor, who explains that Lydgate is remembered now mainly for one minor poem and "was a voluminous but not a great poet".²⁷

Post-Reformation religious polemic had a considerable hand in shaping the credibility of those pre-Reformation writers. The reputation of Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* was seriously undermined by an oblique reference to it in *The Scholemaster* written in 1570 by Roger Ascham, tutor to Elizabeth I. "In our forefathers' time" he writes, "when papistry as a standing pool covered and overflowed all England, few books were read in our tongue, saving certain

books of chivalry ...which ...were made in monasteries by idle monks or wanton canons; as one for example Morte Darthur".²⁸ A destruction cleverly achieved by association.

The low profile of the fifteenth century writers has also been due to the fact that they have resisted categorisation both as a group and as individuals. The poet Lydgate and to a lesser extent Hoccleve were writing within a limited and specialised courtly tradition which neither fits into the medieval mould nor heralds the Renaissance. Malory's work was not considered to have emanated from any previous vernacular model, on the contrary it is in many ways ahead of its time, and Peacock's work has been described as "a raid into new territory: he strives to conduct in English that kind of philosophical discussion for which Latin had hitherto been regarded as the only proper medium".²⁹ The English writing of the fifteenth century has suffered neglect at the hands of literary historians because of its position between the winding down of the medieval tradition and the burgeoning literary/Humanist Renaissance. It has suffered further from the lack of a central figure to bridge the transition and through which to define progress in vernacular writing. Evidence of literary activity is piecemeal and the trends are muddled, it is true, but the age is no less dynamic and varied for that, and certainly no less important to the

subject in hand.

Returning to contemporary conditions, it has to be said that life at the time was extremely unsettled and not conducive to literary growth. The political order was constantly changing; the annointed King in the person of Richard II had, after an unstable reign, finally been deposed and replaced by Henry IV in 1399. This began a century of internal conflict between the houses of Lancaster and York and external conflict with France.³⁰ The next King, Henry V, died after nine years' reign leaving a baby son, Henry VI. He took over the throne in 1422 but was deposed by Edward IV, restored briefly then murdered. In 1470 it was Edward's turn to be deposed by the same person, Warwick the Kingmaker. Edward too was restored to power, but when he died in 1483 his brother seized the throne from the boy King Edward and ruled as Richard III until he was killed shortly afterwards at Bosworth and Henry Tudor became King. Continual uncertainty, insecurity, unrest and rebellion, coupled with external war and several devastating outbreaks of plague were not conducive to a flourishing literary scene and made patronage in particular a very difficult and insecure business. The constant struggle for political power and material wealth was such that law and order within the country had only a tenuous hold, communications were difficult and situations were

continually changing to such an extent that the sparsity of original literary work has to be assigned at least partly to the conditions of the time.³¹

Translation, which has so often come to the fore when a culture has been lacking input from its native language, became the means of bridging the shortfall between the popular demand for vernacular texts and the lack of supply. Contemporary lack of creativity was compensated for in the wealth of translated material. *Mandeville's Travels*³² for example, was originally French, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* was compiled from several French sources,³³ Misyn's *Fire of Love* and *The Mending of Lyf* were translations from Richard Rolle's *de Incendio Amoris* and *de Emendacione Vitae*.³⁴ What had been in the previous century Trevisa's craft, Chaucer's inspiration and a mainstream literary activity now expanded even further to meet the needs of growing literacy. In doing so it not only exerted considerable influence on the shaping of English prose but also exposed some of the problems inherent in the process of translation. In the absence of a strong native style the source languages, mainly French and Latin, had a discernible influence on the developing English prose of the time. When translating from French it was often possible to keep to the original syntax with its trailing sentences,³⁵ but translation from Latin required more

syntactical reorganisation. The Wycliffite translators had grappled unsuccessfully with this phenomenon; now some of the fifteenth century writers began to see that "the sentence structure of the Latin was so far removed from the English that they were forced to rethink the sentence and give it some kind of English shape".³⁴ The "English shape" appeared gradually as a result of the exposure to translated material but not before a considerable variety of experimentation and floundering had taken place. The fact that the proportion of translation to original prose was "probably higher than at any other period of English history"³⁷ paradoxically improved the quality of native prose, either by imposing the structural definition present in the more advanced source language or by forcing the restructuring of the English where the source language structure could not be followed.³⁸ The problem is that this was not achieved in a logical progression and many of the avenues explored by individuals turned out not to lead anywhere in particular. The overall impression of this period of growth and change in the structure and development of English is of a miscellany of contrasting styles in both original and translated prose.

Reginald Pecock's vernacular prose was a conscious experiment not destined to become part of the mainstream writing. The *Donet*³⁹ was an attempt to use English as the

language of theological argument bearing in mind the intellectual limitations of the newly literate non-latin trained audience which made up a considerable part of the Lollard following. Pecoock's prose lacks the lyricism and imagination of Rolle and Hilton since the argument is factual and definitive rather than mystical and emotive. The nature of the content restricts the expression and makes the prose rather flat and technical despite the employment of devices such as dialogue (between father and son); repetition; "wherbi a man falliþ from synne into synne, and so fro myscheef into myscheef";⁴⁰ doubling up words in the latinate sermon tradition "vice or synne", "contrarie or agens", "service or wil",⁴¹ "holdiþ and grautiþ", "falshede and untrouþe", "disoord and contrariete",⁴² and many other examples. There is no overtly French vocabulary and the only discernible Latin influence is more a product of the ecclesiastical subject matter than of specific structures. The words used are deliberately Anglo-Saxon in origin.

Richard Misyn's translation of Rolle's *Incendio Amoris* makes an interesting contrast. Misyn was also a clergyman and writes in the same sermon tradition but allows Rolle's mystic lyricism to come through in the translation. The influence of the original is sometimes evident in the word order when Misyn is translating a direct quotation:

"Inimici eius terram lingent, þat is to say: his enmys þe erth sall lykke",⁴³ but there are also instances when he deliberately alters the Latin word order: "tanquam aurum in fornace probauit eos; þat is to say als gold he has proued þam in þe fornas"⁴⁴ or "laudabo dominum in vita mea, þat is to say my lord sall I worship in my lyfe",⁴⁵ or "Diligam te domine, fortitudo mea; þe lord my strenght I sall luf",⁴⁶ giving the words English shape.

From French sources one of the most interesting products was Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. It was translated according to Caxton "out of certeyn bookes of Frensshe",⁴⁷ but the translator does not rely on the source texts for structure and vocabulary, he reorganises the translated prose into a narrative which not only has its origins in earlier vernacular traditions but looks forward to the narrative novel which was not to appear on the English literary scene until the eighteenth century. The story of Arthur and Guinivere and the Knights of their court is action-packed, one event following close on the next and reading like a chronicle or one of the narrative books of the Old Testament. There are strong echoes of the early English writings of Saints' Lives, where magic/miracle, chance encounter, dreams, disguise and sudden turns of fate play a part in the action. As a narrator, Malory intrudes very little and then only in

short phrases to give structure to the narrative: "And so we leve hem there tyll on the morne",⁴⁸ or to authenticate his story by quoting his source: "And as the Freynshe booke sayth there cam fourty knyghtes to sir Darras..."⁴⁹

The prose is that of the spoken word; it is clear and direct and echoes the oral tradition of storytelling but without the characteristic set patterns and repetitive phrases found in ballads and epic poems. What gives the story momentum is the fact that much of the text is direct speech which has an authenticity and freshness about it even to a modern reader. For example when Bewmaynes is scorned by his lady he underplays his determination to stay with her in his reply. "Damesell," seyde Bewmaynes, "who is aferde let him fle, for hit were shame to turne agayne sithen I have ryddyn so longe with you."⁵⁰ Her reply is less polite: "Well, seyde she, ye shall sone whether ye woll or woll not."

The influence of the French sources on vocabulary is hardly evident apart from proper names and a very small number of words such as "sauuff", "travayle" or "arraunt" which may well have been already integrated into English. In the structure of the prose there are occasions when Malory uses something approaching the French trailing sentence but he keeps tight control of it, neatly

subordinating all the clauses with "and", "lest", "therefor" or "that" so that the movement is always forward and the meaning unambiguous. The Damesell to Bewmaynes again:

"Sir", she seyde, "I mervayle at what thou art and of what kyn thou art com; for boldely thou spekyst and boldely thou hast done, that I have sene. Therefore I pray the, save thyself an thou may, for thyne horse and thou have had grete travayle, and I drede that we dwelle ovirlonge from the seege; for hit is hens but seven myle, and all previous passages we ar paste sauff all only this passage and here I drede me sore last ye shall cacche som hurte. Therefore I wolde ye were hens, that ye were nat brused nothir hurte with this strange Knyght".⁵¹

The speech has clarity, shape and movement and is far less clumsy than, for example, William Caxton's original prose or the involved and artificially structured vernacular writing of Reginald Pecock. What Malory's work lacked was the moral or philosophical element which would have allied it to the established English tradition of religious writing and given it more credibility in the eyes of the post-Reformation critics and scholars. In the preface to the printed edition, Caxton feels it necessary to sell the book on its moral value: "For herein shall be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil."⁵² In reality *Morte D'Arthur* is a secular book with very little even of

philosophy except, interestingly, when Tristram is imprisoned by Sir Darras and falls ill. Malory is uncharacteristically moved to comment that "for all the whyle a presonere may have hys helth of body he may endure undir the mercy of God and in hope of good delyveraunce; but whan syknes towchith a presoners body than may a presonere say all welth ys hym berauffte and than hath he cause to wayle and wepe".⁵³

It has been said of *Morte D'Arthur* that "the whole style is a deliberate artifact. It does not represent the language of his own day. Equally it is not the language of any earlier period".⁵⁴ But setting aside the rather specialised subject matter and the corresponding courtly speech, the style is not so far removed from the narrative sections of contemporary letters. In 1482 Richard Cely wrote to his brother: "The same day that I come to Norlache, on a Sunday befor mattens frome Burforde, William Mydwynter wyllewyd me and in howr comynycacyon he askyd me hefe I wher in any whay of maryayge. I towlde hyme nay, and he informeyd me that ther whos a zeunge gentyll whoman hos father ys name ys Lemryke and her mother ys deyd..."⁵⁵ The function of the passage is utilitarian, namely to impart information, but the communication is animated by the enthusiasm of the narrator, made real and lively by the use of detail in names and places and has its own momentum just

like Malory's concise narrative: "And so they rode with hym untyll his castell, and there they were brought into the halle whyche was well apparayled and so they were unarmed and set at a borde. And when this knyght sawe sir Trystram, anone he knew him..."⁵⁴

As far as fifteenth century prose is concerned, Malory's work supports the evidence provided by contemporary letters that English did not have to be complicated or highly ornate to be vibrant and dynamic. The influence of French through translation could be positive and creative in the hands of a writer who was not setting out to imitate as Lydgate did, or write within the kind of pre-determined boundaries that Pecock set himself. Ascham's dismissal of *Morte DArthur* (assuming that he had read it) may have stemmed as much from the fact that the prose was insufficiently weighty and complex for a sixteenth century intellectual's taste as from the perceived lack of morality of the content. There is an interesting connection in the fact that while *Morte DArthur* was being composed in an uncomplicated conversational style, one of the first Humanists, Lorenzo Valla, was taking the early Bible translators to task for turning everyday Greek into complicated Latin, and not much more than half a century later Luther was looking to the spoken German of the streets and market places to provide him with a language

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of the original".⁵⁸ He also, as the Wycliffite group did, experienced difficulties with corrupt readings of the source text and made problems for himself by not reading the passage through but by translating phrase by phrase. On the surface it seems as if the progress in translation techniques since the rather crude Wycliffite versions had been minimal. A comparison of a short passage of the translation with the source text is sufficient to demonstrate the translation procedure and to illustrate that the translator was also very much influenced by the French vocabulary, not expanding far from the original wording unless absolutely necessary:

& puis mist Diex Adam et
Eve en paradis terrestre
qui est plains de touz
deliz & de bones odeurs
et leur abandonna tout ce
paradis fors seulement d'un
pommier

And after that sette God Adam
and Eve in paradise terrestre
which is full of all
delitis and of good savours
and abaundemid to them alle
that paradise save only an
appultre⁵⁹

The translator begins with the only expansion in the passage rendering "puis" as "after that". The glimpse of conversational tone is soon lost however as he settles immediately into the French word order which makes the English formal and constrained. "Sette God" and "paradise terrestre" could have easily been "God sette" and "terrestrial paradise" but he chooses to keep as close to the construction of the source text as possible. The reversal of verb and subject could be argued for in terms

of poetics or emphasis, but the adjective following the noun is typical of romance languages and not a characteristic of fifteenth century English, poetic or otherwise. Not only is the order of words that of the source text, but the vocabulary is also as close as possible. "Terrestre" is left unchanged, "deliz" is "delights" and "abandonna" becomes "abaundonmid", although he does resist "odours" for "odeurs" and instead produces the far more appropriate "savours". The overall effect of juxtaposing source text and translation is that the translation resembles a gloss or dual text, yet the English text was presented as an independent piece of English prose.

Although the passage has been translated into the target language, the phrasing and vocabulary retains the Frenchness of the source text, making its origins easily identifiable. The translator has worked through the piece phrase by phrase without regard for the overall effect of the passage as a unit. This particular translator's habit of working with a small area of the text and ignoring the pattern and development of the work as a whole seems to have been a common one among translators of the fifteenth century, particularly when the translation in hand was a close reproduction of a single source. This way of working would account in part for the "merchaunt" error and

entirely for the inconsistency in the use of "lyf" and "soule" in the Wycliffite early version of John 10:12.⁴⁰ The fifteenth century translator appears to have had little conception of connecting patterns in the work as a whole. Samuel Workman describes the phenomenon in this way: "Middle English prose writers until 1460 or 70 appeared to have lacked the habit of associating the pattern of thought with the pattern of expression or form. Whether or not they perceived the full pattern of thought from its beginning, their attention to the form did not embrace the whole but was habitually concentrated only upon the part immediately under expression."⁴¹ A parallel might be drawn here with the rise in the awareness of perspective in painting during the same era.⁴² Just as the idea of perspective was crucial to the development of painting, so the perception of unity of thought and expression throughout, which is also a sort of perspective, and by extension an awareness in translation of the interrelationship of linguistic and thematic structures, was essential not only to the development of English writing but also to the successful translation of a work as varied and interconnected as the Bible.

At this point in the progress of English as a target language for translation, there are signs that the success of a translation in terms of English expression had everything to do with the relationship of the translation

to its source text. A close relationship, as in the Wycliffite versions or *Le Bible en Francois*, inhibited the expression of the target language. A less rigid adherence to the source or use of several sources left the writer free to restructure the material as Malory did and order it in his own style. Re-telling the stories of the Scriptures orally or in verse or prose had never been a problem for the vernacular, but close rendering from the single official Latin source (the Vulgate) had always presented and would continue to present difficulties, until the Humanist philological approach to the source text expanded the translation possibilities and shifted the perspective of the Vulgate.

Medieval tradition allowed for licence and approximation, imagination and embellishment; the incipient Renaissance was to require precision and a more scientific approach, accuracy with fullness of expression. The fifteenth century writers were occupied in acquiring the vernacular language facility in a period of confusion before change; by 1513 Gavin Douglas was complaining that Caxton's *Eneydos* "quilk that he sais of Frensch he did translait/ ...hes nathing ado therwith, God wait" and that Caxton himself "Knew never thre wowrdis of all that Virgill meant".⁶³ Douglas, looking forward to Renaissance thinking, required both the letter and the spirit of Virgil's

original, whereas Caxton in the Medieval tradition had been happy to provide an English rendering of a French translation of a classical Latin work, a text at least twice removed from its primary source.

Experience of the process of translation and exposure to translated material had several positive effects on the target language. The fifteenth century writers were eventually led to structure the vernacular on the lines of a better developed model and the reading public had access to prose which in turn influenced future prose composition. The English prose writer was educated into "composing by units broader than the separate sentence member".⁶⁴ As an example of how English prose structure was improved by the process of translating, Workman quotes Edward of York who translated *Master of the Game* in 1405. Edward's original prose is neither "plain nor lucid"⁶⁵ but his translated prose is relatively clear and well constructed because he keeps closely to the structure of the French source text. At the other end of the century as the letters of the Pastons, Celys and Stonors illustrate, the writing of coherent, well-organised and lively original prose was no longer a problem.

The whole process of the development of vernacular prose was immeasurably influenced by the arrival of

printing in England in the 1470's. It was an event which not only foregrounded the role of translation in shaping the language to an even greater degree, but also redefined the position of the text in terms of function and reader response. The invention of printing has not always been given adequate credit as a literary as well as an historical landmark; it has either been ignored as a revolutionary event or viewed as an evolutionary technological response to the increased demand for more quickly produced and more readily available texts. The fact that wood blocks had been used for some time for capital letters in manuscripts and that the printing process sprang up in several places at about the same time in Europe confirms this idea but the effect of the invention, although its potential was not so perceived at the time, was revolutionary indeed.¶¶

Printing altered the function of the text, it redefined the reader/text relationship and gave rise to a new authority, that of the printed word. It lessened the need for texts to be committed to memory, important in the process towards a direct translation of the Bible, and it speeded up the shaping of a coherent prose style through greater public access to texts and through access to a wider variety of writing. It was also, through advertisements, broadsheets and later pamphlets, the most

efficient and potentially seditious means of mass communication so far available.

The function of the text shifted from that of peripheral aide-memoire to that of central basic reference. What had been recorded imperfectly in the collective memory; from epic poems to how to skin a rabbit, could be recorded consistently in print. Even more significantly, this same consistent version of the text could be studied simultaneously by several different people. Information could be readily dispersed; study no longer depended on having a teacher or being in a particular place; philosophy, theology and poetry could be easily read and discussed; the same liturgy could be followed simultaneously by each lay person from an identical book.

Proliferation of material and an increase in text ownership through printing encouraged a more personal reader response. A century before in Wyclif's time the relative scarcity of texts meant that most people were used to sharing both material and response in a group situation. A poem or story recited to entertain company, a few sheets of manuscript read aloud to a group of friends or a sermon preached to the congregation elicited a collective response to the material presented, whereas the individual reading a

text privately was called upon to make a personal response. It is interesting in this context to notice that Chaucer was very popular in print, the *Canterbury Tales* running to two editions between 1476 and 1491.⁴⁷ Chaucer's stories and characters are presented without overt authorial comment or accompanying moral treatise; the reader's response is left open.⁴⁸ The growth in the area of individual response allowed the corresponding weakening in the authority of establishments like the Church or institutions like schools where collective and united response was important for the maintenance of order and power. At the same time the books themselves provided another layer of authority; they were a tangible measure of culture and knowledge which could compete with, challenge and diminish the traditional authorities of religion, the schoolteacher, superstition and folk lore. This is not to say that the centrality of the Church to medieval life was in any way lessened, rather that the relationship of religion to the society it served was being altered by changes in that society. Written documents had always had so much more authority and reliability than oral communication,⁴⁹ with printing that kind of authority became more widely available. Having a text to refer to meant that it was no longer necessary for important information to be presented in easy-to-remember form. Many early religious works had been in verse so that their more important parts might be easily committed to

memory. Now it was possible, simpler and more reliable to refer to the the text itself. This had no small effect on the way in which the medieval mind worked. Through printing, as Elisabeth Eisenstein puts it, "the nature of the collective memory was transformed".⁷⁰ The individual mind also adjusted to the phenomenon. Is it coincidence that Workman charts the beginning of the English prose writer's perception of form relative to the whole as occurring in the 1470's? If printing cannot be proved to be responsible for this development, it may safely be said to have facilitated and accelerated it. Exposure to more texts and seeing the book as a physical entity instead of separate sheets of manuscript must have given a new perspective to the way in which the writer/ translator viewed a piece of writing.

Printing arrived in England in the 1470's with William Caxton's Westminster Press, but had established itself in Europe some fifteen years earlier in a way which has some relevance to the subject in hand. The first book to be printed was the most important in the canon, the Vulgate Bible. The forty two line Bible or Gutenberg Bible as it is known, was produced c1455 by the eponymous Mainz goldsmith of "vision and ability" who "most probably"⁷¹ invented printing. His Vulgate Bible was followed in 1466 by a Bible in German printed by Johann Mentelin in Strasbourg; an

Italian Bible printed in Venice in 1471 by Wendelin of Speier; the Old and New Testaments separately in French in Lyon in the 1470's (not direct translations but based on Peter Comestor's commentaries); a Dutch Old Testament at Delft with the Psalter added later; a Catalan Bible in 1478; a Czech New Testament in 1475 and a complete Bible in Czech at Prague in 1488.⁷² In spite of this considerable European precedent for printed vernacular Bibles before 1500, the nearest Caxton came was the *Golden Legend* of 1481⁷³ "wherein ben conteyned alle the hygh and grete festys of our lord, the festys of our blessyd lady, the lyves passyons and miracles of many other sayntes and other hystoryes and acts".⁷⁴

Why did Caxton not print an English Bible? If the cost of paper and printing deterred him, "expense did not prevent the printing of so bulky a work as Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*".⁷⁵ If the archaic language of the Wycliffite version daunted him, he had no such qualms about Chaucer's work. The answer lies in the fact that he was first and foremost a businessman, shrewd and practical. It would have been foolhardy to print the Wycliffite version as although it was over half a century since the Lollards Badby and Oldcastle had been burnt⁷⁶ and persecution of the sect had died out, the taint of heresy surrounding Lollard activities remained. Suspicion of heresy had ended the

theologian Reginald Pecock's career as vernacular writer as late as 1457 even though he had set out to counter Lollard doctrine⁷⁷ not to defend it. Although the secular authority in the form of Parliament had stopped short of banning the vernacular Bible, the ecclesiastical prohibition of Archbishop Arundel made in 1409 still stood, so that officially new translations had to be approved by the church. Caxton himself had neither the linguistic nor the theological expertise to undertake such a large translation enterprise and, more to the point, he had no need to as there was other material available for printing which was equally popular and far less controversial. He did need his royal patrons however,⁷⁸ to give social credibility to his work and to support his translation ventures financially. He would do nothing which might compromise his standing in their eyes and took every opportunity to connect them with his work. The translation of *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* for example was done according to its prologue "at the comaundement of the right hie myghty and vertuose Prynccesse"⁷⁹ Margaret of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV. Anthony, Earl Rivers, brother-in-law to the King, translated *The Dictes or Sayengs of the Philosophres* and again according to the prologue "desired" Caxton "to put the sayd booke in enprinte".⁸⁰ Caxton would not have needed much persuading in view of the pedigree of the material and the prestige of the author. "Caxton's policy was to issue

texts in the vernacular and to provide reading matter that was up-to-date";⁸¹ he was neither furthering a religious cause nor pioneering ideals, simply cornering the vernacular market and making money out of a new invention.

The two major influences on English prose in the fifteenth century, translation and the impact of the printed text, come together in Caxton's work. Lack of original vernacular prose made him turn to translation for his material and he began translating the *History of Troy*⁸² even before he had learned the art of printing. It appears that he had the innovative and long-term aim of producing vernacular texts for the English market even before he was established in England.⁸³ The volume of his output, more than one hundred and eight items published over twenty years,⁸⁴ meant that he was in a better position to promote the vernacular and influence English prose reading and writing than anyone else of his time. It has been said that Caxton "through his work as printer translator and editor ...to a substantial degree shaped the popular and general reading matter of England in the last quarter of the fifteenth century".⁸⁵ It was Caxton who selected the material, translated it himself or edited the translations done for him. Having to look at a text with a view to printing it and then reading a text set out in edited form must have heightened consciousness of structure. Editing

broke down the text into manageable proportions. Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* for example, finished in 1470 and said in the prologue by Caxton to be a translation "whyche cople Syr Thomas Malorye dyd take oute of certayn bookes of frensshe"⁶⁴ although no one original has been found, was divided into books and chapters specifically for printing.⁶⁷ This notion of structure was to be taken further in the case of the Scriptures, which had been divided into chapters as early as 1244⁶⁸ but was first given verse numbers in an edition printed at Lyons in 1528.

The business of translation and printing also made for a greater awareness of language. Dialectical differences had not mattered so much in texts limited to regional use; copies could be amended to the scribe's dialect as they were made. Printing was more permanent and less flexible. Once the press had been set up the text was immutable,⁶⁹ therefore the language had to be suitable for all readers from the beginning. In the prologue to his translation of *Eneydos*, completed in 1490, Caxton gives us a unique insight into the linguistic problems he experienced as writer/translator in English at that time. It has to be said that much of the material in the prologues was designed as publicity to promote the book, and that Caxton has proved unreliable in some of his assertions. Nevertheless what he has to say about the state of the

English language at the end of the fifteenth century is interesting and valid as a contemporary opinion. The prologue begins with his description of how he came across a French version of Virgil's *Aeneid* and was impressed both by the story and by the "fayr and honest terms and wordes in frenshe".⁹⁰ It seemed to him that the book ought to be known "as wel as for the eloquence as for the historyes". He was afraid that it would not please "some gentylnen whiche late blamed me sayeng yt in my translations I had over curyous termes which coude not be vnderstande of comyn peple and desired me to vse olde and homely termes in my translacyons". Anxious to please his reading public, Caxton found an old book containing such vocabulary and read it, but found "the englysshe was so rude and brood that I could not wel vnderstande it". To reinforce his point, he relates how the Abbot of Westminster had shown him "certayne evidences" with a view to his translating them into contemporary English, but Caxton found them "more lyke to dutche than englysshe" and "coude not reduce ne brynge it to be vnderstonden". From the description of the language and the fact that it was the Archbishop who showed him the material, these texts could have easily been Anglo-Saxon religious manuscripts. Even so, Caxton's general premise remains intact: the rapidity with which English was developing meant that many texts were becoming difficult to read. "Our language now used", he tells his reader,

"varyeth ferre from that whiche was vsed and spoken when I was borne". The prologue continues with a short anecdote about some merchants who set sail for Zeland but were held up for lack of wind and forced to land again further along the coast for provisions. One of them asked at a house for "egges" but the "good wyf" could not understand him and thought he was speaking French. Eventually his companion solved the problem by using the word "eyren". Such diversity of dialect presents as great a problem of choice for the translator as it does in comprehension for the reader. "Loo what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte, egges or eyren" asks Caxton feelingly, "certaynly it is harde to playse euery man by cause of diuersitie and chaunge of langage".

Coping with "diversitie and chaunge" was only part of the problem, as there was also the question of register. There were those scholars who wished to retain the elitist nature of a certain type of English by keeping the vocabulary incomprehensible to those deemed unsuitable to read it; a sort of compensation for the loss of Latin as the language of scholarship. "Som honest and grete clerkes have been wyth me and desired me to wryte the most curyous termes that I coude fynde", Caxton tells us in the same Prologue, "and thus bytwene playn, rude and curyous I stande abashed". Ever the diplomat and businessman, he

decides that the middle course is best declaring that he has translated "this sayd booke in to our englysshe not over rude ne curyous but in such terms as shall be vnderstande".⁹¹ Caxton's minor difficulties in translating register foreshadow the greater ones soon to come: Luther determined to translate the Scriptures into the German used by "the mothers in the house, the children in the streets, the common man in the market place",⁹² and at the other end of the scale the translators of the Rheims Bible whose latinate English proved less comprehensible in places than the Latin source text.⁹³

The question of register is strongly linked with the idea of the suitability of the text for the reader or, put another way, the capacity of the reader to appreciate the text. Writing about *Eneydos* Caxton twice clearly defines its intended readership; "this present booke is not for a rude vplondish man to laboure therein ne rede it, but onely for a clerke & a noble gentylman" and again, "for this booke is not for every rude and unconnyng man to see but to clerkes and very gentylmen that vnderstande gentylness and scyence".⁹⁴ It is evident from Caxton's unequivocal division of readership that a sense of the unworthiness of certain sections of the population to be permitted certain texts still prevailed. This reluctance to cast pearls of knowledge before uneducated swine was not now limited to

access to the Bible, a fact which some later commentators tend to overlook, but included classical and medical books or indeed anything which was deemed to require sensitivity and refinement for its appreciation. The hierarchy of class structure and social order was so firmly in place that the production of an English Bible suitable for and available to the entire population required the impetus of another century of literary and religious input.

In spite of the fact that there was no great literary figure to revolutionise English prose and no great religious pioneer of vernacular Scriptures, there was more progress towards an English Bible in the fifteenth century than there had been since Christianity first came to England. The difference in position to the time of Wyclif at the end of the fourteenth century was staggering in practical terms. The Wycliffite version had been produced in a manuscript age when literacy belonged to an elite and the use of English was connected with a heretical religious movement. The problems of translating in terms of establishing a source text, defining meaning, retaining structure, choosing register and so on, either came as total surprises to the translators or remained unperceived by them in their inexperience. The end of the fifteenth century showed a markedly different picture. Literacy was not only widespread but dynamic; there was active interest

from the laity in reading and learning, but religion was not the only source of interest. Texts of all kinds were in demand and through printing more easily available and replaceable. English became the undisputed medium. The vast experience of translating into English from French and Latin in the absence of original native talent not only helped to shape the vernacular but modernised the medieval perception of structure and made translation of connective thought a possibility.

The achievement of progress in the fifteenth century was almost entirely in the area of general trends which were nevertheless essential to the evolution of an adequate English translation of the Scriptures. The more specific Humanist work on the Biblical texts which had been going on in Europe as part of the Renaissance and which was to provide the catalyst for the translation activity of the sixteenth century will be discussed in the following chapter.

References to Chapter Seven

1. Parliament was petitioned for this as early as 1362. See Marjorie Reeves and Stephen Medcalf "The Real, the Ideal and the Quest for Perfection" in *The Later Middle Ages* edited by Stephen Medcalf (London: Methuen 1981) p.66
2. *The Fifty Earliest English Wills* edited by Frederick J. Furnivall EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1882 1964 edition).
3. Ian Gordon *The Movement of English Prose* (London: Longman 1972 edition) p.58
4. *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery nr Oxford* edited by Andrew Clark EETS (London: Kegan Paul 1907)
5. *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century* edited by Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1971)
6. *The Stonor Letters and Papers 1290 - 1483* edited by C.L.Kingsford Camden Society 2 vols (London: Royal Historical Society 1919)
7. This is illustrated by the *Cely Letters 1472-1478* edited by Alison Hanham EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1975). The editor makes the point in the introduction that unlike the Pastons and Stonors, the Celys were not gentry but trade, and as such representative of the recently literate merchant and business class. The letters are mainly about business and family affairs, the prose is clear and lively and can cope with narrative when called upon to do so as in the letter by Richard Cely in which he describes how he has met a woman whom he hopes to marry (p.154).
8. Nicholas Orme *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen 1973) p.78
9. Orme p.203
10. Orme p. 84
11. H.S.Bennett *Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1947) p.117
12. Orme p.75
13. Osbert Bockenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* edited by Mary Serjeantson EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1938) was one of the most popular collections of Saints' Lives.
14. Nicholas Love's *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* was a translation from the Latin *Meditationes Vitae Christi*. It was so popular in the early part of the fifteenth century that Caxton decided to print it in 1486. It ran to three editions.
15. Samuel K. Workman *Fifteenth Century Translation as an Influence on English Prose* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1940) p.20 quotes Edward of York *The Master of Game* 1405 a translation of Gaston de

- Foix *Le Livre de Chasse*. Caxton printed *The Book of Hawking, Hunting and Blasing of Arms* also known as *The Book of St. Albans* in 1486 and *The Treatise of Fysshynge* in 1496.
16. Geoffrey de La Tour-Landry wrote a book for the instruction of his daughters called *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* edited by M.Y. Offord EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1971) "Techynge by which al yong gentyl wymen specially may lerne to bihave themself vertuously" p.3, which was printed in 1484. Peter Idley wrote *Instructions to his Son* but this does not appear to have been printed by Caxton. Bennett p.286
 17. Ian Gordon p.59-60 quotes a recipe from *Two Fifteenth Century Cookery Books* edited by T.Austen EETS (London: 1888)p.73
 18. John Fortescue wrote *The Governance of England* in the 1460's. See Bennett p.194
 19. The best known work of John Capgrave 1393-1464 is *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles* edited by Peter J Lucas EETS (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1983) John Harding (1378-1465) wrote a metrical Chronicle but this was not printed until 1543. Bennett p.284
 20. Bennett p.196 gives an account of the various medical tracts available in English in the fifteenth century. He quotes the heading of one tract which indicates it was meant for the use of the intelligent layman: "Tractatus... composuit breviter in lingua materna magis plane ad intelligentsiam laicorum." John of Arderne's treatise *Fistula in Ano* ed D'Arcy Power EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1910, 1968) was written in Latin in 1376 and translated with diagrams of instruments and operations in the early fifteenth century. In the same way that some clergy were opposed to vernacular Bibles because of the unsuitability of the layperson to cope with the information, there appears to have been reluctance in some quarters to have medical treatises in English for similar reasons.
 21. *The Complete Poems of John Skelton* edited by Philip Henderson (London: Dent & Sons 1931) p.xx
 22. Samuel Workman p.1
 23. Bennett p.96
 24. Quoted in *The Poetry of John Lydgate* by Alain Renoir (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1967) p.7
 25. Henderson p.xx
 26. *The Worthies of England* by Thomas Fuller edited by John Freeman (London: Allan & Unwin 1952) p.572
 27. Freeman p.572
 28. *The Scolmaster* by Roger Ascham edited by Lawrence V Ryan (New York: Stanford University Press 1967) p.68

29. "The Continuity of English Prose" by R.W. Chambers in *Harpsfield's Life of More* EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1932) p.cxxxvi
30. Maurice Keen *English Society in the Late Middle Ages 1348 - 1500* (London: Penguin 1990) has a chronological table of principal political events which shows clearly how the age was fragmented by war, internal conflict and plague.
31. See also J.R.Lander *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth Century England* (London: Hutchinson 1969, 1977 edition)
32. Bennett p.119
33. *Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton* edited by W.J.B. Crotch EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1956 edition) p.94
34. Richard Rolle's *The Fire of Love and The Mending of Life* translated by Richard Misyn edited by Ralph Harvey EETS (London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner & Co. 1896)
35. Samuel Workman p.74
36. Ian Gordon p.65
37. Samuel Workman p.40
38. See Samuel Workman p.50
39. *The Donet* by Reginald Pecock edited by Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1921)
40. Hitchcock p.92
41. Hitchcock p.79
42. Hitchcock p.141
43. Harvey p.24
44. Harvey p.20
45. Harvey p.21
46. Harvey p.27
47. Crotch p.94, also quoted in *The Works of Malory* edited by Eugene Vinaver, revised by P.J.C. Field 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1991) vol 1 p.cxlv
48. Thomas Malory *Le Morte Darthur* 2 vols (London: 1920) vol 1 p.315
49. Malory p.419
50. Malory p.308
51. Malory p.310
52. Crotch p.94
53. Malory p.540
54. Ian Gordon p.67
55. *The Cely Letters 1472-1488* edited by Alison Hanham EETS (London: Oxford University Press 1975) p.154
56. Malory p.702
57. *The Middle English Prose Translation of Roger D'Argenteuil's Bible en Francois* edited by Phyllis Moe (Heidelberg: Winter 1977) p.8
58. Phyllis Moe p.31 and 32
59. Phyllis Moe p.32
60. Anne Hudson *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1978)

- p.58 and 59 also notes to text 11 p.170 line 13
61. Samuel Workman p.35
 62. The fifteenth century Humanist Leon Battista Alberti wrote in 1435 a treatise called *Della Pittura* in which he outlined the mathematical foundation for the visual geometry in painting pioneered earlier by Filippo Brunelleschi. Interestingly, although he wrote it in Latin, it was translated into the vernacular less than a year later. Alberti was exceptionally talented in languages, philosophy, mathematics and music, as well as in art, architecture, painting and sculpture. "And as if all this were not enough, his labors on behalf of the Tuscan vernacular won him a place among the founders of Italian literature"- *Leon Battista Alberti, Universal Man of the Early Renaissance* by Joan Gadol (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1969) p.3. In Alberti's Renaissance mind the mathematical ideas of perspective and architectural structure were side by side with those of structure and perspective in thought and writing.
 63. Alain Renoir p.36
 64. Samuel Workman p.161
 65. Samuel Workman p.21
 66. Elisabeth Eisenstein *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* Vol 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1979) Ch.1
 67. N. F. Blake *Caxton: England's First Publisher* (London: Osprey Publishing 1976) p.149
 68. Contrast Langland's *Piers the Plowman* where Piers' reaction cues that of the reader.
 69. Part of the authority of the Scriptures lay in the fact that they had a tangible presence, the Ten Commandments were engraved on stone, the early chronicles painstakingly written down for posterity. Covenants and Treaties, Magna Carta, wills etc. took their authority from their written form.
 70. Elisabeth Eisenstein p.66
 71. Rudolph Hirsch *Printing, Selling and Reading* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1967) p.15
 72. *Printing and the Mind of Man* edited by John Carter and Percy Muir (London: Cassell 1967) p.2
 73. Blake p.194
 74. Crotch p.76
 75. J. Isaacs "The Sixteenth Century English Versions" in *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* edited by H Wheeler Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1940) p.149
 76. Bennett p.222
 77. Pecock died in 1460 and was the author of the *Repressor of Overmuch Blaming the Clergy* in 1449. He wrote in the vernacular expressly to argue against

- Lollard doctrine as he thought that he would be more likely to be read by those he wished to reach if his work were written in the language that they most used. Accused of heresy he recanted but was disgraced and confined until his death. *English Prose Selections* edited by Henry Craik vol 1 (London: Macmillan 1893) p.51
78. Bennett p.107-109 gives a clear idea of how important patronage came to be in the fifteenth century.
 79. Crotch p.2
 80. Crotch p.20
 81. Blake p.178
 82. *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* a translation from the French of Raoul Lefevre. C. David Benson *The History of Troy in Middle English Literature* (Woodbridge Suffolk: Brewer, Rowman and Littlefield 1980) traces the fortunes of the legend in its many different English presentations and quotes the only edition of Caxton's work that I could find edited by H. Oskar Somner, 2 vols (London: 1894)
 83. Blake p.30
 84. Freida Elaine Penninger *William Caxton* (Boston: Twayne Publishers 1979) Preface
 85. Penninger p.17
 86. Crotch p.94
 87. Carter and Muir p.17
 88. By Hugo de Sancto Caro for "convenience in controversial writing" H. Wheeler Robinson p.184
 89. This practical aspect of the printing process had serious implications for the printing of a text as important as the Scriptures where accuracy was paramount. A mistake in the text could mean heresy. In 1631 the King's Printers were heavily fined for omitting the word "not" out of the seventh commandment in what came to be known as the "Wicked Bible". *Cambridge History of the Bible from the Reformation to the Present Day* edited by S.L. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1963) p.412
 90. This and the following quotes from Caxton's Prologue to *Eneydos* are from Crotch p.107 and 108.
 91. Crotch p. 109
 92. Quoted in Andre Lefevere *Translating Literature: The German Tradition* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum 1977) p.2
 93. J. Isaacs p.191 gives examples.
 94. Crotch p.109

Chapter EightTHE RISE OF THE NEW LEARNING AND ITS EFFECT
ON TEXTUAL PERSPECTIVE

The rise of Humanism in Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century was to have a fundamental effect on scriptural scholarship and by extension on the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular. The new learning set the Bible into a new context, a philological one, which changed the perspective of the Vulgate, highlighted the contribution of language study to Scriptural hermeneutics and challenged the traditional exegetical structures. The tradition of Biblical exegesis was a long and unbroken one from the early Fathers of the third and fourth centuries, Jerome (346-430) and Augustine (354-430), to the most influential medieval exegete of the thirteenth and fourteenth, Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349). Lyra was instrumental in advancing the cause of uncommentated vernacular translation of the Scriptures by refocusing on the literal exegesis of the Vulgate and putting less emphasis on the extensive allegorical systems previously foregrounded in commentary: but even after Lyra, as far as most scholars were concerned the hermeneutic aspect of Bible study remained theological rather than philological. Moreover the significance of language nuance

in defining the literal and theological meaning of the Scriptures had not been fully appreciated by those who studied them. The notable exception in the thirteenth century was Roger Bacon (1220-1292) who in the pursuit of meaning encouraged the study not only of Latin grammar, but also of Greek and Hebrew. He was also aware that "the Latin text of the Scriptures is extremely corrupt and becoming more so",¹ but as a lone voice he had neither the influence nor the support to effect change.

The Vulgate, compiled in the fourth century by Jerome from various Greek and Latin manuscripts, remained the unchallenged text of Scripture despite its admitted deficiencies, mistakes and miscopyings, secure in the credibility of its compiler and in the authority of antiquity. Part of the reason for the Vulgate's exclusive position was that after the schism of the Greek Orthodox Church from Roman authority, the Greek language, and consequently the Greek manuscripts of the Scriptures, were virtually lost to the West of Europe. It was not until the early fifteenth century that this situation changed. When Constantinople was threatened by the Turks,² sympathy in the West for fellow Christians was such that Greek scholars were invited to seek refuge first in Italy and later in other parts of Europe where "more and more of them were offered professional chairs".³ By the time Constantinople

fell in 1453, the enforced diffusion of Byzantine culture was already having an effect in Europe in a variety of ways. Relating more specifically to the subject in hand, the resulting increase in the knowledge of the Greek language had considerable impact on the growth of Humanism and on Biblical studies. For several centuries "New Testament scholarship had been severely hampered by Western Scholars' ignorance of the Greek text".⁴ This is not to say that knowledge of Greek alone produced advances in textual scholarship; it was rather a combination of the knowledge of Greek and the Humanist perspective which brought a change in attitude towards the text of the Scriptures and eventually towards its translation.

One of the earliest of the new Humanists, Lorenzo de Valla (1407-1457) annotated the Vulgate New Testament using Greek codices as the basis for his observations. The *Annotaciones in Novum Testamentum* have been described as containing "nothing very exciting" being "just philological notes",⁵ but in fact they were the first hint of a shift in perspective regarding the accepted Latin text and the beginning of the application of literary and linguistic techniques to the criticism of Scriptural texts. Comparison with the Greek New Testament was not only the first step towards the dismantling of the inviolable Vulgate myth, it also exposed the inadequacies and errors of the

translators to the extent of focusing attention on linguistic structures. Valla's aim was to resolve some of the discrepancies of the Vulgate, "to patch up the Latin Scriptures and render them a more faithful reflection of the Greek".⁶ The Greek manuscripts elucidated several obscure passages in the Latin and demonstrated that philological techniques could often make more progress in Scriptural scholarship than theological speculation. As he progressed further into his task, the classically trained Valla could not help but make comparisons between the wordy style of the Vulgate and the clarity of the more basic Greek.⁷ On several occasions he chides the translator for having done the Vulgate the disservice of unnecessarily embellishing and inserting "quod graece non legi".⁸ In his notes to 2 Corinthians 1, he is unhappy with the translator's use of two words, *consolatione* and *exhortatione*, where only one appears in the Greek. "Quidam putat aliud esse exhortatione quam consolatione" he says, "hoc cuius erroris in culpa est interpres, qui idem nomen varie transfert".⁹ Similarly in chapter three he complains of the confusion caused by "interpres varie transferens".¹⁰ In fairness to the translators it has to be pointed out that in Latin it was common for a word to be strengthened by combination with one of a similar meaning, in fact it was good Latin style. It also has to be taken into consideration that some Latin words were deficient in the

full expression of their Greek equivalent and needed the support of another noun or adjective to make the meaning clear. Erasmus on this point discusses at some length the inadequacy of "fides" to convey the full meaning of "ΠΙΣΤΕΣ" in his notes to Romans 1:17.¹¹ Valla's condemnation of the translators seems to indicate either that he was not aware of the problems of translation or that he considered the upgrading of the language and the addition of extra words too great a departure from the original. Scholars before him had been aware of copyists errors in the Vulgate, but he was the first person to imply mistakes or misdirection in the original interpretation of the Greek codices.

Some of the features of Valla's notes anticipate later sources of contention, for example the translation in Acts 15 of the Greek as both *senior* (Latin) and *presbyter* (Greek)¹² as if they were two different words. One of More's complaints against Tyndale was to be his translation of "πρεσβυτερος" as "elder" instead of "priest", done specifically to lessen the authority of the clergy,¹³ but Valla was writing before a change in Scriptural vocabulary had come to signify a change in religion; he was objecting more to the confusion caused by lack of clarity. Another of Valla's comments expresses dissatisfaction with the rendering of *poenitam agite* as a translation of

μετανοεῖτε in Matthew 3:2, a point to be taken up later by Erasmus, and suggests *poenitemini* as a better reflection of the Greek.¹⁴ He notes several places where the Greek tenses differ from the Latin and as a result make more sense of the text: "non in solo pane vivit homo" graece est futuri, vivet... idem in Luca "quoniam angelis suis mandavit de te" graeci est mandabit".¹⁵

The significance of Valla's work lay mainly in its approach to the text. The Scriptures were treated linguistically as any other important literary text might be treated; errors and misreadings were exposed and corrected, not assumed to be the uncorrectable word of God; the role of the translator was foregrounded as a very human component of the translation equation; the translator himself was censored roundly for interfering with the uncomplicated Greek style. Half a century and the invention of printing later, the most influential of the Renaissance Humanists, Desiderus Erasmus, came across a manuscript of Valla's *Annotaciones* by chance and was sufficiently impressed by the content to have them published.¹⁶ Erasmus' own experience in Classical and Scriptural studies had led him to the conclusion that "we can do nothing in any field of literature without a knowledge of Greek, since it is one thing to guess, another to judge; one thing to trust your own eyes and another to trust those of others".¹⁷ Erasmus

was the leading Humanist influence in Europe in the sixteenth century, and through his personal friendship with Thomas More and John Colet and his five years in England during which he taught briefly at Cambridge, his work and scholarship became widely known and acknowledged among English and European scholars and theologians. Born in Holland he travelled Europe in pursuit of knowledge, and together with Cardinal Francisco Ximenez de Cisneros of Spain, Lefevre d'Etapes of France and More and Colet of England he supported "simplification of doctrine and reform of practice, especially through the infusion of Humanist values".¹⁶ Unhappily the moderate process of intellectually motivated reform in the Church was soon drawn into polemic by more specific issues: the outspoken extremism of Martin Luther in Germany, and in England the deliberate heretical stance of William Tyndale and the quarrel of Henry VIII with the Pope. In the face of open challenge, the conservatives' position became even more entrenched; moderates like More and Erasmus were forced to take sides. Even to consider the validity of some of Luther's complaints brought the reputation of a Humanist into disrepute. As a result the assessment of the Humanist contribution was at the time and still is in some quarters strongly coloured by partisan religious enthusiasm.¹⁷ Religious polemic has blurred the excellent progress made by the movement towards the facilitating of Scriptural

translation into the vernacular. The Humanists, under the leadership of Erasmus, rescued Biblical theology from the complicated and specialised subject it had become and applied to it the literary and classical techniques which opened up a way forward out of the theological maze. At the University of Alcalá in Spain, Ximenez and his helpers spent years preparing what came to be known as the Complutensian Polyglot,²⁰ an edition of the Bible with Latin, Greek and Hebrew texts side by side so that what was unclear in one language might be illuminated by one of the others. The study and editing of texts both classical and religious was the main occupation of the Humanists and many texts are available to us today because of their diligence in searching out and preserving important manuscripts.

Erasmus was particularly interested in restoring and emending the Latin text of the New Testament and in order to do this satisfactorily followed Valla's method of comparing Latin texts with Greek codices and supporting the emendations with explanatory notes. He knew that Ximenez was preparing a similar more extensive work and realised the advantage in being the first to publish. Accordingly in 1515 the first edition of *Novum Instrumentum* was rushed through the press. In his haste Erasmus was not as thorough as he might have been; each subsequent edition had to be revised in the light of new information or new thinking by

the author. The Greek text of the 1519 edition provided Luther with the basis for his German New Testament which in turn had such an influence on William Tyndale. The fourth and final edition published in 1527 contained the Vulgate printed next to the Greek text with Erasmus's own new Latin translation and notes explaining the emendations.

In his preface to the reader, Erasmus makes it very clear what to expect from the work: "What I have written are short annotations, not a commentary, and they are concerned solely with the integrity of the text; so let no-one like a selfish guest demand supper in place of a light luncheon, and expect me to give him something different from what I undertook to produce".²¹ He was aware, as Jerome was in editing the various Latin texts into the Vulgate that "this sort of labour does not usually earn its author much gratitude",²² but he was so convinced of its importance that he was prepared to receive and counter the criticism it aroused. His work was based on a collation of texts from several sources: two Latin manuscripts lent to him by John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, a third provided by Margaret the Aunt of Emperor Charles, four Latin manuscripts from as early as the eighth century made available by the foundation of St. Donatus in Bruges, a twelfth century Greek manuscript and ninth or tenth century Gospels from the house of Korsendonk as well as

others lent by the brothers Bruno and Basilius Amerbach.²³

Erasmus's aim was to restore the Latin text to accuracy, but what he actually achieved was something far more radical as the *Annotaciones* completely altered the contemporary textual perspective of the Scriptures. Instead of the usual single text, the reader was presented with three reference texts simultaneously: the traditional Vulgate with its known discrepancies, a Greek version previous unavailable and inaccessible to western scholars and a new Latin translation which called on the Greek where the Vulgate was deficient. When the work was first published, the Greek text had "an important authenticating function; it remained nevertheless supporting evidence and was not yet considered the principal content of the book".²⁴ As the intellectual world assimilated what had been presented, it became apparent that the juxtaposing of the three texts in this way had had a greater impact than Erasmus could have foreseen. Firstly the reader was reminded that the earliest writing down of the New Testament had been in Greek: Greek codices were therefore one step less removed than Latin from the events that they depicted. It followed that the authority of the Greek text must be equal to if not greater than that of the Vulgate since its origins were older and its function in the context of the *Annotaciones* was to correct the Vulgate's

deficiencies. Finally both the Greek version and Erasmus's new Latin translation presented an implicit challenge not only to the Vulgate as a text but also to the theology based on its exegesis.

The exegetical tradition was thorough and complex, and depended very much on the wording of the text. A single word could hold not only its literal meaning but an allegorical significance which would overlay every context in which the word occurred and act as a link between those contexts. Walter Schwarz gives as examples the words "virgin", "bride" and "betrothed" around which was built up the symbolism of the Church as the "bride" of Christ. By extension of the allegory the Church was seen as pure and virginal, incapable of wrong, caring for her children, submissive to her husband and so on. Each time one of the relevant words appears in the Bible it recalls the theology woven around its meaning. As Schwarz says: "The connection between the actual wording of the Bible, in this case the Vulgate, and the tenets of the Church is... very close and the Church had therefore to protect the sacred text of the Vulgate from any changes".²⁵ If so much as a word were to be altered, the points of reference would be changed and the intricately woven pattern of allegorical theology would be broken.

It was for this reason that Erasmus encountered a good deal of criticism for substituting the word "sermo" for "verbum" in the opening phrase of his Latin translation of John's Gospel. Such was the esteem in which the Vulgate was held that he did not dare to make even this alteration until the second edition of the *Annotaciones*, held back as he said by "a superstitious fear",²⁶ It was by comparison with the Greek that "verbum" became an unsatisfactory rendering: "logos" has so many more connotations than the specific "verbum". "Sermo" was an attempt to reflect the wider context, but earned Erasmus accusations of corrupting the Gospel of St. John²⁷ and obliged him to write a defence of his action in the form of *Apologia de "In principio erat sermo"*.

Conservative theologians could not countenance change to the basis upon which exegesis was built or to wording which was comfortable and familiar. In a letter to Buschius, Erasmus relates how Bishop Henry Standish had preached a sermon at St. Paul's in London condemning his New Testament and "maintaining that the Christian religion faced utter destruction unless all new translations were instantly removed from the scene".²⁸ The Humanist view was that a reformed Scriptural text was a way forward towards simplifying doctrine and shedding some of the more complex structures which encumbered interpretation. A philological

perspective could clarify meaning and was not something to be feared.

The English Humanists received Erasmus's work with enthusiasm. He was encouraged by his friend Thomas More, lent manuscripts by John Colet and had intended to dedicate the work to John Fisher but decided at the last minute that it might be more politic to devote it to the Pope. Hoping that Bishop Fisher would not be too disappointed, Erasmus wrote to him saying that the New Testament was "marvellously well-received by all good scholars and sincere and open-minded men, not excluding theologians".²⁷ For a short while it seemed as if the new learning would gradually effect a route towards enlightened reform from within the Church. The publication of the Greek and Latin texts of the New Testament had provided some flexibility in terms of exegesis and shifted the position of the Vulgate from that of untouchable original to that of translation. The attitude towards the Scriptures changed. If the Vulgate were a translation from the Greek, why should there not be vernacular translations from the Greek? All that Jerome had done was to translate into a more commonly used language.

Using Erasmus's Greek text as the basis for the New Testament, Martin Luther (1483-1546) published his German

translation of the Scriptures in 1523. His was not the first German version³⁰, but it was undoubtedly the most influential. Two years later, again in Germany, William Tyndale (c1495-1536) produced the first edition of an English New Testament which owed much to Luther's and in 1530, the septagenarian Jacques Lefevre d'Etapes (c1450-1537) published his complete translation of the Bible into French in the face of opposition from conservative theologians at the Sorbonne.³¹ The progress of moderate reform was however shortlived, and whatever breakthrough had been made in softening the conservative attitude was swiftly countered by reaction to the increasingly extreme positions of some of the reformers. The problem was that the translations were made vehicles for the re-interpretation of doctrine, and with the facility of printing making distribution of texts quicker and more efficient, it was feared that unorthodox views would become widespread through the vehicle of the vernacular Bible.

A scholar and reformer, Luther at first enjoyed the support of moderates like Erasmus who had himself satirised Church practices in *Encomium Moriae*.³² Luther's views on indulgences, for example, were shared by many other members of the Church who hoped for reform. Erasmus even wrote to the Pope and Cardinals and to Frederic the Wise on the young German scholar's behalf³³ asking that he should be

allowed to state his case. Later, however, when Luther began to combine rejection of the abuses of the Church with unorthodox doctrine and invective against papal authority, Erasmus was obliged not only to withdraw his support but also to write a paper attacking Luther's heresy³⁴ in the hope of limiting the damage already done to the reputation of the moderate Humanist movement. Neutrality in the debate was impossible; those who were not against Luther were considered to be for him. The horror of heresy spread throughout Europe as quickly as Luther's reforming ideas and schism was inevitable. Henry VIII, whose fear of heresy was to condemn Tyndale's translation to be burnt, wrote a tract in Latin against Luther and encouraged Erasmus to do the same.³⁵

One of the problems of the established Church had always been what Janet Coleman calls "historical tension between local cultures and a universal religious teaching",³⁶ that is, the dual loyalty required to Pope and State. A rejection of Church authority left a need for another means of religious identity, a reference point which was provided by a vernacular Bible. Luther's vernacular Scriptures not only provided alternative authority, but because of the way in which religion was already embedded in the culture formed a basis for nationalising his religious ideas and making them a part of

the German language and literature. There is an interesting comparison to be drawn here with the attitude of Henry VIII in England who initially took the orthodox stance on vernacular translation because of his fear of heresy, but after the split with Rome recognised the need for an English Bible as a focal point of reference and more actively encouraged its development.

Luther approached the task of translating the Scriptures as he approached most things, with very definite and controversial ideas on the way to proceed and a sense of authority and total confidence in his own methods. His German Bible was not the first in the vernacular but was an improvement on the earlier version³⁷ and "by its superior scholarship and wonderful style, marks an era in both religion and literature".³⁸ Like Jerome, Luther realised the enormity of the task - "I freely admit that I have undertaken too much," he writes, "especially in trying to put the Old Testament into German"³⁹ - and expected criticism, from which, also like Jerome, he defended himself solidly, explaining but never apologising for his way of working. In 1530 he published an open letter on translating⁴⁰ in which he declares that "no-one is forbidden to do a better piece of work. If anyone does not want to read it he can let it alone".⁴¹

Luther's ideas on translation were as revolutionary for the time as his religious ideas. He had two main precepts: to germanise (verdeutschen) not merely to translate (übersetzen) and to translate the sense rather than the literal wording of the text. Many translators before him had followed the theories of Cicero and Jerome and talked about sense for sense instead of word for word, but Luther was more determined than most to put his theories into practice, and not to be intimidated into taking refuge in literal translation where there were difficulties of interpretation. In the earlier editions of his *Preface to the Book of Job* he outlines his theory:

The language of this book is more vigorous and splendid than that of any other book in all the Scriptures. Yet if it were translated everywhere word for word - as the Jews and foolish translators have done - and not for the most part according to the sense - no-one would understand it... Therefore I think that this third part will have to suffer and be accused by know-it-alls of being an entirely different book from the Latin Bible.⁴²

And again, talking about his rendering of the story of Moses:

To translate properly is to render the spirit of a foreign language into our own idiom. I do this with such care in translating Moses that the Jews accuse me of rendering only the sense and not the precise words... In rendering Moses I make him so German that no-one would know that he was a Jew.⁴³

The idea of germanising the text and characters so

thoroughly was completely new in translation theory, but very strong in Luther's concept of what a good translation should be, since he had a specific audience in mind and a specific function for the translated text. His method was vindicated by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, writing in the nineteenth century, in the following terms:

Religion has benefited more from the fact that this excellent man translated a work written in the most different array of styles into a work all of one piece in our mother tongue than it would if he had aspired to recreate the original's idiosyncracies down to the smallest detail.... If you want to influence the masses a simple translation is always best. Critical translations vying with the original really are only of use for conversations the learned conduct amongst themselves.⁴⁴

Because he wanted the translation to be recognised as vernacular by the reader, Luther took the spoken word as the basis of his language. "How hard it is to make the Hebrew writers speak German," he complains to Wenzel Link in 1528,⁴⁵ and in his open letter on translating he says,

"We do not have to inquire of the literal Latin how we are to speak German, as these asses do. Rather we must inquire about this of the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the marketplace. We must be guided by their language, the way they speak, and do our translation accordingly. That way they will understand it and recognise that we are speaking German to them".⁴⁶

By the use of German idiom, Luther aimed to produce a

specifically German text capable of being recognised and understood by all classes of reader, literary and non-literary, educated and uneducated. Like Wyclif, Luther has been credited by some as being the Father of his modern literary vernacular, but in fact his role has proved to be supportive rather than pioneering. German mystics had already provided vernacular vocabulary for expressing the mysteries of religious experience⁴⁷ as Richard Rolle, Julian of Norwich and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* had done in the English language. Nevertheless, Luther's German Bible, since it was "of the highest literary quality",⁴⁸ since eighty-five editions were printed between 1522 and 1533, and since one hundred thousand copies were sold in the fifty years following the publication of the complete Bible in 1534, could not fail to have a profound influence on the German language wherever it was spoken. Its influence was also evident in other German Scriptures. The Catholic Jerome Emser (1478-1527) published a rival translation which Luther declared in his *Sendbrief* to be a copy of his own "patched and altered in a few places".⁴⁹ William Tyndale, at work on a similar project at the same time and in the same country, incorporated a large piece of Luther's preface to the New Testament in the prologue to his own quarto Testament and used what amounts to a translation of Luther's preface as his own prologue to Romans.⁵⁰

Luther's translation theory, although logical and acceptable on a linguistic level, had the effect of shaking the exegetical foundations of the text, challenging the established doctrines and sweeping away traditional renderings. The most famous point of contention arose from his insertion of the word *sola* in Romans 3:28. In his open letter on translating he explains:

I knew very well that the word *solum* is not in the Greek or Latin text; the papists didnot have to teach me that..... But it is in the nature of our German language that in speaking of two things, one of which is affirmed and the other denied we use the word *solum* (*allein*) along with the word *nicht* (not) or *kein* (no).⁵¹

He continues by giving several examples of German phrases where it is appropriate to use *allein* in conjunction with *kein* or *nicht*. When we look at the passage in question however, we find that neither *kein* nor *nicht* appears, it is the word *ohne* with which Luther wishes to pair *allein*: "So halten wir es nun, dass der Mensch gerecht werde ohne des Gesesses Werke, allein durch den Glauben". The effect of germanising the phrase as he describes is to put forward the doctrine of justification by faith alone, "allein durch den Glauben", without the deeds of the law, "ohne des Gesesses Werke". From the idea of justification of man by faith alone without good works it is just a step to the doctrine of predestination. In another section of the letter he discusses the traditional angelic salutation Ave

gratia plena (Hail full of grace) which he renders "Gegruesset seistu holdselige" instead of the literal and more familiar "Gegruesset seistu voll gnaden". "When", he asks, "does a German speak like that, "You are full of Grace"?...I have translated it "Thou gracious one" so that a German can at least think his way through to what the angel meant by this greeting... though I have still not hit upon the best German rendering for it."⁵² Changing the traditional rendering caused a furore because apart from the considerable exegesis built up around the idea of the redemptive power of grace and the role of the Virgin Mary in the redemptive process, the part of the text Luther was dealing with was virtually untouchable by dint of the tradition of its use in the prayer *Ave Maria*, Hail Mary. Jerome Emser called Luther's translation of the salutation "auf gut bulerisch"⁵³ but the reformer was unrepentant. "Suppose I had taken the best German", he says, "and translated the salutation thus, "Hello there dear Mary" (Gott grüsse dich, du liebe Maria) - for that is what the angel wanted to say and what he would have said if he had wanted to greet her in German. Suppose I had done that! I believe they would have hanged themselves out of tremendous fanaticism for the Virgin Mary, because I had thus destroyed the salutation".⁵⁴ The angel Gabriel was not German, but Luther's aim was to make him and all the Bible characters speak as if they were. He set out to convert a

text that embodied a message across time and culture into a specifically German, not to say Lutheran document. He chose phrases and idioms which were not merely in the German vocabulary but a part of the contemporary spoken language and as a result he was remarkably successful in reaching a large number of people as well as upsetting the orthodox members of the clergy who did not subscribe to the new learning. Luther was able to achieve this because he had the necessary scholarship; because he was not intimidated by the more difficult passages and was prepared to paraphrase for the sake of intelligibility if necessary; and because his character and commitment was such that he was undeterred by criticism. As far as other vernacular translations of the Bible were concerned, his influence was both positive and negative. Luther's German Bible may have regenerated the German language, but in the same way that Wyclif's connection with the 1380 translation of the Bible into English had rendered the work itself suspect and by association heretical, so Luther's undertaking did little to further the cause of vernacular versions with orthodox ecclesiasts owing to the heretical inclinations of its author.

The contribution of Humanist scholarship in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century was central to the development of the vernacular Bible, as was the invention

of printing and the diffusion of Greek language and scholarship after the fall of Constantinople. Valla's comparison of the Vulgate with the Greek had a much wider audience after Erasmus published it; through printing, Erasmus's follow up of Valla's work on the New Testament meant that for the first time for centuries the Greek text was available to scholars for comparison with the Vulgate. The printed parallel texts shifted the perspective of the Vulgate in a way that could not be ignored: the reformers, looking for an alternative authority to counter the abuses and intransigence of the establishment found it in the central text of the religion, but not in the established form, in their own language, their own expression of the content. Translation of the Scriptures was an issue which now had to be addressed by all sides in view of the advances in scholarship and the challenge of the reformers. Events in Europe were to have their effect on the Englishing process: Humanism, reform, heresy and vernacular Bibles made a powerful and interesting combination.

References to Chapter Eight

1. *Selections from Medieval Philosophers* edited by Richard McKeon vol 2 (New York: Scribners 1930) p.39
2. The threat to the Greek Orthodox Christians in Constantinople from the Turks engendered such a wave of sympathy (as well as Crusaders) from the Roman Church that there were actually talks on unity between the two Churches as a way of mobilising available armies. Before agreement on the finer details could be reached Constantinople was taken.
3. Steven Runciman *The Fall of Constantinople 1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1965) p8-9
4. Jerry Bentley *Humanists and Holy Writ* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1983) p16
5. Roland Bainton *Erasmus of Christendom* (New York: Scribner 1969) p85
6. Bentley p.35
7. Bentley p.181 reminds us that that work on the nature of Koine Greek was not completed until this century but that Erasmus (and Valla before him) recognised its colloquial nature and the dependance on the spoken idiom.
8. Laurentius Valla *Opera Omnia* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus 1962) p870 "...what I do not read in the Greek". The translations from Valla are mine.
9. "Someone might think *exhort* is something different from *encourage* and the translator is to blame for this error for he translates the same noun in different ways." Valla p.870
10. Valla p.871 "the translator translating in different ways"
11. Bentley discusses this p.181-2
12. Valla p.851
13. *The Complete Works of Thomas More* vol vi part 1 edited by Thomas C. Lawler, Germain Marc'hadour and Richard Marius (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press 1981) p.289
14. Valla p.807
15. Valla p. 807 "man does not live by bread alone" the Greek is future tense, "will live" ...the same in Luke "since he has given orders to his angels about you" the Greek is "will give orders".
16. L. D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson *Scribes and Scholars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1974) p.142
17. *The Correspondence of Erasmus* letters 1518 to 1519 translated by R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S.Thomson *The Collected Works of Erasmus* vol vi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1982) p.195

18. J. K. McConica *English Humanists and Reformation Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1965) p.2
19. This is still evident in relatively recent publications. A 1967 edition of *Fox's book of Martyrs* (Grand Rapids Michigan) continues at the end of Fox's original list (with no change of style or editorial comment to mark the change) with accounts of persecution of Protestants after Fox's death from Ireland in 1641 to Burma in the nineteenth century. The book ends with the epilogue from Fox's original edition.
Another small volume of 1870 written by "a member of the English church" consists of accounts of Roman Catholic martyrs and is entitled "Martyrs omitted by Foxe".
Similarly the introduction to the 1989 edition of William Tyndale's New Testament edited by David Daniell (Yale: Yale University Press 1982) exhibits the kind of polemic that hinders a balanced assessment: "Every change that Tyndale makes is more than defensible: it is correct. More was wrong."
20. Called Complutensian after the Latin name for Alcala (Complutum), as explained in *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* edited by H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1940) p.74
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22. Mynors and Thomson 1976 p.200
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26. Cornelis Augustijn *Erasmus, His Life, Works and Influence* translated by J.C. Grayson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1991)
27. *The Correspondence of Erasmus* letters 1520-1521 translated by R.A.B. Mynors *The Collected Works of Erasmus* vol viii (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1988) p.8
28. Mynors 1988 p.8
29. Mynors and Thomson 1976 p.294
30. C.H.Williams *William Tyndale* (London: Nelson 1969) p.68
31. Mark Greengrass *The French Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell 1987) p.18

32. *Encomium Moriae* or *In Praise of Folly* was dedicated to More and probably finished while Erasmus was staying in England in 1510. It became popular very quickly and ran to several editions.
33. Preserved Smith *The Life and Letters of Martin Luther* (London: Murray 1911) p.202
34. *de Libero Arbitrio* produced, in Erasmus's own words in a letter to Lorenzo Campeggio in February 1524 "under pressure from princes and especially from the King of England (Henry VIII)". *The Correspondence of Erasmus letters 1523-1524* translated by R.A.B. Mynors and Alexander Dalzell in *The Collected Works of Erasmus* vol x (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1992) p.166
35. Henry received the title "Fidei Defensor" from Pope Leo for his tract against Luther *Assertio Septem Sacramentum* 1521. Preserved Smith p. 192. It must also be remembered that Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain under whose reign the Spanish Inquisition was set up in order originally to detect half-hearted Jewish converts.
36. Janet Coleman *English Literature in History 1350-1400* (London: Hutchinson 1981) p.15
37. The most vocal critic of Luther's translation, Jerome Emser, conceded in *Annotaciones Hieronimi Emseris uber Luthers Newe Testament* that Luther's language was "sweet and good" but only to ensnare the reader. Notes to *On Translation: An Open Letter in Word and Sacrament* edited by E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press 1960) *Luther's Works* vol xxxv part 1 p.184
38. Preserved Smith p.263
39. Luther's *Preface to the Old Testament* Bachmann p.249 Also quoted in a note on the same page is Luther's remark "It was necessary for me to undertake the translation of the Bible, otherwise I would have died under the impression that I was a learned man".
40. *Ein Sendbrief von Dolmetschen Heiligen* 1530 translated as *On Translating: An Open Letter* Bachmann p.181
41. Bachmann p.183
42. Bachmann p.252
43. Preserved Smith p.266
44. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe quoted in *Translation History Culture* edited by Andre Lefevere (London: Routledge 1990)
45. Preserved Smith p.264
46. Bachmann p.189
47. Bernhard Lohse *Martin Luther, an introduction to his life and work* translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1986) p.116
48. Lohse p.117

49. Bachmann p.183
50. C.H. Williams *William Tyndale* (London: Nelson 1969)
p.126
51. Bachmann p.188
52. Bachmann p.191
53. "vulgarly familiar" quoted by Bachmann p.191 Emser
wrote this in the Anotaciones p.xiv
54. Bachmann p.191-192

Chapter NineTYNDALE'S ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN THE CONTEXT OF
LUTHERAN HERESY, HENRICIAN ORTHODOXY
AND THE FRAGMENTATION OF HUMANISM

In early sixteenth century England, there were two main influences which provided the initial background to the next stage of development of the English Bible. The first was the increased textual awareness brought about by the Humanist approach to the Scriptures and the second was Luther's presentation of the Bible in German as an alternative authority to the Church. As the century progressed, however, the process in England became dominated by the strong will of the King and complicated by other political and social ideologies. "The King's Great Matter";¹ the jurisdictional debate which arose out of Henry's original dispute with the Church;² the search for a new order in society which would redress past abuses and define the role of the state with regard to the individual;³ these were all issues which influenced attitudes towards vernacular Scriptures and made the Bible in English a political symbol with a significance beyond its text. Wyclif's challenge to Papal authority resulted in a vernacular Bible, as did Luther's; it would be convenient to be able to say that the Bibles of the sixteenth century

were a result of Henry VIII's reforming zeal but this is not so: what has been interpreted as reform by interested commentators originated solely in the King's attempt to get his own way over his divorce and evolved into a gradual but relentless reclamation of what he came to consider as his previously usurped power and wealth.⁴ Nevertheless, it is during the reign of Henry VIII that the process of Englishing the Scriptures accelerates. Although Thomas More testifies to the fact that there were Bibles in English before Tyndale's,⁵ there had been no new translation that we know of since the Wycliffite versions of the 1380's, then in 1525, 1535 and 1537 vernacular Bibles were published and in 1541 a proclamation was issued ordering an English Bible to be placed in every church.⁶ It would seem that these events marked the quickening of a continuous Englishing process, but in fact the reality was less positive. The prospects of the English Bible (and of those who translated it) varied according to the political temperature and depended upon who had the ear of the King. Anne Boleyn and Cromwell both encouraged Henry towards an official English translation, but when they lost favour, so did their ideas. The King's argument for his divorce depended on texts from the Bible - interpretation and translation issues had never been so vital or so widely discussed - they became matters of life and death.⁷ Henry VIII's religious ideas were, contrary to popular myth still

promoted in some school textbooks, deeply rooted in orthodoxy, and he suffered considerable psychological shock on the occasion of his excommunication in 1533. His commitment to reform extended mainly to the recovery of temporal power and wealth acquired by the church;⁸ he was not a particular champion of vernacular Bibles, nor of Humanism, and certainly not of Luther, although he used all three to his political advantage and had several well known Humanists in his court.

In the opening years of the sixteenth century Humanism was as strong in England as it was anywhere in Europe. As in Europe, it had its detractors who feared the new learning as a threat to the old order and who greeted Humanist writing with distrust and dismay.⁹ There were those who felt threatened by John Colet's sermon on clerical abuses preached before the Canterbury Convocation in 1512¹⁰ and whose interests were not served by his call for an end to war a year later when he preached at Greenwich before the King.¹¹ Erasmus's attack on the abuses in the Church *In Praise of Folly* was published in 1510, followed in 1513 by his thoughts on the structure of society *Institutio Principis Christiani*, to which More's *Utopia* of 1516 was in part a response.

In the course of the recent reassessment of the

Henrician age¹² there has been the suggestion that Humanism was not the coherent movement it was thought to have been and that it "contained unresolved tensions between the competing claims of faith and reason".¹³ There is even a question as to whether English Humanism existed as a movement at all, or was dissipated in its infancy by stronger outside forces. Colet's early death in 1519 and the fact that Thomas More's Humanist activities were eclipsed by his responsibilities as chancellor to the King lend credence to this view, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that certainly until 1520 a group of like-minded intellectuals in England were the propelling force behind the promotion of what we have come to recognise as Humanist values; the reform of poor religious practice through the new learning as applied to the Scriptures; the furtherance of peace and the establishment of a new order in society.¹⁴ Humanist ideology in the sixteenth century is relatively easily identifiable, it is the strategy for its implementation which remains unclear.

The Humanist vision, though recognised as "noble"¹⁵ has also been called "naive in the extreme"¹⁶ because of the simplistic belief that restoring the corrupt text of the Vulgate and demystifying its exegesis would bring automatic reform of religious practice. The correcting of the Vulgate had a significance beyond that of a textual

exercise; it was an attempt to return to wholeness what had "symbolised the corruption of ecclesiastical tradition".¹⁷ More's *Utopia* was also a symbolic representation, that of an enlightened society which by implied comparison revealed the deficiencies of contemporary Christian Europe. Both Erasmus and More, through intellectual exercises, produced models for reform, but neither provided the pragmatic strategy for its achievement.

Luther, in contrast, physically nailed his articles to the church door and forced a reaction to his challenge. In 1520 he completed *de Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae* in which he put forward the view that there were only three real sacraments instead of the seven taught by the Church. This piece of work set the final seal on his excommunication and brought an order from the Pope for the destruction of his books. The repercussions in England were considerable. There were still, almost a century and a half after Wyclif's death, pockets of the country sympathetic to Lollard principles, as the trickle of executions for Lollardry shows;¹⁸ these were susceptible to Luther's ideas and sustained interest at a local and popular level. Both Universities were forced to burn Luther's books in 1521 and John Fisher preached against him at St. Paul's; nevertheless there remained considerable support for his teachings especially in Oxford where "Divers of that

University be infected with the heresies of Luther and others of that sort, having among them a great number of books of the said perverse doctrine".¹⁹ Thomas More's son-in-law William Roper became very much influenced by Luther's arguments and was even called to appear before Wolsey at one point on a charge of heresy, but was eventually restored to orthodoxy mainly by the good offices of his father-in-law.²⁰ Whatever support the English Humanists and Erasmus might have shown for moderate reform was compromised by Luther's obvious extremism; ironically their creative energies, particularly those of Erasmus and More, were side-tracked from their own projects into the defence and protection of the very structures that they wished to modify.

Henry VIII took the work of the German reformer so seriously that he wrote a direct reply to Luther's tract defending the tradition of the seven sacraments, the authority of the Pope and the doctrine of the real presence. *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* (1521) earned the King "that most Illustrious Splendid and Christian-like title of Defender of the Faith"²¹ from the Pope and illustrated how deeply rooted Henry's orthodox views were at the time of its writing. As Maria Dowling says "The *Assertio* was not simply a facet of Henry's lust for glory like his campaigns in France; the King was deliberately

putting the prestige of his name and the weight of his authority against a threat to Church unity and traditional doctrine".²² In an age when the question of authority and jurisdictional rights were very much to the fore Henry came to the defence of the structures which supported and enhanced his own authority in kingship. "...I will not wrong the Bishop of Rome so much " he says "as troublesomely or carefully to dispute His Right, as if it were a matter doubtful".²³ Embarrassing words in view of the later change in the King's thinking.

The Scriptures were used by both sides as the source of authority in the dispute, the difference between the protagonists being that while Luther considered Scriptures the sole authority for his teaching, the orthodox reply as featured in the *Assertio* included apostolic tradition and the writings of the Church Fathers. The fact that Luther relied on his own interpretation of Scripture to the exclusion of other evidence is a weakness attacked by Henry's tract. In the section of the *Assertio* concerned with the doctrine of Real Presence the King²⁴ writes "Yet Luther endeavours to wrest the words of the Gospel by his own Interpretation. Take, eat, this, that is this bread (says he which he had taken and broken) Is my body. This is Luther's interpretation; not Christ's words nor the sense of the Words".²⁵ There follows a discussion on whether the

use of the Latin demonstrative pronoun hic/hoc used with "corpus" and "sanguis" proves or disproves Luther's contention that the body of Christ cannot be present in the Eucharist with the bread. Henry continues "For though in the Hebrew the Article should be of the Masculine Gender, that is Hic est Corpus meum; nevertheless the matter would be left doubtful because that Speech might seem forc'd by the necessity of the language which has no Neuter Gender. But because Bread and Body are of different genders in the Latin, he that translated it from the Greek should have joined the article with panis, if he had not found the Evangelical demonstration was made of the Body".²⁶

The availability of the Greek text of the Gospels opened up the possibility of re-interpretation through translation or comparison between different source texts. The problems of the use or non-use of definite or indefinite articles,²⁷ genders, the verb to be etc. were ostensibly linguistic but in reality came to be doctrinal. Interpretation / translation of both Scriptures and the Law became paramount in the jurisdictional crises of the Henrician age; vernacular translation as a means of re-interpretation was a dangerous instrument, and to those with an interest in preserving orthodox doctrines which supported the hierarchical structures of authority, it was

an instrument which needed rigid control. Henry VIII was never really comfortable with the idea of an English Bible. He was afraid of heresy, fearful of demeaning the status of the text and had seen how Luther had used it to support changes in the old order. Moreover the presence of a vernacular Bible might encourage the reader to consider alternative interpretations, to question authority, to offer his/her own interpretation.

Into this inhospitable context came the translation of William Tyndale, alias Hutchins, the next person after Wyclif and the first after the invention of printing to take practical steps towards the making of the English Bible. Born sometime between 1490 and 1495²⁸ he went first to Oxford university and then to Cambridge at the time when Erasmus was or had recently been teaching there. Tyndale was ordained a priest and became proficient in Greek; after a brief period as tutor to the Walsh family in Chipping Sodbury where he distinguished himself by his unorthodox views,²⁹ translated *Enchiridion Milites Christi* of Erasmus and converted his employers to his way of thinking, he set off for London in 1523. His intention was to obtain a position in the household of the Bishop of London, William Tunstal, friend of Erasmus and More, so that he could begin the work of translating the New Testament into English.

Perhaps he thought that the Bishop's Humanist sympathies would extend to his own project, but in view of the political situation in Europe, the King's stand against Luther and the increasing pressure upon the Humanists to declare their position, he could hardly have chosen a less appropriate moment.

Tunstal could find no position for Tyndale, and after a six month stay in the house of a Lutheran sympathiser, merchant Humphrey Monmouth, Tyndale "understood at the last not only that there was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the new Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England, as experience doth now openly declare".³⁰ He went to work at the University in Wittenburg where Luther had made his original challenge by attaching his thesis to the door of the church. After some set-backs³¹ he eventually produced his New Testament in 1526 and, again with the help of sympathetic merchants, copies reached England in sufficient numbers to alarm the Bishop Tunstal and provoke him to action in the same year. It was Tyndale's association with Lutheran ideas and his use of Lutheran glosses that condemned the translation in the eyes of the English Bishops. The uncommentated, unglossed text, produced abroad, ironically later formed the basis of the next generation of Scripture

Englishings; it was Tyndale's close association with heretical thought that prejudiced the reception of his work and brought him eventually to the stake, not defects in his translation skills. By 1528 the controversy over the burning of Tyndale's confiscated Testaments was such that Tunstal recruited Sir Thomas More since he could "rival Demosthenes in our vernacular as well as in Latin"³² to write "in English for the common man, some books that would help him see through the cunning malice of heretics". It is interesting that the Bishop Tunstal should see the necessity of the use of the vernacular in this situation. Those interested in Lutheran ideas were able to obtain and read books in English, it was therefore necessary that the counter-propaganda should be in that language. There is a change here from the Lollard story when Reginald Pecock wrote in English for the same reason, but in a manuscript age with a more limited literate audience was unable to generate sufficient readership for the vernacular to become the accepted intellectual medium for writing.

Duty and loyalty to the Church and the King obliged More to undertake the writing of *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*³³ as a reply to the many re-interpretations of doctrine which had been gaining ground as a result of the influx of Lutheran literature in general and Tyndale's New Testament in particular. The work was described in the

title as a discussion "of diuers maters as of the veneration and worship of ymagys and relyques, prayng to saynts and going on pylgrymage. Wyth may othere thyngs touchyng the pestylent sect of Luther and Tyndale",³⁴ but was more specifically a defence of the burning of the new vernacular translation and the treatment of those involved with the distribution or reading of heretical books. The defence takes the form of a dialogue between More, "one of the counsayll of oure souerayne lorde the kyng and chauncellour of hys duchy of Lancaster", standing for experience and authority, and the Messenger, a University student, representing the challenging view of the inexperienced but concerned intellectual. Written as it was as part of a "crash program of counter-propaganda in the vernacular"³⁵ it can be said to represent the official Church/Royal view as perceived and pursued by one of the more liberal thinkers of the time, but nevertheless by one whose Humanist perspective was by now seriously restricted by the polemic of the Lutheran challenge.

The part of the dialogue which deals directly with the question of the vernacular New Testament begins at chapter eight, in which More justifies the burning of Tyndale's work "(the burning) of which maketh men moche mervayll",³⁶ by citing the more controversial examples of translation manipulation. More explains to his pupil that

the claimed number of mistranslations - according to Bishop Tunstal there were two thousand incorrect renderings³⁷ - is accounted for by the fact that Tyndale "hath mysse translated thre words of great weyght and every one of them is as I suppose more than thryce thre tymes repeted and reherced in the book".³⁸ The three words to which More objects are "senior" for "priest", "congregation" for "church" and "love" for "charity". "Nowe do these names in our englysshe tonge neyther expresse the thyngs that be ment by them" says More, "and also there appereth (the cyrcumstaunces well consydered) that he had a myschevous mind in the chaunge".³⁹ Using "elder" for "priest" is inappropriate, More proposes, because all priests are not old and the office of elder or alder man is secular and not religious. The word "senior", used as an alternative by Tyndale, not only has less meaning in English than in Latin "but is a frenche word used in englysshe more than halfe in mockage whan one wyll call another my lorde in scorne".⁴⁰ Tyndale has mistranslated on two counts according to More's argument. By not using the word "priest" he has denied the full religious and authoritative significance of the office and demoted it to a less specific and more secular level; by replacing it with the word "senior", the Latin equivalent of *πρεσβυτερος*, he has introduced a derogatory tone owing to its contemporary usage as a term of mockery. In the preface to his 1534 edition of the New Testament,⁴¹

William Tyndale replies to criticism of his use of "elder" instead of "priest" citing the Old Testament usage of the word for the temporal rulers of the Jews and pointing out that both Peter and Paul carry on the custom of referring to the spiritual governors as "elders". "Now whether ye call them elders or priests it is to me all one" he says, "so that ye understand that they be officers and servants of the word of God, unto the which all men both high and low that will not rebel against Christ, must obey as long as they preach and rule truly and no longer".⁴² Tyndale's contention is that the word used is unimportant, what matters is its hermeneutic function. In the sub-text of his comment, however, lies the issue that in changing the word he has altered or at least drawn attention to a shift in its definition. The juxtaposition of the words "officer" and "servant", the use of "the word of God" as the authority to which they are subject, the proviso that they must be obeyed "as long as they preach and rule truly and no longer", redefines the concept of the priest in the same way as the use of "elder" does. Tyndale's vocabulary is heavily loaded with subtle shifts of definition. Similarly, by using "congregation" as a translation of *ἐκκλησία* Tyndale sheds all the preconceptions engendered by the word "church", loses all the exegetical functions associated with it and shifts the definition from a particular well-delineated specific to a considerably less

familiar but more general idea which has room for reconstruction and redefinition. More's objection to this exchange is too simple: "every man well seeth that though the chyrch be in dede a congregacyon, yet is not euery congregacyon the chyrche".⁴³ The word "church", he says, has always been used to describe the congregation of Christian people in England, what reason could there be for changing it? It is difficult to believe that More did not perceive the intention behind Tyndale's switch of vocabulary, since he had been encouraging of Erasmus' linguistic work on the Vulgate and aware of the furor caused by his substitution of "sermo" for "verbum" at the beginning of John's Gospel. More was also aware of Luther's particular linguistic interpretation of the verse in Romans 3:28 which supported the doctrine of justification by faith alone and had actively encouraged Erasmus to write *de Libero Arbitrio* against it. We can only assume that in not denouncing Tyndale's underlying motive he was writing well within the framework that Tunstal had outlined, with heresy and "the common man" in mind, and Humanist reform in abeyance. In the same way, Tyndale's use of "love" for "charity" is criticised by More but unconvincingly, without attacking the real issues. "For though charyte be always loue yet is not ye wote well loue always charyte"⁴⁴ is his only comment. He must have been aware that the problem arises from the fact that in Latin there are two words for

love; "amor" for sexual love⁴⁵ and "caritas" for love from esteem. In English, "love" covered both types, but the word "charity" was preferred as a closer derivative of "caritas". This was because in the medieval Church the "amor" type of love was considered a distraction from holiness and an occasion of sin to be discouraged; priests and nuns were supposed to be celibate; the worship of the Virgin Mary was promoted as a role model; the story of the Fall - the source of mankind's separation from God - had sexual undertones, Adam being seduced by Eve and Eve by the serpent to taste the forbidden fruit. The process of reform altered these attitudes. The cult of Marian worship declined outside the Roman Church, celibacy was no longer considered a pre-requisite for holiness and Luther himself married.⁴⁶ Tyndale's choice of "love" over "charity" was an early reflection of this change in thinking and once more showed his preference for a more general term which left room for flexibility of interpretation.⁴⁷

More uses Tyndale's manipulation of vocabulary as justification for the destruction of the text and contends that the New Testament was "untrewely translated for the mayntenaunce of heresye".⁴⁸ The Messenger is partly convinced by this argument but pursues his point. He concedes that there may be cause for the suppression of Tyndale's translation but enquires why the clergy "do

dampne all other and as thoughe a leye manne were no crysten man wyll suffer no ley man haue any at all".⁴⁹ More allows him to state the case strongly: "all other contrees of crysendome ye people haue ye scrypture translated in to theyr owne tonge". The Messenger implies that the clergy deliberately withhold the Scriptures from the laity, "wherein I can in good faythe se no scuse they can fynde". Since the dialogue was written as counter-propaganda to the new reforming ideas it is reasonable to suppose that this section reflected growing opinion among the laity that a vernacular Bible should be available to them and that it was the English clergy who were actively preventing this from happening. More uses all his skill in polemic in the handling of this part of the argument. First he allows the Messenger to state his case forcefully in words "somewhat pugnaunt and sharpe" and then makes the concession that amongst the English clergy there are "very many lewde and naught" but says that they are on the whole no worse than in any other part of Christendom. He points out that little notice is taken of good priests, but that people are more than ready to criticise the bad ones. His final move is to announce⁵⁰ that there is in fact no constitution forbidding the vernacular translation of the Bible, but that this is a popular myth based on a misinterpretation of the law. He goes on to explain that the Council of Oxford in 1408 "neyther forbedeth the translacyons to be red that were all

redy well done of olde before Wyclyffys dayes nor dampneth his bycause it was new but bycause it was nought, nor prohybyteth newe to be made but prouydeth that they shall not be red yf they be mysse made".⁵¹ To give weight to his words he cites himself as witness: "But I my self haue sene and can shew you bybles fayre and old wryten in englysshe whych haue ben knowen and sene by ye bishop of ye dyocyse and left in ley mennes handys and womens".

More does his best to produce a reasoned and authoritative defence of the establishment position on this issue of vernacular Bibles, but his skill in putting their case does not conceal the flaws in the argument. The early fifteenth century Convocation may have allowed for the licensing of translations but it certainly did not encourage them - on the contrary, the penalties for mistakes were too great. The Bibles "wryten in englyshe" that More could produce as evidence must have been manuscript copies available exclusively to those who could afford them and whose education was sufficient to make use of them. We have seen how Caxton was not inclined to consider the printing of a vernacular Bible and how Tyndale was forced to go to Germany in order to be able to work on a translation. More the lawyer does his best to defend on technicalities, but is unconvincing in material evidence. Any possibility of changing the theological status quo

through translation had to be firmly denied by the establishment.

What does make interesting reading however is More's personal attitude towards translating the Bible into the vernacular which he expresses in chapter sixteen, book three. It is here that we see evidence of Humanist thinking. He admits that the licensing of translation is a deterrent: "yet I thynke there wyl no prynter lyghtly be so hote to put any byble in prynt at his owne charge whereof the losse sholde lye hole in his owne necke",⁵² and he defends the restrictive attitude of the clergy by saying that they are afraid "lest if it were had in euery mannes hande there wold grete parell aryse and that sedycyous people sholde do more harm therwith than good and honest folke sholde take fruyte therby".⁵³ More himself, however, does not subscribe to this view - "which fere I promys you nothyng fereth me" - on the contrary he recognises that "yf any good thyng shall go forwarde, somewhat muste nedes be aduentured".⁵⁴ There is a risk in translation but a risk he considers worth taking for the benefit. Problems arise, says More, when "bolde busy medlers" expound the meaning for themselves and prefer their own reading to that of the Church's teaching. Provided that lay people accept the Church's exegesis and hold the Scriptures in sufficient respect he can see no reason why they should not be

translated into English.

More's attitude shows a considerable shift from the establishment view of 1401 as expressed in William Butler's *Determination*,⁵⁵ and does not display the tenth century Aelfric's unease at translating for the laity.⁵⁶ This is not to say that the Humanist approach was taken up by all his contemporaries; Bishop Tunstal for example had shown no interest in giving Tyndale a place in his house and at the time of More's writing was occupied in confiscating and destroying the only English New Testament since the Wycliffite versions. The King, while issuing proclamations forbidding the use of Bibles and other books in the vernacular, promised in 1530 that the Scripture would be put into English in an official translation if the heretical versions were abandoned and "if it shall then seem to his grace convenient so to be".⁵⁷ Five years later there was still no officially authorised version. As late as 1546 there were still severe restrictions on the printing and possession of not only Tyndale's Bible but Coverdale's⁵⁸ too, and in his last speech to parliament in December of the same year, Henry was still not entirely happy about having the Bible in the vernacular:

And though you be permitted to read holy scripture, and to have the word of God in your mother tongue, you must understand that it is licensed you so to do, only to inform your own conscience, and to

instruct your children and family, and not to dispute and make scripture a railing and taunting stock against priests and preachers (as many light persons do). I am very sorry to know and hear how unreverently that most precious jewel the word of God is disputed, rimed, sung and jangled in every alehouse and tavern, contrary to the true meaning and doctrine of the same.⁵⁹

In spite of the reservations of Bishop and King, the Humanist perspective of the Scriptural texts had shown many of the old traditional arguments for not having a vernacular Bible to be invalid. For example in the sixteenth century the quality of English as a language was no longer an issue. As More expresses it: "for as for that oure tonge is called barbarouse is but a fantasye".⁶⁰ Valla and Erasmus had highlighted the fact that it was simple vernacular Greek into which the Scriptures were first recorded and More presses the same point: "For neyther was the ebrewe nor the greke tonge nor the laten neyther any other speche than suche as all the people spake".⁶¹ English could no longer be said to be inadequate and in any event the original language of Scripture was a basic vernacular. Nor was the loss involved in turning the Scriptures from one language to another any more or less than that already experienced by those "that haue translated the scripture all redy eyther out of greke into laten or out of ebrewe into any of them bothe".⁶² If Scripture had already been turned from one vernacular into another, there was no reason not to turn it into English. More even has a

translation strategy to suggest: "For it myght be wyth dylygence well and truly translated by some good catholyque and well lerned manne or by dyvers dyuydyng the laboure amonge theym and after conferryng theyr seuerall partys togyther eche with other".⁴³ The completed work approved by the ecclesiastical authorities, all copies would be given to the Bishop to distribute to those who will make best use of them. "Amonge whome yf any be proued after to haue abused it than the use therof to be forboden hym eyther for euer or tyll he be waxen wyser."

It is one of the ironies of History that the translation strategy cautiously outlined by Thomas More should be exactly that employed less than a hundred years later in the making of the King James version of 1611 which has had such impact on both English language and literature. There is also irony, in the light of such studied persecution, in the survival of Tyndale's work not only as an independent text but as part of every subsequent rendering of the Scriptures into the English language up to and including the Authorised Version. Reasons for the official rejection of Tyndale's New Testament at the time of its publication are not difficult to find: translations of Scripture were dangerous and controversial as even the orthodox Erasmus discovered; association with Luther - and Tyndale's was strong - raised the spectre of heresy.

Moreover the Scriptures in English were not part of the mainstream tradition, they were looked upon as something new, a challenge and a shock to those in a position of power. Then there was Tyndale himself, considered an extremist, a propagandist who made bitter attacks against the Pope, the Church and against More. Finally there was natural suspicion of things foreign and Tyndale's work was part of a wealth of religious propaganda emanating from the continent at the time.

How did it happen then, in spite of all these negative aspects, that the plain text of his New Testament formed the base upon which the future translations into English were to be built? J. Isaacs claims that "Nine-tenths of the Authorized New Testament is still Tindale, and the best is still his".⁴⁴ He goes on to demonstrate that phrases which not only featured in the 1611 Bible but which remain in current use are Tyndale's: "eat, drink and be merry" Luke 12:13; "the powers that be" Romans 13:1; "in him we live, move and have our being" Acts 17:28; "a prophet hath no honour in his own country" John 4:44.⁴⁵ The fact is that the language of the Scriptures was already part of the English language through the extensive and continuous oral tradition; through the localised but nevertheless considerable influence of the Wycliffite versions; through Caxton's *Golden Legends* and through the sermon culture in

which Latin texts were used as authority but translated into English for the benefit of the congregation. In Tyndale's *Epistle to the Reader* joined to the 1526 edition of the New Testament, he shows himself to be unaware of the way in which Scriptural vocabulary had already established itself in the language, particularly in the course of debates about doctrine.⁴⁶ He asks his audience to "consider how that I had no man to counterfeit, neither was helped with English of any that had interpreted the same or such like thing in the Scripture beforetime".⁴⁷ He may not have had a complete written text as a model, he was not as far as we know helped by anyone with the English style, but he had a wealth of expression available to him which was already familiar to the English ear. The people who read his New Testament had listened to sermons based on Biblical texts and heard them quoted in English at length. They also would have known several versions in English of the parables and stories of the New Testament. They had lives of the Saints in English and may even have had access to one of the vernacular Bibles that More speaks of as being "left in ley mennes handys and womens".

Tyndale shared Thomas More's view that the quality of the English language was no longer an impediment to translation. In the preface to *Obedience of a Christian Man* he argues that English is in fact a more suitable target

language for the Scriptures than Latin:

"For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin. And the properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin. The manner of speaking is both one; so that in a thousand places thou needest not but to translate it into the English word for word; when thou must seek a compass in the Latin, and yet shall have much work to translate it well-favouredly so that it have the same grace and sweetness, sense and pure understanding with it in the Latin as it hath in the Hebrew. A thousand parts better may it be translated into the English than into the Latin".⁶⁸

Tyndale recognised that the deposing of the Vulgate as primary source text was a positive advantage in terms of promoting English as a target language but miscalculated the strength of the orthodox tradition which still clung to the Vulgate as the only original. He recognised that what he had produced was part of an on-going process and needed further work: "Count it as a thing not having his full shape, but as it were born before his time, even as a thing begun rather than finished".⁶⁹ He was thinking in the short term, as his revisions of 1534 and 1537 show, but Tyndale's words could equally have applied to the entire process of Englishing the Bible of which his and Wyclif's contributions were, as subsequent events were to prove, things "begun rather than finished".

References to Chapter Nine

1. The question of the validity of the marriage between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon was referred to obliquely at the time as "the King's Great Matter". Henry had been granted a papal dispensation to marry Catherine, as she had been previously betrothed to Arthur, Henry's elder brother, who had died before the marriage could be consummated (so Catherine's supporters always maintained). By asking the Pope for the dispensation to be rescinded, Henry was asking the Church to admit that it had been wrong to grant it in the first place.
2. At that time the Pope was a temporal as well as a spiritual ruler. He used his spiritual authority to extract support for political manoeuvres which were to his temporal advantage. Henry resented his loyalty being drawn on in this way. The Church also had powers in England which were to a large extent untouchable by the state, the appointment of livings, courts, the collection of tithes. It also owned a large amount of land. The King came to the opinion that he had the right to reclaim jurisdiction over his kingdom and to be free from political loyalty to the Pope.
3. This was evident not only in the Humanist writings and sermons against war (Colet's Good Friday sermon 1513, Erasmus's *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis*) but in the general interest in new structures of society (Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani* 1514, More's *Utopia* 1516) and law (Christopher St. German's *Doctor and Student* Dialogues, and Thomas Elyot's *The Boke named the Governour* in the 1520s and 30s).
4. Henry had in mind King John's quarrel with his nobles when an interdict forced him to capitulate to the Pope's authority. An interdict was "a serious possibility" in Henry's case also (see John Guy *Tudor England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1990) p.116) Henry also sought to marginalise the moral victory of Church over State/King in Henry II's quarrel with Beckett by removing the martyr from the church calendar and later despoiling his tomb and place of pilgrimage at Canterbury. Wolsey, who like Beckett was also "of upstart origin" (see J. F. Mozley *William Tyndale* (New York: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London: Macmillan 1937) p.37) should have been warned by this, for his own fall from power was a further indication that Henry was determined to curb the power of the Church.
5. *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* edited by Louis

- Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi and Richard Schoeck. vol vi (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1973) p.316
6. *Records of the English Bible* edited by A. W. Pollard (London: Oxford University Press 1911) p.261
 7. Of the translators of the 1525, 1535 and 1537 Bibles, Tyndale was burnt at the stake in Henry's reign, Rogers (in spite of working under the pseudonym of Matthews) was burnt in Mary's reign as was Cranmer, the originator of the Great Bible. Only Coverdale escaped death.
 8. Henry's motive for the dissolution of the monasteries lay more in the wealth and lands that he could recover from them than in his reform ideology. See John Guy *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1988) p.144-145
 9. In 1518 Thomas More wrote to Oxford University on hearing that those not sympathetic to the new learning had formed a group called the Trojans to oppose the Greeks (those keen to learn and work in Greek). *St. Thomas More Selected Letters* edited by Elizabeth Rogers (New Haven: Yale University Press 1961)
In 1519 Erasmus wrote to Henry Guildford "The world is regaining its senses as if awakening from a very deep sleep; and yet some persons are still putting up a stubborn resistance, while clinging tooth and nail to their old ignorance". *Erasmus and His Age Selected Letters* edited by Hans J. Hillerbrand translated by Marcus A. Howarth (New York: Harper and Row 1970) p137
 10. Guy p.118
 11. *Henry VIII* J.R. Scarisbrick (London: Eyre Methuen 1968, 1988) p.33
 12. First in the seventies by G.R. Elton in *Reform and Reformation - The New History of England* (London: Arnold 1977) and later by Fox and Guy *Reassessing the Henrician Age* (Oxford: Blackwell 1986)
 13. Alistair Fox *Politics and Literature in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Oxford: Blackwell 1989) p.209
 14. More's *Utopia*, the ultimate model for a new order of society, was extremely popular. It established his European reputation and was translated into French German, Dutch and Italian within twenty years of his death. The British Museum has eighty-four editions and translations.
 15. Fox p.209
 16. Maria Dowling *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII* (London: Croom Helm 1986) p.37
 17. Guy p.118
 18. Between 1418 (Oldcastle) and 1519 Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* records approximately fifteen executions for Lollardry or Lollard related offences. About half took

- place in the opening two decades of the sixteenth century. *Foxe's Martyrs* edited by William Forbush (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1926, 1967) p.191,192,193.
19. Dowling p.75
 20. Complete Works of Thomas More vol viii part III p.1141
 21. Henry VIII *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum or, An Assertion of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther* translated by T.W.Gent, (London: Nath.Thompson near Charing Cross 1688)
 22. Dowling p.38
 23. *Assertio* p.5
 24. The King is believed to had had help with the *Assertio*, perhaps from Fisher, almost certainly from More, who was given the task of replying to Luther's invective against the King.
 25. *Assertio* p.18
 26. *Assertio* p.19
 27. The Wycliffite translators had already demonstrated how much depended on these small grammatical matters. The difference between "the Good Shepherd" and "a good shepherd" or between "The Son of Man" and "a son of man" was considerable.
 28. C. H. Williams *William Tyndale* (London: Nelson 1969) p.2
 29. Williams p.11. The young priest was actually brought before the vicar general in Bristol as a result of some of his sermons.
 30. Williams p.15
 31. Williams p.19 describes how Tyndale was forced to move his printing operation after spies discovered his workshop in Wittenburg.
 32. Complete Works of Thomas More vol viii p.1139
 33. Published in June 1529. Complete Works vol viii p.1142
 34. Complete Works vol viii p.1142
 35. Complete Works vol viii p.1134
 36. Complete Works vol vi part I p.284
 37. Charles Sturge *Cuthbert Tunstal* (London: Longman 1938) p.133
 38. Complete Works vol vi p.285
 39. Complete Works vol vi p. 285/6
 40. Complete Works vol vi p.286
 41. Tyndale's New Testament edited by David Daniell (Yale: Yale University Press 1989)
 42. Daniell p.10
 43. Complete Works vol vi p.286
 44. Complete Works vol vi p.287
 45. In the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer describes the Prioress as having the motto "Amor vincit omnia" on her "broche of gold ful shene" - a deliberately ambiguous use of the word "amor".
The General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales edited by

- A.V.C. Schmidt (London:University of London Press 1974)
p.56 lines 160-163
46. Luther married an ex-nun, Catherine von Bora in 1525. For the impact this had see John M. Todd *Luther - A Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton 1982) p.265
 47. Modern Biblical translations prefer "love" rather than "charity" since the latter has acquired a derogatory connotation in current vernacular usage.
 48. Complete Works vol vi p.290
 49. This and the following short quotes are taken from Complete Works vol vi p.293
 50. At the beginning of Chapter Fourteen , Book Three vol vi p.314
 51. Complete Works vol vi p.316
 52. Complete Works vol vi p.331
 53. Complete Works vol vi p. 332
 54. Complete Works vol vi p. 339
 55. Described and printed in *The Lollard Bible* by Margaret Deanesley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1966) p.399
 56. See Aelfric's Latin and Old English Prefaces to his *Lives of Saints* edited by Walter Skeat EETS vol i (London: Oxford University Press 1881)
 57. *Tudor Royal Proclamations* edited by Paul Hughes and James Larkin vol i (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press 1964) p.196
 58. Hughes and Larkin p.374
 59. *Letters of King Henry VIII* edited by M. St.Clare Byrne (London: Cassell and Co. Ltd. 1936) p.421
 60. Complete Works vol vi p.337
 61. Complete Works vol vi p.338
 62. Complete Works vol vi p.337
 63. Complete Works vol vi p.341
 64. "The Sixteenth Century English Versions" by J. Isaacs in *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* edited by H. Wheeler Robinson (London: Oxford University Press 1940) p.160
 65. J. Isaacs p.160
 66. In his discussions with More he quotes James, Paul and the Old Testament in English. The King's use of the Old Testament Texts in his divorce case also brought the Old Testament readings into the public eye and into discussion.
 67. *The Work of William Tyndale* edited by G. E. Duffield, (Appleford: Sutton Courteney Press 1964) p.28
 68. Duffield p.326
 69. Duffield p.28

Chapter TenCHANGING ATTITUDES:
COLLATING, REVISING, LAYERING, EDITING

The Reformation in Europe and the wealth of literature it generated¹ both for and against reform and the reformers forced a re-appraisal of the English tradition of religious literature. Vernacular Scriptural translation came to be foregrounded in a political as well as literary way. After the initial shock² of the vocabulary of Tyndale's New Testament in English had faded, attitudes softened towards the idea of vernacular Scripture in areas of the community which had not previously supported it. Those with Protestant leanings considered the vernacular Bible as central to their religion; an alternative spiritual authority to what they now saw as the intrusive power of the Pope. Orthodox lay people, now more literate, began to question why the Bible in English was unavailable to them;³ if the reason was fear of heresy why could there not be a translation which was not heretical?

For some the releasing of the Scriptures into the vernacular remained a question of class: there was still the feeling that the common people were not worthy to have

it, or might misuse the privilege.⁴ Men and women of noble birth and education were deemed competent to deal with it, the others were not.⁵ Access to the Scriptures was a mark of worthiness as well as of education. Underlying this concept was the implicit notion that making the Bible available to all without the intermediary of Latin would reduce the elitist nature of the Latin text and so diminish the status of those who currently held exclusive access to it. The status of the clergy was already under attack following the wave of anti-clericalism which had been gaining ground for some years; to give the people the Scriptures in their own language might further reduce the importance of those accustomed to dispensing religious teaching and, more specifically, might lay their own powers of interpretation open to challenge from their increasingly interested and knowledgeable congregations.

It was mainly due to these changing attitudes, the ongoing question of the King's "Great Matter" and to the controversy caused by Tyndale's New Testament that the Scriptures continued to maintain a high profile in the years 1525-30 across all classes of English society. The first printed English New Testament continued to be supplied to enthusiastic customers⁶ via agents from the Continent, and continued to be confiscated and burned if it was discovered by the authorities. Henry VIII had meanwhile

decided that he would base his claim for a divorce from Catherine of Aragon on the Old Testament text of Leviticus forbidding a man to take his brother's wife.⁷ The text in Deuteronomy⁸ which appeared to contradict this order had therefore to be discredited or explained away in some other cultural context which did not apply to the King's position. This necessitated a good deal of exegetical manoeuvring. "For Leviticus, a rigorous almost fundamentalist interpretation was required; for Deuteronomy abolition".⁹ Both English and European Humanists were called into action to provide evidence for the King's case, Henry making full use of the New Learning when it could be advantageous to his position.

It was quite possibly during the dispute about the validity of his marriage to Catherine that Henry's ideas on the jurisdiction of the Pope and the authority of the Church began to crystalise. It was not only that the Pope would not let him have an annulment, it was also that the Church's power seemed more and more to impinge on secular affairs which should have been under the King's jurisdiction. He began to look for allies to support his cause and thought he might find them among the German Lutheran Princes, so he instructed Thomas Cromwell to invite the self-exiled reformer Robert Barnes¹⁰ to help in the negotiations with the Protestant Leaders. Cromwell was

also to try and win over William Tyndale to the King's cause¹¹ as his treatise *The Obedience of a Christian Man* had impressed the monarch, but neither of these initiatives proved ultimately successful. The King's interest in the reformers encouraged Cromwell and later Cranmer to promote their own projects in terms of a vernacular Bible. Correspondence between a friar called Miles Coverdale and "Mr. Crumwell" as early as 1527 speaks of "the Godly communication which your mastership had with me your orator in master Moore's house upon Easter eve..."; says that the writer begins "to taste of Holy Scripture" and asks Cromwell's help in obtaining the books he needs to complete his work.¹² The letter does not mention the particular work that Coverdale is involved in, but then if he was preparing a translation of the Bible at that time he would hardly have put the fact in writing. Given Thomas More's ideas on vernacular translation and his connection with Cromwell, the mention of "master Moore" in this context is an interesting one but in the absence of further evidence More's involvement, if any, in the project must remain the subject of speculation. Coverdale's and Cromwell's plans, if they were related to a translation, remained unfulfilled for another eight years.

Meanwhile the King himself was overtaken by events. In January 1533, Anne Boleyn became pregnant and, despairing

of an official annulment, Henry secretly married her.¹³ As soon as he had persuaded the English Convocations of Bishops to declare his first marriage unlawful his new queen was crowned. The Pope's response was to excommunicate the King, so that his position was now, although still outwardly orthodox, more isolated from Catholic influence and more open to suggestions from his new wife and those of like mind. Anne had Lutheran leanings and kept an uncommentated copy of the latest (1534) edition of Tyndale's New Testament available for consultation by the members of her household.¹⁴ She also read the Scriptures in French, her own first language, and was a supporter of the French Humanists; her father Thomas Boleyn had commissioned work from Erasmus. She discussed questions of Scripture with her husband and actively supported the idea of an English vernacular Bible. Her influence, Cromwell's reforming ideals and Cranmer's enthusiasm made the possibility of progress in that direction more likely, but still not without setbacks.

In 1535, Archbishop Cranmer, anxious to push forward the idea of an English Bible while the King was not openly opposed to the principle, followed More's idea of translation by a group of people and sent parts of the New Testament to several of the "best lernyd bishoppes and other lernyd men"¹⁵ to translate and correct. According to

anecdotal evidence supplied by one of Fox's manuscripts, after the appointed time had elapsed, everyone had returned his portion¹⁶ except for the Bishop of London, Lord Stokisley, whose reported reply on being asked for his share shows his attitude towards both the project and the laity for whom it was intended. "I marvaile what my lorde of Canterbury meaneth, that thus abuseth the people in gyvying them libertie to read the scriptures, which doith nothing else but infecte them with heryses. I have bestowed never an hower upon my portion, nor never will; and therefore my lorde shall have his boke againe, for I will never be gyltie to bring the symple people into errour".¹⁷

The motives of clerics like Stokisley for keeping the English Scriptures from the ordinary people were beginning to be challenged, as the second part of the anecdote illustrates. Thomas Lawney, chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk, was present when Cranmer received Stokisley's response and explained the Bishop's reluctance to cooperate in the following terms:

"....his portion ys a pece of Newe Testament; and than he, being persuaded Christe hath bequeth hym nothing in his testament, thought it mere madness to bestowe any labour or payne where no gayne was to be gotten. And besides this, it is the Actes of the Apostells, whiche were symple poore fellowes; and therefore my lord of London disdayned to have to do with any of thair actes".¹⁸

The Archbishop Cranmer's initiative came to nothing, but Thomas Cromwell had continued his interest in Miles Coverdale and given him the means and opportunity to work on a translation. Coverdale was an Augustinian Friar at Cambridge when he first came to the notice of Cromwell, but the details of his whereabouts during the time that he was involved in translating are unclear;¹⁹ like Tyndale before him he was obliged to work abroad and publish the first complete printed English Bible in Zurich in 1535.²⁰ Coverdale compensated for the lack of prior official approval by a cleverly organised dedication to the King in which he indicates that all the difficulties which had beset Henry were the result of the Pope's denying the Scriptures to the people. By his own admission in the Prologue, he makes use of "sundry translations, not only in Latin but also of the Dutch (German) interpreters, whom, because of their singular gifts and special diligence in the Bible, I have been the more glad to follow for the most part, according as I was required".²¹ Is it possible that in the ten years since Tyndale's translation the attitude towards the Lutheran translators had changed sufficiently to allow Coverdale to admit his debt to them? Or was it simply that the initial shock of Tyndale's manipulative vocabulary had subsided and after the break with Rome in 1533 Henry was more open to reforming ideas, particularly if they allowed him to consolidate his own position within

the kingdom?²²

The King may have been better disposed towards an English translation but the Bishops again showed their general circumspection when presented with Coverdale's Bible in late 1535. The printer, James Nicholson, had written to Cromwell asking him to obtain the King's approval for its distribution.²³ Henry had given the Bishops a copy in order to check for heresies. According to William Fulke, writing in 1583, "after they had kept it long in their hands, the King was divers times sued unto for the publication thereof, at the last being called for by the king himself, they redelivered the book; and being demanded by the king what was their judgment of the translation, they answered that there were many faults therein."²⁴ The King apparently pressed his point by asking if the translation contained any heresies. The Bishops' reply was careful and unenthusiastic; there were no heresies that they could find. "Then in God's name" the King is said to have replied, "let it go abroad among our people".²⁵ Coverdale's version was therefore allowed to circulate freely, although it was not officially licensed.

The distinction between faults and heresies implied in the reported exchange between Henry and the Bishops is a reflection of how attitudes had changed towards Scriptural

translation within a relatively short time. Heresies were still obviously unacceptable but faults could be tolerated if it meant that an English Bible could be made available. The conservative Bishops retained their reluctant and at times obstructive position over the issue but the King felt his responsibility as the new spiritual guide to the people and, encouraged by Cranmer and Cromwell conceded that there should now be a vernacular version. The enormity of the task of translating from a practical point of view was becoming more and more evident, as were the political and social implications of the translated text. Tyndale's perspective on his own work as being unfinished in the sense of imperfect and unpolished was echoed by Coverdale in the prologue to his first edition. "We have great occasion to give thanks unto God" he writes, "that he hath opened unto his church the gift of interpretation and of printing, and that there are now at this time so many which with such diligence and faithfulness interpret the Scripture".²⁶ He continues that it is inevitable that some translations should "miss and come not nighest the mark".²⁷ These works are not to be abhorred, but "rather to be commended and to be helped forward". How could these translations be helped forward except by being corrected? What Coverdale is recommending is the collating and editing of the available translations, English included, into one vernacular version which would then be, hopefully, "nighest

the mark". Following his own precepts the New Testament he produced was therefore substantially that of Tyndale but with minor changes. Much of the Pentateuch was also Tyndale's, but the translation of the Psalms was his own, there being no contemporary model.²⁸ His other sources have subsequently been verified as Luther's German translation, the Vulgate, Pagninus,²⁹ and the Zurich version of 1531.³⁰ Translation activity generated by Erasmus' production of a new Latin translation of the Vulgate together with the original Vulgate and the Greek New Testament in 1516 meant that the range of source texts available in Europe in Coverdale's time was far more extensive than ever before. In this way began the system of editing, revising and layering of translations from which the 1611 Authorised Version eventually emerged.

Anne Boleyn's execution in May 1536 complicated an already difficult political situation and gave those with reforming inclinations reason to pause in their projects until the King's will became clear. Catherine of Aragon had died in January of the same year so that both obstacles to a return to the religious status quo were now removed. The Pope had hopes of returning England to the fold, but Henry put an end to speculation in this area by authorising Cromwell to begin the first stage of the Dissolution of the Monasteries; the King was not prepared to give up the

jurisdiction that he had won.

1536 also saw the burning of William Tyndale, not by the English government but almost certainly with the knowledge of Cromwell.³¹ John Fisher and Thomas More had been executed in the year before: it was not the age to be engaged in crossing either the Church authorities or the English King. It is unsurprising therefore that the next vernacular Bible was published under a false name. In 1537 John Rogers under the pseudonym Thomas Matthews produced another edited composite work which has come to be known as the Matthews Bible. It comprised Tyndale's 1535 New Testament (a revision of the 1525 version), Tyndale's Pentateuch (used by Coverdale for his 1535 version), Coverdale's Apocrypha and his translation of the Old Testament from Ezra to Malachi and a version of Joshua to Chronicles which may have been Tyndale's.³² Rogers also used Olivetan's French Bible to supply some of the linguistic deficiencies he found in his English sources and included several contentious commentaries. The work was more precise than Coverdale's but "too provocative in its theological apparatus"³³ although interestingly it was licensed by the King.

Thomas Cromwell wrote a circular to the Bishops in June 1538 reminding them of the King's wishes that his

subjects should be well instructed in the Scriptures. He chides them for being remiss in carrying out the King's wishes and orders them to redress the situation:

And further his graces pleasure and high commawndment is thatt yow with no lesse circumspection and diligence cause the bible in Englishe to be layd ferthe openly in your own howses and thatt the same be in lyke maner openly layd forth in every parisshe churche att the charges and costes of the parsones and vicars... ³⁴

Every parish having to provide a Bible in English at the parson's expense constituted a source of irritation for some of the clergy and a considerable business opportunity for publishers willing to support a translation venture and able to obtain the sole right to its production. It was also important to provide an acceptable translation. With this in mind, Cromwell asked Coverdale, whom he viewed as the more moderate theologian, to revise Matthew's Bible, which he considered to be a more accurate rendering. Coverdale was already engaged in revising a Latin/English New Testament he had produced in 1535, having discovered that the copies now being printed were "not the true copy of the Latin text observed, neither the English so correspondent to the same as it ought to be; but in many places, both insensible and clean contrary not only to the phrase of our language but also from the understanding of the text in Latin".³⁵ He nevertheless undertook the revision of Matthew's Bible under the protection and

support of Cromwell and with the help of Richard Grafton, a London merchant who was one of the printers of the version that they were revising.

Cromwell's support with both the finance and authority for the venture resulted in the first edition of the Great Bible, usually known as Cromwell's Bible. The work was begun in Paris and a letter from Coverdale and Grafton to "Lord Crumwell" sets out their method of working:

We follow not only a standing text of the Hebrew, with the interpretation of the Chaldee and the Greek; but we set also in a private table the diversity of readings of all texts, with such annotations in another table, as shall doubtless elucidate and clear the same, as well without any singularity of opinions, as all checkings and reproofs.³⁴

They worked with Matthew's text as the basis of the translation and referred to others in cases of dispute, editing and refining rather than translating. The great advantage was that they had a text from which to work, the groundwork was already done, all that was necessary was a toning down of contentious language and a modification of Matthew's excesses. Their work was seriously delayed when the French Inquisitor General seized some of the printed sheets and the operation had to be removed to London. The diplomatic problems meant that Cromwell's Great Bible was not published until April 1539 by which time a layman,

Richard Taverner,³⁷ had made and printed his own revision of Matthew's Bible. Taverner's skill lay in his Greek scholarship which he used to improve the rendering of the definite article in the ready-made text; but his work was overshadowed by the Great Bible which had the more powerful sponsor. He retains the distinction of being the first layman to produce an English version of the complete Bible.

The printing of the second edition of the Great Bible, which constituted a considerable revision of the first edition, coincided with the fall from grace of its chief instigator in 1540. Because of the need to distance the project from the now disgraced Cromwell and because of Cranmer's well-known preface, it came to be called Cranmer's Bible. The revisions were again supplied by Coverdale who had by now become more editor/revisor than translator. Whereas the Wycliffite group had struggled with meaning, Coverdale benefitted from the scholarship which had preceded his translations and now found himself in the position of having to make choices, not from the point of view of meaning, but from a stylistic perspective. For example, in the notoriously difficult passage in Isaiah 53,³⁸ the Wycliffite translator struggled to make sense of the sentence rendering verse three in the early version as: "and wee desireded hym dispisid and þe last of men; man of sorewis and witende infirmyte" and the later version as:

"And we desiriden him, dispisid and the last of men; a man of sorewis and knowinge sikenesse".³⁹ These two versions show a progression in the understanding of the text; the change in punctuation (if it can be relied upon), the insertion of the indefinite article before "man", the replacing of "witende" with the more modern "knowinge" and the use of "sikenesse" for "infirmyte" to make more relevance to the use of "sikenesse" in a following passage - all indicate a progression in the shaping of the passage as a whole. In the Coverdale revisions, however, it is more difficult to discern the intention of the re-phrasing apart from the omission of "shalbe" after 1535. In Coverdale's own version of 1535 he has: "He shalbe the most symple and despysed of all, which yet hath good experience of sorowes and infirmities"; in his 1539 revision of Matthew's Bible he has: "He is despysed and abhorred of men, he is soch a man as hath good experience of sorowes and infirmyties". The 1540 revision has: "He is despysed and abhorred of men, he is soch a man as is full of sorowe and hath good experience of infirmyties".⁴⁰

In the sixteenth century context we need to ask what the purpose was of this type of re-arrangement that amounted to little more than adjusting the existing word order. The English language was developing very rapidly but the changes in this example are over a very short time span

and are definitely stylistic rather than hermaneutic. Could it be that they were the result of an instruction to revise when in fact there was no translational need to do so, merely a political one? Revision made a politically unacceptable translation acceptable. The text remained substantially the work of, for example, Matthews or Tyndale in as much as they were responsible for the hermaneutic transfer from source to target language, but their names, commentaries and heretical associations were withdrawn, obscured by the process of revision. In similar political manoeuvring, when Cromwell's name became politically sullied, the Great Bible revision was linked with Cranmer to uphold its credibility even though there was no change to the substance of the text.

After Cromwell's execution the religious direction of the country was again unclear. Henry veered towards orthodoxy once more now that he had regained the wealth and jurisdiction that he felt to be rightfully his; besides which he had to keep his ally Charles V reassured of his loyalty to the faith they shared even if he had quarrelled with the Pope. The reforms had not been received by either the clergy or the people with consistent enthusiasm.⁴¹ The order to make an English Bible available in every church was not fully observed until a system of fines instituted in 1541 made it cheaper to have one than not. The

conservative Bishops wanted a revision of the Great Bible, since they found it "distasteful both to their theology and their ecclesiastical standpoint".⁴² Coverdale's revision had not sufficiently addressed the real issue of definition of doctrine. Tunstal (who had been so diligent in destroying Tyndale's New Testament) and the Bishop of Lincoln are two of those on record as not liking its tone.⁴³ Henry agreed that the Great Bible was unsatisfactory and allowed convocation to make provision for its revision. Stephen Gardiner, often portrayed as Cranmer's political opposite⁴⁴ made a list of words which he required either to be left in their latinate form or to be turned into English as suitably as possible so that there should be no doubt about their doctrinal definition. This presupposed the use of the Vulgate as the major source text and by implication reduced the influence of the new learning used by the reformers and Humanists, but could also be interpreted as an attempt to lessen the impact of Lutheranism and to avoid the political unrest which had accompanied the Reformation in Europe.⁴⁵ The list of words included "ecclesia", "presbyter" and "senior", which had caused such a storm in Tyndale's 1525 New Testament as well as "caritas" and "gratia"⁴⁶ which were key words in exegesis. The priority in the proposed revision was to return as closely as possible to the primary source text of Church doctrine, Jerome's Vulgate, since only then could

threat of heresy, and through heresy sedition, be avoided.

The representation of Gardiner's intentions in this matter tend to have been coloured somewhat by subsequent propaganda and the urge to categorise the protagonists into distinct religious opposites, the evangelists being cast as the heroes and the conservatives as the villains. Given the complicated political conditions which obtained in Henry VIII's reign it is unlikely that the religious issues were quite so clearly defined or separable from their social and political context; they dominated events no more than, for example, the wars, or the succession. What is clear is that attitudes both at the time and after played a considerable part both in clouding issues concerning Bible translation and deflecting attention from what was happening on a literary level. What Gardiner recognised was that Coverdale, although he had revised a contentious rendering, had in fact restored nothing of orthodoxy. A more definite and stringent translation theory had to be employed if the translation were to reflect traditional exegesis. The main source of information for the debate over the the revision of the Great Bible comes from Wilkins' *Concilia III*, printed in 1737 by which time factions had polarised:

.....episcopus Wintoniensis (Gardiner) publice legebat verba Latina in sacro volumine contenta, quae voluit pro eorum germano et nativo intellectu et rei majestate, quoad poterit vel in sua natura

retineri, vel quam accommodatissime fieri possit in Anglicum sermonem verti.⁴⁷

J.J. Isaacs translates the final phrase of this quote as "fitly englished with the least alteration";⁴⁸ J.F. Mozley⁴⁹ and later F.F. Bruce⁵⁰ project the wording which may have resulted if Gardiner's proposals had been adopted: "This is my dilect son in whom complacui" is quoted by both but is a hypothetical rendering and does not appear in any translation. "Cranmer", says Isaacs "foiled the conspiracy".

Much has been made of Stephen Gardiner's list of a hundred or so words that he felt needed particularly careful translation; very little has been made of the fact that the point at issue was now no longer whether the Bible should be in English but how it should be translated. Gardiner and the other Bishops had become aware not only of the difficulties involved and the problems to be addressed in putting the Bible into English but also of the power of the translator who could cause schism by the addition of a single word as Luther had done.⁵¹ In 1547 Gardiner wrote a letter to Cranmer in which he recalls Henry's promise to have the Great Bible revised and reprinted at his own expense but advises against pursuing the project during the new King Edward's minority "for such rumours might arise that we bishops went now about to fashion God's Word after

our own fancy, whilst we want the presence of our hed, that durst, could and would controll us".⁵² Englishing the Bible foregrounded translation issues and forced them to be addressed in a way that no other text had done: Gardiner's so-called conspiracy was a reaction to the now well recognised *traduttori traditori* problem.

The year following Gardiner's attempted revision of the Great Bible, Henry, in accordance with his inherent orthodoxy and in the interests of religious unity introduced a bill to parliament which not only restricted the sale of books (including Tyndale's New Testament) "teaching doctrines contrary to those set out by the King since 1540"⁵³ but also limited the reading of the Bible in English to the "highest and most honest sort of men". After 1543, "no women (except noblewomen), artificers, prentices, journeymen, servingmen of the degrees of yeomen or under, husbandmen nor labourers"⁵⁴ were allowed to read the Bible in English to themselves or others.⁵⁵ Since the translation problems could not yet be satisfactorily addressed, the answer seemed to lie in restriction of readership. 1545 saw the introduction of a new Primer in English authorised by the King the contents of which confirmed the traditional approach to religion albeit in the English language and not Latin.

It is at this point that we need to ask whether a Reformation had yet actually taken place in England. Events could equally be explained as Henry VIII making use of the European Reformation as a cover under which to reclaim money and power held by the Church within his kingdom. The dissolution of the monasteries, for example, could be regarded either as a true reform or as an opportunist transfer of wealth and jurisdiction to the state.

When Henry VIII died in 1547 the English Church had not changed drastically except in the language used for services and writings, and it is impossible to say whether the use of English was a result of reform or part of the natural development of the language within the wider context of the growth of the nation state. When the King took control of the English Church the use of the vernacular confirmed the Englishness of the institution but jeopardised its orthodoxy vis-à-vis the traditional source text of the Scriptures. The problem of the source texts for the Scriptures was not easy to solve and was rooted in paradox. The Vulgate signalled exegetical acceptability but was also acknowledged to be corrupt as a text. This could be seen as symbolically reflecting the corruption of the institution it represented. The texts produced by the Humanists were philologically more exact but lacked traditional authority and had been used by heretics; they

did however throw light on some previously obscure passages which in turn made translation into the vernacular easier.

The major changes to the Church in England took place after Henry VIII's death, during the short period of the Protectorate. Edward Seymour Duke of Somerset, took the opportunity presented by Edward VI's minority to progress reform. The English Prayer Book of 1549, which changed the nature of the Mass from the central sacrificial celebration to a thanksgiving/memorial service, was the source of considerable upset among the people, and coupled with other reforms such as the prohibition of Lenten ceremonies, the abolition of confession, provision for the marriage of clergy and the removal of all statues and images fuelled the uprisings in the West country and East Anglia which took place in the same year.⁵⁴ The translation of ceremonies from Latin to English had provided the opportunity for a re-writing, a re-positioning of priorities. The people recognised this in the same way that the authorities had recognised in the vernacular Scriptures Luther's and Tyndale's re-writing of traditional exegesis. Translation of religious material into the vernacular was still an extremely dangerous political activity, because it was being used as an instrument of change. Consequently those in a position to undertake translation or revision of the Scriptures were reluctant to do so publicly unless they

had a serious political motive, as Gardiner's previously quoted letter to Cranmer shows.

The challenge of Englishing as opposed to merely putting the text into English words was taken up privately by Sir John Cheke, tutor to the eleven year old King Edward VI. Cheke was professor of Greek at Cambridge and had been chosen as tutor because of his sympathy towards the new learning but he enjoyed an uneasy relationship with the Protector. At the time of the 1549 uprisings he was out of favour and wrote in English a tract *The Hurt of Seditious*⁵⁷ perhaps to convince Somerset of his loyalty. The following year he produced a translation of Matthew's Gospel with part of the first chapter of Mark. Cheke's work was not meant for publication and was not even printed until 1843, but it is interesting from the translation point of view since it shows the workings of a sixteenth century intellect on the subject of Englishing. Sir John must have been aware of the controversy over key words and of Gardiner's attempt to re-align the vernacular translation more closely with the accepted orthodox original, but his approach to translation was from a different perspective, that of rooting the text in a traditional English language.

As a Greek scholar Cheke chose to use a Greek original and to translate it into a specifically Anglo-Saxon based

English, that is with as few latinate words as possible, preferring "hunderder" for "centurion", "moond" for "lunatic", "gainrising" for "resurrection".⁵⁸ His work has been described as part of the "patriotic anti-Vulgate tendency"⁵⁹ but could equally be interpreted as the fascination of the linguist with the relationship between the chosen source and target texts. Where the hermeneutic relationship of a target word to the source text is unclear he leaves the Greek in the margin; where the exegetical content needs explaining there are short passages of commentary. He also worked out his own system of English spelling for consistency and clarity, using as Anglo-Saxon does two separate signs (y and th) for the voiced and unvoiced "th" sound and distinguishing between the two "i" sounds by the use of a stress mark and the insertion of the letter j. For example Matthew 23:4 reads "For yei biynd vp heui burdens and hardli bearabil and lai yem on mens scholders".⁶⁰ There are words made up in the Anglo-Saxon style but at the same time reflecting their Greek origins; "frosent" meaning a person sent forth, "biworde" for the familiar English "parable", "groundwrought" for "founded" and "forthink" for "repent".⁶¹ The use of "easter" and "good-fridai" not only places the translation unequivocally into English culture but diminishes the significance of the Jewish context, although Cheke retains "Rabbi", "Pharisais" and "Sadoucais".⁶² One particularly interesting use of

vocabulary occurs in Matthew 23:5 where Cheke uses the word "gardes" to denote what the authorised version renders as "phylacteries". The editor of his manuscript has discovered two examples of the use of the same word in Shakespeare, one in *Much Ado About Nothing*⁶³ and the other in *The Merchant of Venice*⁶⁴. It would seem from this that although he found it necessary to re-invent some words where he felt English had lost its roots, Cheke also employed contemporary sixteenth century vocabulary wherever possible.

This period of English history highlights just how politically sensitive the act of translating could be and underlines the idea that every translation is at the least a re-writing of material and can amount to a complete re-organisation of it. Changing an ideology is as easy as inserting a single word; as simple as replacing a familiar, clearly defined word with one of similar meaning but with less well-defined parameters. The extremely complex issues of political translation have been retrospectively simplified into a relatively straightforward power struggle between those who wanted the Bible in English and those who did not, but the reality was very much more complex and politically significant. In a society where conformity was a pre-requisite of stability, vehicles of change like Bible translations or prayer books in the vernacular were

understandably viewed with caution. This is not to deny that there were people with what we would presently consider as misguided attitudes towards the vernacular Scriptures; nevertheless the underlying significance of the act of translation played a far greater part in the sixteenth century struggle than the eighteenth and nineteenth century commentators would have us believe. We tend to consider manipulative translation strategies as a modern development, but there is ample evidence that the early sixteenth century Bible translators had a considerable awareness of the manipulation facility that translation affords: Luther and Tyndale used it as a means of effecting religious change, Sir John Cheke for linguistic experiments for his own personal satisfaction. This was also the age of editing and revising; techniques used to make a politically discredited translation acceptable and also to improve a text in the light of advances in understanding or increased availability of source texts. What is lacking in the retrospective analysis of the sixteenth century is the articulation of the translational problems presented by the introduction of vernacular Scriptures. There was considerable contemporary material discussing translational problems; modern historiography has concentrated more on the analysis of religious polemic, which tends to obscure the literary progress of the Englishing process.

References to Chapter Ten

1. More's *Dialogue* (1529) and Tyndale's *Answer* have already been mentioned in Chapter Nine; Simon Fish wrote *A Supplication for Beggars* (1529) and Christopher St. Germain wrote *A Treatise concerning the Spirituality and the Temporality* and two dialogues on Law known as *Doctor and Student* in the 1520s. George Joye, once an assistant to Tyndale, wrote the controversial *Supper of the Lord* and *The Debellation of Salem and Bizance*.
2. Tyndale's New Testament was originally rejected because of its association with the Lutheran Bible and heresy, but irrespective of its content it highlighted the question of vernacular Scripture and translation strategy. Once the unorthodox vocabulary had been defined and isolated (as in More's *Dialogue*) and once the idea of a Bible in English had become less unacceptable, it was possible for Tyndale's text to be used as the basis for future orthodox translations.
3. Thomas More's *Dialogue* was commissioned specifically to defend the orthodox position in this matter in the face of questioning by the laity. His personal view was that translation of the Bible into English was a risk, but a risk worth taking.
4. This was one of Henry VIII's fears as his last speech to parliament quoted in chapter nine made clear. The attitude of the conservative Bishops and of Stokisley in particular with his reluctance to take part in Cranmer's project reflects the feeling of one section of the clergy.
5. Anne Boleyn and her ladies had vernacular Bibles: Thomas More was allowed to read heretical books and Tyndale's work in order to be able to answer it: Sir John Cheke privately translated Matthew's Gospel while tutor to Edward VI.
6. An entry in the 1526 diary of Spalatinus, secretary to the Elector of Saxony quoted in *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* edited by H. Wheeler Robinson (London: Oxford University Press 1940,1954) p.153, describes the printing of 6,000 copies of Tyndale's work and says that the English "so long after the Gospel.... that they will buy the New Testament even if they have to give 100,000 pieces of money for it".
7. There were two texts of Leviticus involved; Leviticus 18:16 (Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness) and Leviticus 20:21 (If a man take his brother's wife it

- is an impurity: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless).
8. The apparently contradictory Deuteronomy text was Deuteronomy 25:5 (When brethren dwell together and one of them dieth without children, the wife of the deceased shall not marry to another, but his brother shall take her and raise up seed for his brother.)
 9. J.J.Scarisbrick *Henry VIII* (London: Methuen 1968, 1988 edition) p163
 10. Rainer Pineas *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics* (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press 1968) p.120
 11. A.G Dickens *Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation* (London: English University Press 1959, 1966) p.111
 12. *Works of Bishop Coverdale* edited by George Pearson for the Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1866) p.409
 13. Scarisbrick p.309
 14. E.W.Ives *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford: Blackwell 1971, 1986) p.314
 15. *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation* edited by John Gough Nichols for the Camden Society (London: J.B.Nichols and Sons 1859) p227
 16. Alfred Pollard expresses the opinion in a note that it is unlikely that Stokisley was the only one not to complete his portion. *Records of the English Bible* Henry Frowde (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1911) p.196
 17. *Narratives* p.227
 18. *Narratives* p.227
 19. According to Foxe as quoted by J.J.Isaacs in *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* p.154 Coverdale helped Tyndale to translate "the whole five books of Moises" in 1529.
 20. *Ancient and English Versions* p.168
 21. *Works of Bishop Coverdale, Prologue* p.12
 22. It is possible that a vernacular Bible fulfilled a psychological need for both King and people at this juncture in its function as an authoritative reference book (in the absence of papal authority) with a national identity (the English language). It was also important that this authoritative text should be seen to come from him as head of the church and not from any foreign or unauthorised source.
 23. Dickens p. 112
 24. William Fulke *A Defence of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue* The Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1843) p.98
 25. Fulke p.99 This story is usually related to

- demonstrate on the one side the reluctance of the Bishops and on the other the enthusiasm of the King, but it is more likely that both parties were aware of the potential dangers of a revolutionary text in the vernacular. Henry VIII was willing to risk the consequences because he needed the religious support (and the people's) and because he thought that he could control the outcome.
26. Works of Bishop Coverdale p.13
 27. Works of Bishop Coverdale p.14
 28. Coverdale's translation of the Psalms remains intact in the Prayer Book Version Ancient and English Versions p.172
 29. Pagninus was an Italian Dominican monk who translated the Old Testament Hebrew into a literal Latin version.
 30. Dickens p.112
 31. C.H.Williams *William Tyndale* (London: Nelson 1969) reproduces a letter from an agent to Cromwell informing him of Tyndale's position and urging action p.
 32. Ancient and English Versions p. 173
 33. Ancient and English Versions p.175
 34. Roger Bigelow Merriman *The Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell* vol 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1902) p.145
 35. Works of Bishop Coverdale p.33
 36. Works of Bishop Coverdale p.492 letter 3 Coverdale and Grafton to Cromwell from Paris 1539
 37. David Daiches *The King James Version of the Bible* (Chicago: Archon Books 1968) p.30 describes Taverner's Bible as "a reissue and revision of Matthew's Bible by an independent scholar" which "did not form the basis of any subsequent revision."
 38. The passage in question has already been discussed in more detail in chapter 6 p.139 of this thesis which is why I quote only a short example here.
 39. *English Wycliffite Writings* edited by Anne Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1978) p.40-41
 40. Ancient and English Versions p.177
 41. Christopher Haig *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1993) Chapter 8 Resistance and Rebellion
 42. Glyn Redworth *In Defence of the Church Catholic - The Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford: Blackwell. 1990) p.159
 43. Redworth p.60 It has to be remembered that this version was a revision of the contentious Matthew's Bible.
 44. There is no specific evidence that Gardiner wished to suppress the vernacular Bible but he wanted to steer it back towards the orthodox source text and exegesis.
 45. Just as Wyclif had been drawn into the Peasants Revolt

- and received bad publicity because of it, so Luther was given the blame for most of the unrest in Germany even though the causes were not of his making.
46. Ancient and English Versions p.179
 47. Redworth p.162
 48. Ancient and English Versions p.179
 49. J.F.Mozley *Coverdale and His Bibles* quoted by Redworth p.162
 50. F.F.Bruce *The English Bible - A History of Translations* (London: The Lutterworth Press 1961) p.79
 51. By adding the word "ohne" to the text of Paul's epistle to the Romans 3:28 Luther inaugurated the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
 52. *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner* edited by J.A. Muller (Connecticut: Greenwood Press 1933, 1970) p.313
 53. Stamford E. Lehmborg *The Later Parliaments of Henry VIII 1536-1547* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1977) p.187
 54. Lehmborg p.187
 55. A much quoted piece of evidence demonstrating that at least some of the ordinary people were sufficiently well equipped to deal with the Scriptures is to be found on the flyleaf of a copy of Polydore Vergil's *History of Inventions*. The inscription reads: At Oxford the year 1546 brought down to Saintbury by John Darbye price 14d when I keep Mr. Latimer's sheep. I bought this book when the Testament was abrogated that shepherds might not read it. I pray God amend that blindness. Writ by Robert Williams keeping sheep upon Saintbury hill 1546. Quoted by Christopher Haig p.161
 56. M.L. Bush *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset* (London: Arnold 1975)
 57. Sir John Cheke *The Hurt of Sediton* (Menston: Scholar Press 1971)
 58. Sir John Cheke (Knight) *The Gospel According to Matthew* edited by J Goodwin (London: Pickering, Cambridge: Deighton 1843) glossary pp122-123
 59. Ancient and English Versions p.181
 60. Cheke's Gospel of St. Matthew p.85
 61. Cheke's Gospel of St. Matthew glossary p.123
 62. Cheke's Gospel of St. Matthew p.84-85
 63. Act I scene I "The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments and the guards are but lightly basted on neither".
 64. Act II scene II "Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows.."

Chapter ElevenENGLISHINGS FROM ABROAD
THE GENEVA AND RHEIMS BIBLES

As a result of Reformation propaganda both from contemporary sources¹ and from seventeenth and eighteenth century Protestant historiographers,² the reign of Mary (1553-1558) has been most often presented as a brutal and ill-advised attempt to return an unwilling nation to the old style religion. It is easy with the benefit of hindsight to condemn unsuccessful policies; however in 1553 "there was every reason to suppose that... Mary would be successful in restoring England to Catholicism".³ Given the conditions of the age and the general acceptance at the time of the *cuius regio eius religio* maxim, it is quite possible that "even the impact of the burnings of Protestants may have been exaggerated through Foxe's enormously influential accounts of the persecutions".⁴ As far as the fortunes of the English Bible were concerned, the assumption has too readily been made that because she wished to restore the old religion, one of Mary's main aims was the suppression of all English Bibles, whereas this was not entirely the case.

By the early 1550's it had become apparent that the

health of the young reformer-King Edward VI was precarious. John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, had taken over from the disgraced Somerset as President of the Council during the King's minority, although he stopped short of taking the title of Protector. In 1552 he made several moves with the succession in mind. He had Somerset executed on fabricated evidence, then married his remaining unmarried son to Lady Jane Grey, granddaughter of Mary, Henry VIII's younger sister.⁵ On the death of Edward in 1553 he attempted to have Jane proclaimed Queen. He severely miscalculated the mood of the people, who rallied to the support of Edward's half-sister Mary. Northumberland had assumed that the "new religion" as it was called, was the most important aspect of the succession; in general, however, it is probable that "loyalty to the Tudor Dynasty weighed far more heavily than religion".⁶ Henry's thirty-eight year reign was still fresh in the collective memory of the people and he had named Mary as the successor after Edward. Reform was neither so complete nor so widespread in the rest of the country as would seem from what was happening in official circles.⁷ As far as the ordinary people were concerned, it appears that legitimacy of succession and dislike of Northumberland were sufficient to outweigh religious considerations.

Mary interpreted the wave of loyalty which served to

put down Northumberland's coup before it had really begun as a vote of confidence to return to the old religion; whereas in fact it was more a reflection of the unpopularity of John Dudley than a sanctioning of a return to the status quo. "There was considerable resistance to her religious settlement as there had been to the previous Edwardian settlements; opinion was deeply divided in the nation."⁶ Mary's naivety in this area was a main cause of her later disappointment; religious ideas were far from clear cut as both extreme conservative and extreme progressive movements existed. She probably assumed that the country would naturally revert to Catholicism without coercion; she certainly did not take into account how far things had moved on since her father's break with Rome and according to Christopher Haig "thought heresy was a minority problem, to be crushed by a few salutary burnings".⁷

Political naivety combined with personal inadequacy and considerable bad luck to make Mary's reign a disaster. Near famine caused by the failed harvest in 1556-7 was followed by a devastating influenza epidemic; the loss of Calais to the French in 1558 was a severe blow to English pride and morale at the time. The Queen's marriage to Philip of Spain was equally unpopular not so much because he was Catholic but because he was foreign and could

possibly have had some claim to the English throne if Mary had made him King and then predeceased him. There is some historical irony in the fact that Philip impeded Mary's projected reconciliation with Rome by being continually at loggerheads with the Pope. Like Henry VIII he would have dearly liked to run his country without the Pope's interference. As a result Mary found herself being manipulated by both husband and pontiff.¹⁰ At one point she was forced to prepare for the eventuality of her Cardinal (Pole) being recalled to Rome on a charge of heresy. She refused to let him go.

Two phantom pregnancies increased Mary's misery and laid her open to the accusation that God was punishing her for the suppression of the Protestants. Once more the succession assumed immense importance. It is interesting to speculate what the course of English history would have been if Mary had produced an heir, or lived longer, or if Elizabeth had died earlier. The title "Bloody Mary" and the frequent quotation of the number of people executed for heresy during her rule give her a very poor image.¹¹ She had Cranmer executed, and his association with the English Bible is usually mentioned in this context¹² even though the Archbishop's support of Northumberland's coup would have been excuse enough in the climate of the time. As D.M. Palliser says "Mary's real tragedy was to be overwhelmed by

catastrophe, demographic and agrarian as well as political, and not to live long enough to ride out the short term difficulties".¹³ She may or may not have been an inadequate Queen: she has certainly had a bad press.

In England during Mary's reign the fate of the English Bibles already in use was varied. There were no more printed and they were no longer used in the church services¹⁴ but there was no official order for their suppression. Nor was the 1538 injunction setting up the English Bible in parish churches ever revoked.¹⁵ The Great Bible, which had been commissioned for use in churches during the reign of Henry VIII had bound up with it an English translation of Erasmus's paraphrase of St. John's Gospel prepared by the young Princess Mary under the guidance of her Humanist tutor Vives. If she had been happy to be associated with the venture at the time of its publication it is unlikely that she would subsequently order its destruction. Moreover, since when Elizabeth came to the throne there was not a noticeable dearth of English Bibles,¹⁶ it is reasonable to suppose that the enthusiasm for keeping or disposing of the parish Bible depended mainly on the local religious climate.¹⁷ There does not appear to have been a concerted move made to destroy those already in existence.

Since, during Mary's reign they could no longer comfortably practise in England what was becoming identifiable as Protestantism, prominent Protestant figures such as John Knox,¹⁸ William Whittingham and Christopher Goodman sought exile abroad in a more sympathetic community. This resulted in a considerable influx of propaganda literature from Geneva where they settled. Goodman in particular by 1558 had abandoned theories of non-resistance and had formulated instead a "vision of the English as a covenanted People of God, bound by solemn and religious duty to overthrow idolatrous rulers".¹⁹ It was from this community with its potentially subversive ideas that the next translation of the Bible into English was to come, albeit almost at the end of Mary's reign.

The appearance of Whittingham's New Testament in 1557, printed and shipped over from Geneva, interestingly followed the pattern set by Wyclif, Luther and Tyndale whereby a deviation from the perceived mainstream religion almost invariably resulted in a vernacular version of the Scriptures as an alternative authority. Whittingham's was also, as Luther's and Tyndale's had been, a vehicle for Protestant propaganda in the form of notes and commentaries included in the early editions. The preface records his intended audience as the "simple lambes partly wandering astray by ignorance".²⁰ By this translation and by the

other Protestant literature emanating from "the store of heauenly learning & iudgement which so aboundeth in this Citie of Geneva",²¹ the exiles hoped to convert waverers to their cause.

Whittingham's scholarship was excellent. He had been a linguist at Oxford and had already produced a metrical version of fifteen of the Psalms.²² He had also provided the preface to Christopher Goodman's pamphlet *How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed* which did not endear him to Queen Elizabeth when she succeeded her sister.²³ He used Beza's recently completed annotated Latin New Testament as well as "diverse Greke copies".²⁴ "Furthermore" he tells us in the Preface, "that the reader might be by all means proffited; I have deuided the text into verses and sections according to the best editions in other languages and as to this day the ancient Greke copies mention, it was meant to be used".²⁵ This was the first time that the English Bible had been given chapters and verses. Apart from dividing the text into sections to make study easier, this system made evidence for particular arguments more accurately identifiable and consequently more authoritative. Instead of prefacing a point with "St. Paul says.." or "as the prophet tells us.." it was now possible to give an exact reference which could be verified by the audience. Another small but important practical point was that the Roman type

in which the New Testament was printed was far easier to read than the Gothic, particularly for those whose eyesight or reading ability was poor. The final marketing stratagem was to produce the book in quarto which meant that it could be carried about quite easily.

The consciousness of the translators of the condition and needs of the reader, besides being evident in the practical measures taken with the publication, are also reflected in the words of the Preface to the complete Geneva Bible. This was published in 1560 at the expense of the Geneva community and consisted of the New Testament revised and the Old Testament translated by a group of eminent scholars including Whittingham.²⁶ The act of translation is justified by the advance in scholarship since the previous translations: "albeit that divers heretofore have endeavored to atchieue (a translation) yet considering the infancie of those tymes and imperfect knollage of the tongues in respect of this ripe age and clear light which God hath now reueiled, the translations require greatly to be perused and reformed".²⁷ The Hebrew phrases have been retained "notwithstanding that thei may seeme somewhat hard in their eares that are not well practised...". The reader may expect the words to sound strange but "lest..the simple shulde be discouraged" the difficult places are marked with a cross. The translation

strategy prioritises intelligibility and accessibility as in the question of Hebrew names, where some are restored to their proper form "yet in the vsual names litle is changed for feare of troubling the simple readers." At this point the translator is assuming previous knowledge of the English text and appreciating that people may be put off if they find unfamiliar sounding phrases or names that they cannot recognise. Additions made to the text in order to complete the sense of the phrase are marked with different print; the chapters and verses are marked. "that by all means the reader might be holpen "in the study of the Scriptures. The reader also has the benefit of "certeyne mappes of Cosmographie" to help place the action in context which Luther, some half a century earlier, was unable to make use of either to assist in his own translation or to clarify points for his readers. The finished product was judged to be "the most accurate and scholarly version yet made".²⁸

By the time the Geneva Bible had reached England in any great numbers, Mary was dead and Elizabeth firmly established on the throne. The new Queen's background was undeniably Protestant, although she did not approve of married priests and kept some of the trappings of the old religion. Her mother had been a champion of the vernacular Bible and the main reforms had been inaugurated during the

reign of her half-brother Edward whose tutors she had shared. She showed herself so outwardly loyal to Protestant ideals that Knox was forced to temper the *First Blast of the Trumpet* with the thought that here was perhaps an exception to his theory about women rulers being a perversion of the natural order. Elizabeth, unlike Mary, was of the right religion: it was possible that she had been appointed by God to restore the Gospel to England. In some ways this may have been how Elizabeth viewed herself,²⁹ but not to the point of committing political suicide and not at the expense of being distracted from the more pressing political crises of which there were several during her reign. She was astute enough to realise that the extremities of conservatism were equally as dangerous as the extremities of reform; and so it was that she found herself in the 1580's executing Jesuit priests on the one hand while firmly enforcing conformity from the Puritan minority on the other. Conformity was essential for stability.

In the same year that the complete Geneva Bible was published, John Bodley³⁰ was granted a licence by Queen Elizabeth to be its sole printer for seven years provided that the edition met with the approval of "our trusty and welbeloved the bisshoppes of Cantorbury and London".³¹ This clause was inserted into the wording of the licence so that

the Bishops could exercise a veto over any undesirable annotations of the text to which they objected. As in the case of Tyndale's translation, the text itself was for the most part acceptable, it was the partisan commentary which was not. In 1565 Bodley requested renewal of his privilege for a longer term³² and in a letter to the Queen supporting the application Archbishop Parker displays a particularly relaxed attitude towards the translation. "We thinke so well of the first impression" he writes "...that we wishe it wold please you to be a meane that twelve yeres longer tearme maye be by speciall privilege graunted him in consideration of the charges by him and his associates in the first impression and the review sithens susteyned".³³ This seems to suggest that Bodley had had to do some revising of the text in order to satisfy the Bishops and had incurred some expense as a result, for which an extension of his licence would be some compensation. The Archbishop's next comment is particularly interesting from the point of view of the development of attitudes towards the text. He reminds the Queen that "one other speciall bible for the churches be meant by vs to be set forthe". It was in fact already in hand at the time of his writing, but he does not appear to feel that this will affect the privilege requested. On the contrary, he seems to welcome a variety of translations: "Yet it shall nothing hindre but rather do moche good to have diversitie of translaciones

and readings". This idea is echoing the comment of Augustine who wrote in *Christian Instruction* that "....This diversity has helped rather than impeded understanding, if only readers would be discerning".³⁴ Archbishop Parker's words show a considerable difference of attitude from that of the beginning of the sixteenth century when Tyndale's translation of individual words such as "ecclesia" and "caritas" had caused such furore. He was in a strong enough position to be liberal in his views. With another swing of the pendulum the Rheims Bible of the latter part of the sixteenth century, product of a minority under attack, was to return to a more rigid idea of translation, employing almost unintelligible latinized words rather than risk compromising the perceived sense.

It is easy to understand why the Geneva Bible became so popular as far as the general public is concerned when the practical aspects of its production are taken into account. As we have seen, the ordinary people were neither so distinctly divided nor so resolutely united in their beliefs as contemporary propaganda would have us believe.³⁵ They were, however, by now used to having access to books in the vernacular: the psalter, the official prayer book and catechisms all of which "ran through enormous numbers of repeat editions with print runs twice the normal size".³⁶ Five years of Mary's reign had not been sufficient

to reverse the vernacular trend. The Geneva New Testament was easy to read and carry and the text was divided into manageable units for easy reference. It was the Bible Shakespeare used, quotations from it were painted on house and Church walls,³⁷ a revised edition went out with the pilgrims in 1620 and interestingly it was the text from which the quotes in the preface to the King James' Bible were taken. The scholarship was of good pedigree; only the provenance was doubtful, as the group at Geneva contained Calvin, and even this disadvantage was not totally apparent in 1558 when the crown changed hands. It was not until later that Elizabeth began to have difficulties with radical Protestant groups and by that time the Geneva Bible was well established in the popular culture.³⁸

While the Geneva Bible continued to flourish, Archbishop Parker proceeded with his project for the revision of the Great Bible. It was completed in 1568, revised and improved in 1572 and came to be known as the Bishops' Bible, since the Bishops shared the task of translating/revising. In his letter presenting the work to Queen Elizabeth he first justifies the need for the revision: "In many Churches they want their bookes and have longe tyme loked for this".³⁹ He refers to the Geneva Bible as having unsuitably filled the gap: "as for that in certaine places be publikely vsed sum translacions which

have not byn Labored in your Realme having inspersed preiudicall notis which might have ben also well spared".⁴⁰ Parker has no violent objection to the Geneva translation in itself but it cannot be allowed to take over as the official text as it might compromise the moderate path taken by Elizabeth. He tells her that the aim of the revision was "not to make yt varye much from that translation which was commonlye used by Publike order, except wher eyther the verytie of the hebrue & greke moved alteracion, or wher the text was by sum negligence mutilated from the originall".⁴¹ The Bishops' Bible was therefore an exercise in restoring and editing the previous official text rather than a new translation, but it was interesting from the point of view of the methods employed by Parker. He sent a list of the Bishops and the chapters for which they were responsible to William Cecil, the Queen's secretary, to make them as he says "Awnswerable for their doinges".⁴² He also sent each reviser a short list of instructions including one "to make no bitter notis vppon any text, or yet to set downe any determinacion in places of controversie".⁴³ In this way he retained some measure of editorial control over the finished revision, although he accepted that in such a major undertaking there might still be errors, since the Bishops worked separately on individual chapters and there was no general overseeing of the project as a whole. As he wrote to Cecil "non omnia

possunt omnes".⁴⁴

In the same year that Parker's first revision of the Great Bible was published, 1568, the unsettled religious climate was dealt yet another blow by the arrival in England of Mary Queen of Scots. She fled from Scotland after having been deposed by the Protestant Government in favour of her infant son, following the scandal of the murders of first her secretary and then her husband. Her arrival, although she was imprisoned by Elizabeth, provided a possible rallying point for English Catholics and a focus for plots against Elizabeth, since Mary was Catholic and the French King's widow. Two years later Pius V exacerbated the situation by excommunicating Elizabeth and announcing that she was no longer Queen. Since this amounted to an invitation to insurrection or invasion, English Catholics, who had hitherto been left alone provided that they did not break the law,⁴⁵ were forced to choose between their religion and their nation. To be Catholic was to be a traitor, so Catholicism went underground and perversely enjoyed something of a revival. William Allen set up a college for English Catholic clergy at Rheims. Priests trained abroad came secretly to England as missionaries to counter Protestant doctrine. In order to do this efficiently, a Catholic vernacular version of the Bible was prepared; the New Testament at Rheims and the Old Testament

later when the college moved to Douai.

In the same way that the Geneva Bible was the religious propaganda literature of an exiled community, the Rheims New Testament published in 1582 was an attempt by the Catholic clergy to regain some of the religious ground lost by not having an official Catholic vernacular translation of the Bible. This is not to say that the Catholic hierarchy had shifted its position on the question of English Scriptures; the preface makes it very clear that the Rheims New Testament is a response to a very particular need, that is as a counterbalance to the Protestant Bible and to the, by that time, extensive vernacular preaching available to the ordinary people. A letter written at the time by William Allen describes how the Catholic clergy were still hoping to bring back England "from schism to the path of salvation"⁴⁶ but felt themselves at a disadvantage since they "did not commonly have at hand the text of Scripture or quote it except in Latin". They were therefore arguing their position in a different language from both their opponents and those they wished to convince. "This evil might be remedied" continues the Cardinal "if we too had some Catholic version of the Bible, for all the English versions are most corrupt".⁴⁷ Having obtained permission from the Pope, the English College at Rheims gave the main responsibility for the work to Gregory Martin, one of its

most famous teachers and a previous Oxford scholar. He was assisted by William Allen and another ex-Oxford man Richard Bristow⁴⁸. The New Testament was published in 1582, but the Old Testament remained unpublished, although ready, until 1609-1610 when the College moved back to Douai in Flanders.⁴⁹

The product of a community under attack, the Preface to the Rheims Bible exhibits all the signs of a defence of an apparent change in policy. The translation, it says, is not published "upon erroneous opinion of necessite, that the Holy Scriptures should alwaies be in our mother tonge".⁵⁰ Nor do the writers feel that the Scriptures should "be read indifferently of all" or that it is more "conuenient... to haue them turned into the vulgar tonges, then to be kept & studied only in Ecclesiastical learned languages". The only reason for the translation is "the special consideration of the present time, state and condition of our countrie". Things were necessary under the contemporary conditions which "in the peace of the Church were neither much requisite, nor perchance wholly tolerable". These words remind us that there was still opposition to Bible translation in principle long after it had become a fact. There were still many, mostly orthodox clergy and well-educated lay-people, who regretted the English versions and blamed the schism in the Church upon

their wide availability. The college clergy at Rheims were merely demonstrating the same misgivings of mind as Stephen Gardiner when some forty years earlier he had presented to parliament a long list of Latin words to be retained in the proposed revision of the Great Bible "in sua natura",⁵¹ as close to the Latin as possible. Upholding the status of the text by using suitably exalted language and by restricting its reading to those deemed capable and worthy of it was still a priority among orthodox clergy.

Having defended themselves for making the translation, the writers then go on to the defence of the source text. They were obliged to work from the Vulgate, since in 1546 the Council of Trent had decreed that it was to be the official text, so they give ten reasons why it is the best text to use. In actual fact, however, although the Vulgate is the basis of the translation, extensive use is made of the Greek to the point of quoting it in the margin if necessary. The Latin text is also noted in the margin "when either we cannot fully expresse it or when the reader might thinke, it can not be as we translate...".⁵² The medieval idea of absolute authority in Jerome's text and in the Church's pronouncements has given way to a more defensive stand on the part of the translators; a more challenging and literate readership requires justification not only of the translation process but also of the

doctrine defined by that translation process, especially when the readership has access to alternative translations.

The whole tone of the first part of the Preface is one of reluctance and resignation,⁵³ yet having decided to undertake the task, translators explain their strategy thoroughly. "We are very precise & religious " they say, "in folowing our copie, the old vulgar approued Latin: not onely in sense, which we hope we alwaies doe, but sometime in the very wordes also...".⁵⁴ Some words will sound strange at first, but the reader will soon become accustomed to them and accept them in the same way as words such as passover and pentecost have become acceptable. "And if *phylacteries* be allowed for English Matthew 23 we hope that *Didragmes* also, *Prepuce*, *Paraclete*, and suchlike wil easily grow to be currant and familiar."⁵⁵ A reasonable enough proposal, but what the Rheims translators failed to take into account was the fact that the latinate expressions they employed had already been translated into more familiar English terms in both the Great Bible and the Geneva. It is not surprising that terms quoted in the preface such as "neophyte", "evangelize" and "reflorished" did not easily replace the more accessible English already devised by previous translators, but it is only fair to record that some of the words later to be scorned by the writer of the preface to the King James Version,

"holocaust", "tunike" and "rational", have since been assimilated into the language.

Using Latinate vocabulary was one way of restricting the text and defining it according to orthodox doctrine and the Rheims translators' aim in translating was to do exactly that. The purpose of their work was to re-state the text in Catholic terms as a counterbalance to "the Protestants presumptuous boldness and liberalitie in translating".⁵⁶ It follows therefore that they were unwilling to commit themselves in cases of ambiguity or where the meaning of the text was unclear; better to be literal and obscure than to overlay the text with an imagined interpretation. "We presume not" they continue in the Preface, "in hard places to mollifie the speaches or phrases, but religiously keepe them word for word, and point for point, for fear of missing or restraining the sense of the holy Ghost to our phantasie".⁵⁷ This policy accounts for the rendering of part of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 rather awkwardly as "give us this day our supersubstantial bread". "Supersubstantialis" was used by Jerome to translate the Greek word "ὑπερσυστασια", the meaning of which is difficult to define and the position of which in this context is ambiguous. Jerome's choice of "supersubstantialis" has never been satisfactorily accounted for and in the Latin (Catholic) liturgy

"quotidianum" was eventually substituted. The Rheims translators, restricted by the weakness of their source text, played safe by retaining the Latin construction but in doing so rendered a familiar prayer unfamiliar.

Where the language involved a question of doctrine the use of ecclesiastical technical terms can be excused, but as a further example quoted by F.F. Bruce illustrates, the policy of keeping Latinate words rather than using English was more than simply a matter of clarification or definition. It was making a statement about reclaiming the text from the "adversaries". In the story of the Good Samaritan the vocabulary is recognisably English until the Samaritan gives his instructions to the innkeeper. "Have care of him", he says "and whatsoever thou shalt supererogate, I at my returne will repay thee".⁵⁶ Here we have a complicated linguistic situation in which a story is being told to Jews about a Samaritan by a person speaking Aramaic. The oral medium was recorded in Koine Greek then transferred into Latin and is here being rendered in English. "Supererogate" draws the attention for two reasons: that the context is a spoken parable used for teaching the unlearned and as such needs to be intelligible; and that it is difficult to imagine that the Samaritan would use a word which subsequently came to have a specific theological nature⁵⁷ when giving a simple

command to an innkeeper. The translators have sacrificed clarity and context in order to uphold the chosen source text (which has supererogare) and to stamp the text with a Catholic marker, so achieving their aim of a "most sincere...Catholike translation".⁶⁰

In spite of its restricted aims and Latinate diction, the Rheims New Testament holds an important position in the process of Englishing the Scriptures. Gregory Martin was a linguist as well as a theologian; he had studied the other English versions available and was not afraid to make unobtrusive use of their best phrases while loudly condemning their faults. This seems to have been a position taken up later by the King James's Bible translators as they in their turn condemned the Rheims for its Latinity while adopting some of its better renderings. Martin's reference to the Greek text made improvements in the rendering of the definite and indefinite article; he also made use of phrases from the Geneva Bible and from Coverdale's Latin/English diglot of 1538⁶¹ the Latin text of which was the Vulgate. His premise that words which seemed at first strange would grow familiar was indeed true, but they were not to be the words of the Rheims New Testament, but rather those of the King James's version of some twenty-nine years later.

The religious conflicts of the sixteenth century were a stimulus to the production of so many vernacular translations of the Bible, and whereas at the beginning of the century there would have been difficulty in obtaining any English version of the Scriptures, by the end of the Elizabethan era there was a choice of English translations available; a Calvinist Protestant one, an official government one and a Catholic one. The improvement and proliferation of printing facilities made a good deal of difference to the availability of texts; however this does not account entirely for the increased activity in the field of vernacular Bible translation. Although there was already an English Bible available, the Protestants at Geneva felt the need of their own translation as a vehicle for propaganda, as an alternative authority to the Church in power in England at the time, but also as a statement of ownership of the text. Making a translation of a text is an excellent way of securing proprietorial hold on it, of marking it as an expression of the particular perspective of an individual or of a group. For the Catholics, the way to retain the Scriptures as their exclusive property was at first to refuse to translate; keeping the Bible in Latin and insisting on Jerome's text as the only true representation gave them as it were the sole distribution rights. The Rheims Bible became necessary after other English translations became freely available; it was an

attempt to regain control over a text that had been appropriated by others. Similarly Archbishop Parker went to the trouble of revising the Great Bible in spite of the existence and popularity of the Geneva Bible because he perceived the need for an official text, one which had the authority of the government. To use a text provided by anyone else, however competent the translation, would be to accede to their authority.

Although the motives for translating the Scriptures into English were never simple, the method of translating developed as the century progressed. Tyndale wrote that he came to his task without a model, even though he has been seen to rely heavily on Luther's interpretation, but by the time the Rheims translators began work on their New Testament they had several English sources at their disposal as well as corrected Latin texts.⁴² Between Tyndale and Rheims there was much editing and recasting; almost in the nature of rough drafts in preparation for a more definitive version which was to come. It is obvious from the Rheims preface that the translators are familiar with all the previous Englishings and use them in the process of retranslation if only as a point of difference.

The scholarship necessary to undertake scriptural translation improved greatly during the sixteenth century

as did the quality of translation, and it is generally accepted that the Geneva text reached a degree of precision previously unknown. It is still difficult to assess the achievements of the age, however, when the comments made by contemporary commentators tend for a diversity of reasons to be biased. The act of translating the Bible is virtually impossible to separate from the positions taken in the religious controversy which was in progress. The translations were weapons in that controversy and were consequently not assessed as pieces of scholarship or literature but as pre-condemned vehicles for the propaganda of the other side. In 1589 William Fulke published the Rheims New Testament and the New Testament from the Bishops' Bible as a dual text in order to show the faults in the former. He also wrote a defence of the other English translations "against the cavil of Gregory Martin".⁴³ It did not help that Scriptural translations up to this point had been made either by one person or by small groups of enthusiasts whose credentials could easily be discredited. Official translation by committee as Thomas More had suggested "conferryng the seueral partys togyther eche with other"⁴⁴ had yet to be tried, but was to be the next stage in the process of Englishing the Bible.

References to Chapter Eleven

1. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1573) was written first in Latin, perhaps with posterity in mind but quickly translated into English when the propaganda value became apparent. It was later bound up with the Bibles available for reading in churches so that generations were brought up on the stories of the Marian persecutions (see David Loades *Politics and the Nation 1450 - 1660* (London: Fontana Press/Collins 1974, 1988 p.290). The text is still heavily used as a primary source - there are five references to it in *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* - and has been "completed" in one American paperback edition with accounts of subsequent persecution.
2. Strype in 1711 printed *The Life of Matthew Parker* presenting him as the man "under whose Primacy and Influence the Reformation of Religion was happily Effected; And the Church of England Restored, and established upon the PRINCIPLES whereon it stands unto this day." John Strype *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker* (London: John Wyat 1711)
3. Conrad Russell *The Crisis of Parliaments 1509 - 1660* (London: Oxford University Press 1971) p.134
4. D.M. Palliser *The Age of Elizabeth 1547 - 1603* (London and New York: Longman 1983, 1992 p.20
5. Russell p.123 relates how Henry named the Greys in his will but only after Edward, Mary and Elizabeth had succeeded and left no heirs.
6. David Loades *Politics and the Nation 1540 - 1660* (London: Fontana Press/Collins 1974, 1988) p.122
7. Russell p.132
8. Palliser p.19
9. Christopher Haig *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1993) p.244
10. David Loades *The Reign Of Mary Tudor* (London and New York: Longman 1991 edition) p.362-3
11. Russell p.14 sets it in context saying that the executions were "inevitable if the beliefs of people who had been governing England three years earlier were to be rooted out". J.Isaacs, writing in *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* ed H.Wheeler Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1940) comments that Mary's "toll of religious martyrs" seems "strangely amateurish alongside that of present day experts".
12. *Ancient and English Versions* p.182 Also illustrated by the title page of John Strype's *Memorials of Thomas Cranmer, Martyr*

13. Palliser p.20
14. Ancient and English Versions p.182
15. F.F. Bruce *The English Bible* (London: Lutterworth Press 1961) p.84
16. Bruce p.85
17. Local communities had their own customs and practices and could be quite insular. Palliser p.6 talks of the "still-powerful localism and diversity of England". He also quotes Williams *The Tudor Regime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1979 p.10 "The consciousness and power of the (local) community is perhaps the most difficult aspect of early modern England for the twentieth century historian to grasp".
18. John Knox was famous for his *First blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* written in 1558 against Mary, and also for his part in bringing Protestantism to Scotland.
19. Loades *Mary Tudor* p.278-9
20. William Whittingham "Preface to the New Testament" in *Records of the English Bible* ed Alfred W. Pollard (London: Henry Frowde Oxford University Press 1911) p.276
21. Records p.276
22. Christina Hallowel Garrett *The Marian Exiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1938 1966) p.327
23. It was in this pamphlet that Goodman set out his view that if the ruler were idolatrous i.e. not Protestant enough to reject all forms of images, it was the duty of the English people to overthrow her/him.
24. Records p.277
25. Records p.276
26. *The King James Bible Translators* Olga Opfell (Jefferson & London: McFarland 1982) p.22
27. Records p.280
28. Opfell p.22
29. Christopher Haig *Elizabeth I* (London & New York: Longman 1988) p.27
30. Ancestor of the founder of the Bodleian Library Oxford.
31. Records p.276
32. It seems that the publisher had taken up so much time trying to win Parker's approval to print the Bible that he was in danger of losing out financially on the arrangement unless he could procure an extension.
33. Records p.285,286
34. Augustine *Christian Instruction* translated by Father J. Gavigan in *The Fathers of the Church St. Augustine vol 2* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press 1966) p.80
35. Patrick Collinson "The Elizabethan Church and the New Religion" in *The Reign of Elizabeth I* edited by Christopher Haig (London: MacMillan 1984)

36. Tessa Watt *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550 - 1640*
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991) p.259
37. Watt p. 217
38. Watt p.259 reminds us that survival of a text is not necessarily proof of its popularity; on the contrary the most popular titles were often lost through use.
39. Records p.295
40. Records p.295
41. Records p.294
42. Records p.293
43. Records p.297
44. Records p.293
45. Haig Elizabeth I p.37
46. Records p.300
47. Records p.300
48. Bruce p.114
49. As a result the Old Testament was too late to have any influence on the Authorised Version although the Rheims New Testament phrasing was used in numerous places.
50. Records p.301
51. In 1542 Records p.273
52. Records p.311
53. This is supported by Allen's letter in which he says:
"Perhaps indeed it would have been more desirable that the Scriptures had never been translated into barbarous tongues; nevertheless at the present day, when either from heresy or other causes, the curiosity of men, even of those who are not bad, is so great, and there is often such need of reading the Scriptures in order to confute our opponents it is better that there should be a better and catholic translation than that men should use a corrupt version to their peril and destruction." Records p.300
54. Records p.305
55. Records p.307
56. Records p.309
57. Records p.309
58. Bruce p.118
59. That is, what is done over and above the requirements of God's law.
60. Records p.304
61. J.J.Isaacs "The Sixteenth Century English Versions" in *Ancient & English Versions* edited by H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford: University Press 1940, 1954)
62. Coverdale's diglot was produced as an aid to clergy whose Latin was poor.
63. Coverdale's diglot and Beza's new Latin annotated text.
64. William Fulke *A Defence of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holy Scripture into the English Tongue* written in 1583
65. Thomas More *Complete Works* vol 4 p.337

Chapter TwelveTHE KING JAMES BIBLE 1611

Although the number of vernacular translations of the Scriptures was greater between 1525 and 1582 than at any other preceding time in history, three of these versions came from exiles abroad (Tyndale's, the Geneva Bible and the Rheims New Testament) and those produced in England were revisions or edited versions of what had gone before. Biblical scholarship improved, but creativity in the English language was not so evident. The Humanists had begun a revival of classical studies in the first part of the century but then became discredited by the perceived challenge of their work to the Church and never really recovered momentum or coherence as a group. The politics of the times, as they discovered, allowed for little creative interpretation, only the reaffirming of material which was already known and accepted. Prose written in what is known as "the drab age" was "clumsy, monotonous, garrulous", C.S. Lewis tells us, "all the authors write like elderly men".¹ A literary revival in the last quarter of the sixteenth century could not have been predicted and still cannot be satisfactorily explained; nevertheless that is what happened.

It may have been that the relative stability of Elizabeth's long reign - her motto was *Semper Eadem*, "always the same" - produced the security for literary growth. Alternatively the nationalist feeling engendered by the successful defence of the realm from the political attacks of the Pope and the physical attacks of the Spanish could have been the impetus for the wave of innovative English writing which began in the 1580s and 90s. Perhaps the expansion in voyages of discovery and the advances in science and astronomy combined to create the confidence necessary for an upsurge in the quality and quantity of vernacular literature. Whatever the reason, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century "with startling suddenness we ascend... youth returns".² The poets Philip Sidney (1554-1586), Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), John Donne (1572-1631); the dramatists Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), Thomas Nashe (1567-1601), William Shakespeare (1564-1625) and Ben Jonson (1573-1637); the early novelist John Lyly (1554-1606); translator George Chapman (1559?-1634); sermon writer Launcelot Andrewes (1555-1626); essayist Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and political writer Richard Hooker (1553-1600) were all part of a late sixteenth, early seventeenth century literary revival which could not help but have an effect, both directly and indirectly, on the subsequent vernacular translation of the Bible.

The indirect effect stems from the expansion of the vernacular reflected in the exploration of new vehicles of expression and the development of existing forms.³ Translation activity was also demonstrated in the borrowings of the playwrights from foreign sources and in the renewed interest in Greek language and literature.⁴ Drama as a medium became increasingly popular and well-established with the extension of court drama through groups of travelling players and the settling of companies into permanent buildings like the Globe theatre, which opened in 1599. Morality plays continued to be a feature of community life inside and outside London, and play-going became an accepted form of entertainment. The 1590s also saw the rise of literary groups like the Mermaid Tavern circle of which Ben Jonson was a major figure. Most of Shakespeare's works were written between 1590 and 1611, and Marlowe's promising career came to an abrupt end in 1593. The major metaphysical poets, Donne and Herbert, were published too late to have the same sort of impact on Scriptural translation as that exercised by the mystics of the fourteenth century on the early English versions, nevertheless Donne at least was writing in the 1590s with an originality and vigour which was symptomatic of his generation.⁵

A more direct effect on the English Bible was the

system of preaching which had traditionally played a considerable part in the continuity of religious vernacular literature and enjoyed particular prominence in the latter part of Elizabeth's reign. Akin to drama, preaching remained an important practical means of preventing outlying areas of the country from lapsing into the old ways of religion;⁶ it was turned into a metaphysical literary genre by such scholars as Launcelot Andrewes, who with others of similar skills was later to be invited to take part in the making of the King James Bible. Andrewes's prose bordered on the poetic to the extent that T.S. Eliot could take, three centuries later, a section of the sermon *Of the Nativitie: Christmas 1622* and use it for the first five lines of his own poem *Journey of the Magi* with very little alteration.⁷

Andrewes's sermons are extremely well constructed and rely heavily on the interchange of Latin or sometimes Greek and English words in tightly worked phrases. He takes his text in Latin and expounds on the significance of it by teasing every possible sense out of the Latin phrase and relating it to other parts of the Scriptures. Although the language construction is intricate and the content philosophical, the English vocabulary and closely woven Latin tags are never allowed to become unintelligible; on the contrary they are mutually supportive. Part of the

sermon *Of the Nativitie: Christmas 1610* illustrates his preaching style. His text is Luke 2:10, "Et dixit illis angelus: nolite timere; ecce enim evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit omni populo":¹⁰

Yet, it fell not out amisse, that shepherds they were; the newes fitted them well: It well agreed, to tell Shepherds of the yeaving of a strange Lambe; such a Lambe, as should take away the sinnes of the world;¹¹ such a Lambe, as they might send to the Ruler of the world for a present. *Mitte Agnum Dominatori terrae: Esays Lambe.*¹² Or (if ye will) to tell shepherds of the birth of a Shepherd, *Ezekiels Shepherd: Ecce suscitabo vobis pastorem; Behold I will raise you a Shepherd;*¹³ the chiefe Shepherd¹⁴ the Great Shepherd,¹⁵ and the good Shepherd that gave his life for his flocke.¹⁶ And so, it was not unfit news, for the persons to whom it came.¹⁷

Andrewes is master of the art of saying the same thing in a variety of ways: "It fell not out amisse", "It well agreed", "It was not unfit news". He also keeps the thread of what he is saying well connected by the gradual move from "Shepherd" to "Lambe" and back to "Shepherd" again. The rhythm of speech is retained by using phrases such as "(if ye will)" and "And so..", but the rhetorical element also comes through in phrases like "sheperdes they were" or in the repetition of "such a Lambe". The references to the Scriptures, both direct and oblique, act as anchor points for the overt premise that the shepherds were suitable recipients of the angel's news and for the implied premise that the "lambe" was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament and depicted as Saviour in the New. Subtle

The significance of Launcelot Andrewes's work is not only that he possessed the technical skills necessary for translation of Scriptures; scholarship in Greek, Latin and other eastern languages, patristic learning, eloquence and diversification in the target language, but also that his involvement in language was active and dynamic through his role as preacher both to his own parish and to the court. His English writing had elegance in the style of the day, and he had strong literary as well as linguistic connections. He preached Queen Elizabeth's funeral sermon; he was a friend of Francis Bacon; he was at Westminster with Richard Hakluyt who in 1589 published *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*; Nashe and Lyly were among those who attended his sermons regularly and George Herbert was a pupil at Westminster School when he was Dean there.¹⁷ He was typical of the men chosen to work on the King James Version. These men had literary pedigrees and reflected a whole spectrum of religious views. The expansive development of the English language was the next ingredient necessary in the progress towards the English Bible as an English text rather than as a translation, since with the excellent scholarship of the Geneva Bible and the increase in the knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, many, though not all, of the hermeneutic difficulties had been resolved. Translation into a recognisably English literary idiom remained the next step.

On the political scene, the end of the sixteenth century saw Elizabeth becoming older and more indecisive while trying to maintain the image of the glittering virgin Queen which she had actively promoted. "The marketing of Elizabeth began in her own reign"¹⁸ and was pursued into the reign of James for the purpose of promoting the Protestant cause and highlighting what was perceived as James's lack of commitment to it. It was as important to uphold Elizabeth's image after her death as it had been in 1558 to blacken Mary's. The reality was that in her last years as Queen she did very little except annoy her ministers by her seeming inability to commit herself even on the question of the succession, which had traditionally been one of the most important issues of the century and was vital for the stability of the country. It could be argued that her reticence in this matter was self preservation, as a named successor would provide an instant rallying point for her enemies, but whatever her reasons, when she died in 1603 "unloved and almost unlamented",¹⁹ James VI of Scotland, son of Mary Queen of Scots, was received with relief to be James I of England. The new King had several advantages: he was a man, and many of Elizabeth's weaknesses were deemed to be gender-related, he was Protestant although against Knox and the extremes of Protestantism, and he would unite the thrones of England and Scotland thus removing one of the problems which had

beset the previous reign.

Historiographers seeking the causes of the Civil War have found much in the politics and life-style of the latter part of James's reign to criticise, but his part in the conception and completion of what emerged as the definitive English official translation of the Bible for over two centuries was both positive and fortuitous. The new King was not only a considerable scholar but also had for his time a particularly "broadminded intellectual outlook"²⁰ which showed early signs of religious tolerance. He questioned the existence of witchcraft, wrote on the evils of tobacco,²¹ appointed people to office whose religious views he did not share. He has been described as "one of the most complicated neurotics to sit on the English throne",²² but was also well-read, clever and politically astute, and took great interest in the subjects of Kingship and Theology.

In 1599 James wrote *Basilicon Doron*, the Kingly Gift, for his eldest son Prince Henry. It was a private document intended to advise his son on how to proceed with the business of being King, but publication was forced by the circulation of inaccurate copies in manuscript form. Book one stresses that a King is appointed by God and therefore owes his duty to Him. God's Law is found in the Scriptures:

"The whole Scripture is dited by God's spirit, thereby (as by his lively word) to instruct and rule the whole Church militant, till the end of the worlde",²³ therefore Henry is recommended to study them carefully. Book two reveals that study of the Bible will provide not only for Henry's personal salvation but also give him the means to control the Church: "...studie to be well seene in the Scriptures, aswel for the knowledge of your own salvation, as that ye may be able to conteine your Church in their calling, as *custos utriusque tabulae*: for the ruling them wel is no small poynte of your office...."²⁴ James was aware of the difficulties which could be caused by dissent in the Church and saw the Scriptures as the higher authority to which a King could appeal for support of his Kingship. "For if ever you would have peace in your Lande" he tells Henry, "suffer them not to meddle with the policie or estate in the Pulpite".²⁵

From James's advice in *Basilikon Doron* we gain some idea of the importance in which he held the Scriptures as an authority which supported his Kingship and provided irrefutable evidence of his right to obedience from his subjects. James disliked the John Knox-led Presbyterian doctrines of his childhood in Scotland and thought the Geneva Bible the worst of all the vernacular translations, probably not in terms of scholarship but because of the

Calvinist commentaries on the text. The number of divisions in the Church had increased and it was as important as ever to define one's position. The Puritan position had been defined in the Geneva Bible, the Catholic position in the Rheims New Testament and the Protestant in the Bishops' Bible. There was good political sense in one uniform translation which would unite the various factions, not in belief but in the source text of their belief, and most important, under the authority of the King. The Elizabethans had been very much aware of the importance of order in the universe and how disaster followed if that order was disturbed. Marlowe's *Edward II* explored the authority of Kingship and the consequences of its displacement; Shakespeare's *Richard II* of 1593 had a similar theme, as did *Hamlet* in 1602 and *Macbeth* which appeared in 1605. Differences in religion were in danger of threatening the natural order. In 1593 Richard Hooker produced the first four books of a work entitled *Treatise of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* as a counter-balance to the extremity of the Puritan reformers who "menaced not only the Bishops and their ceremonies but the whole order of English society".²⁶ It was therefore unsurprising that James, coming to the throne in 1603, should consider his position in the light of his own Kingship and the expression of it in some tangible form. He had already indicated his commitment to the English

language, in spite of his knowledge and love of Greek and Latin, again for reasons of Kingly duty. "...I would also advise you to write in your own language" he tells his son, for there is no thing left to be said in Greeke & Latine already, & enow of poore scholars would match you in these languages: & beside that, it best becometh a King to purifie and make famous his own language, wherein he might go before all his subjects".²⁷ Literature, especially drama, had become a medium through which the King's position could be simultaneously expressed and defended by others; language was more than a vehicle for James's own political ideas, it was a means of stating his kingship. As Jonathan Goldberg says, "It is...in language that the King represents himself; it is in language that power is displayed".²⁸ James I constantly represented himself in language, both written and oral. He wrote articles and treatises, he gave speeches and had catchphrases. "No bishop, no King", was one of his sayings against the demands of the extreme Puritan lobby to have councils decide church issues.

Problems within the religious structure of the state first demanded his attention soon after his accession. The Puritans were unhappy with the broad interpretation of parts of the Elizabethan settlement and wanted the new King to define the Protestant position more clearly. James

accordingly called a conference at Hampton Court early in 1604 to hear their complaints but selected the delegates himself to avoid the more extreme voices. The Puritans made little headway with James, who felt his authority threatened by their proposals, but one suggestion from their chief spokesman, John Rainolds, caught his ear. According to William Barlow, Dean of Chester, who wrote an account of the conference, Rainolds "moued his Maiesty, that there might be a new *translation* of the *Bible*, because, those which were allowed in the raignes of *Henry* the eight, and *Edward* the sixt were corrupt and not aunswerable to the truth of the Originall".²⁹ This was not such an unexpected request since there were still three versions available, the Geneva, the Rheims and the official Bishops Bible, and there is evidence that the idea had been put forward before but not acted upon.³⁰ James could see advantages in a new version and according to Barlow "wished that some especiall pains should be taken in that behalf for one vniforme translation".³¹ He even had a clear idea of the translation strategy that he wished to employ. The work was to be done "by the best learned in both the Vniuersities, after them to be reuiewed by the Bishops, and the chief learned of the Church; from them to be presented to the *Priuy Councell*; and lastly to be ratified by his *Royall* authority; and so this whole Church to be bound to it and none other".

By involving as many people as possible in the making of the translation and by having several layers of supervision built into its construction, the King protected it against the extremism which had made some of the earlier versions unacceptable. What he required was a translation which would suit everyone, not by virtue of its blandness, but by virtue of its taking the middle path talked about by Hooker in book five of *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, under the heading "touching translations of holy Scripture":

Albeit we may not disallow of their painful travels herein, who strictly have tied themselves to the very original letter; yet the judgement of the Church... hath been ever that the fittest for public audience are such as following a middle course between the rigour of literal translation and the liberty of paraphrasts, do with greatest shortness and plainness deliver the meaning of the Holy Ghost. Which being a labour of so great difficulty, the exact performance thereof we may rather wish than look for.³²

Hooker's last comment about the difficulty of achieving the middle course indicates that there was at least an appreciation of the difficulties involved. The examples of Scriptural translation in the sixteenth century had provided those attempting a similar exercise with material illustrating the possible different approaches and their problems. Each translation had brought with it a storm of criticism from the other side. Thomas More had berated Tyndale in print in 1529, and Tyndale had answered; William Fulke treated Gregory Martin in the same way in 1589 and he had replied. It was appreciated that the translation

process was a difficult one, and that pleasing everyone was impossible. As Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, is said to have remarked at the Hampton Court Conference, "if euery mans humor should be followed, there would be no ende of translating...".³³ James, however, was astute enough to be aware of the implications of the task, and he structured the translation strategy accordingly. Agreeing to John Rainolds' suggestion he gave possibly the most important caveat "that no marginnall notes should be added, having found in them, which are annexed to the Geneva translation some notes very partiall, untrve, seditious, and savouring, too much, of dangerous, and trayterous conceipts...".³³ The Geneva translators, it has to be remembered, went so far as to advocate the removal of a ruler who did not prove to be sufficiently supportive of their views. If there were no marginal notes except for linguistic explanations, there could be no complaints as to the bias of the translators and the version could safely be used by all sections of the religious community.

The organisation of the translation work was carefully thought out. There were to be six panels of translators, two each at Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster. Each panel was assigned its section of the Bible, but there was provision for outside help if required. In July 1604 James wrote to Bancroft:

We require you to move all our Bishops to inform themselves of all such learned men within their several dioceses as, having especial skill in the Hebrew and Greek tongues, have taken pains in their private studies of the Scriptures for the clearing of any obscurities in the Hebrew or the Greek, or touching any difficulties or mistakings in the former English translation which we have now commanded to be thoroughly viewed and amended...³⁴

In theory, anyone with the necessary Scriptural knowledge had the opportunity to express an opinion on the translation, but to what extent this happened in practice can not be ascertained. The panels did, however, comprise the most well-known scholars of the time irrespective of their positions or religious affiliations. When John Bois was chosen, once a scholar of St. John's Cambridge but by 1604 rector of Boxworth, his contemporary biographer wrote of "some university men thereat repining... disdaining, that it should be thought, they needed any help from the country".³⁵ Bois and his former tutor Andrew Downes were not only called to serve on the panel but were given the responsibility of a share in the final editing process. The only notable omission from those invited to translate for the King was Hugh Broughton, an extremely able but notoriously dogmatic scholar whose ability to compromise was limited. Perhaps as a consequence of his exclusion, he was one of the severest critics of the new translation when it was finished.³⁶ When the six panels had completed their work, twelve men selected from those panels revised and

edited the complete translation. John Bois made notes on part of the editing process which are believed to have survived through a copy which is now in the Bodleian Library.³⁷

The rules to be observed in the process of translating were laid down by Bishop Bancroft with the approval of the King. The Bishops' Bible was to be followed, "and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit".³⁸ Even so, the finished translation turned out to be much more than merely a revision of the 1568 version. The layout in terms of chapter divisions, the familiar names of people and places, and the old ecclesiastical words ("church" not "congregation") were all to be retained. The method of translation was for "every particular Man of each Company, to take the same Chapter or Chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their Parts what shall stand".³⁹ Each panel's work was to be reviewed by the other panels and any disagreements were to be referred to the final editors to be resolved. For particularly difficult passages, advice could be sought from "any Learned Man in the Land". The other translations available for consultation were "Tindoll's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Witchchurch's, Geneva".⁴⁰

The Rheims New Testament is not mentioned as a possible source, but it is evident that it was used for some phrases. In the Epistle to the Hebrews 11:1 Tyndale and the Great Bible have "Faith is a sure confidence of things which are hoped for"; Geneva has "Now faith is the ground of things which are hoped for"; the Bishops Bible has "Faith is the ground of things hoped for" and the Rheims New Testament has "And faith is the substance of things to be hoped for".⁴¹ The panel translating for King James finally decided upon "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for", thus showing that they were not afraid to use the best translation even if it came from a rival version.

It is at this point that the difficulty of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the English versions becomes manifest. It is easy enough to point out mistakes or obscurities in the Wycliffite translation or to acknowledge the political bias in Tyndale's use of certain ecclesiastical terms, but when the words and phrases of the King James version have been a part of the English culture for so long it is impossible to view them impartially. The whole Church was "bound to it and none other" as James had wished by virtue of the exclusion of other versions for over two and a half centuries.⁴² In some places the wording is a crystallisation of the phrasing of previous versions, a

final rendering from several earlier drafts, and so has an even longer pedigree. The well-known passage in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians 1:13 is a good example: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal". This comes, with the substitution of "charity" for "love", from Tyndale, through the Rheims New Testament to the King James version.⁴¹ A different rendering sounds strange even to the modern ear. The 1976 Good News version has "I may be able to speak the languages of men and even of angels, but if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell". The New International version, however, keeps the familiar rhythm: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal".

The setting of the English words of the King James Bible to the music of Handel has further embedded them into the culture and increased their familiarity. C.S. Lewis points out the "extreme uncertainty of our literary judgement" for this reason in his discussion of Isaiah 40:1. Coverdale has "Be of good cheer my people", the Great Bible "Comfort my people", the Geneva and King James "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people". "What chance has Coverdale's second rendering (in the Great Bible) with us" he asks, "against the familiarity of the Geneva adopted by

the Authorised and most unfairly backed by Handel? A man would need to unmake himself before he was an impartial critic on such a point."⁴² Familiarity makes it impossible for us to be objective. In a similar way the use of a musical setting of the twenty third Psalm in the traditional liturgy has resulted in its becoming the musical equivalent of the Lord's Prayer in communal worship. Even those whose attendance at church is limited to ritual ceremonies would recognise both the words and music of Crimond's setting. The Geneva rendering sets the rhythm; "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to rest in green pasture and leadeth me beside the still waters". The King James version retains most of this; "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pasture; he leadeth me beside the still water". The musical setting is extremely close to both;

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green. He leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

As these versions are so comfortably familiar, the Good News rendering may not be immediately attractive although it is instantly recognisable; "The Lord is my Shepherd; I have everything I need. He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water". Although the modern version has much to recommend it in simplicity

and clarity it is almost as if someone has altered a well-known speech of Shakespeare to read "To be or not to exist; that is the dilemma". Recognising the rhythms of the Bible and Shakespeare becomes important when they are used as references in other pieces of literature. The effect of much of T.S. Eliot's work, for example, relies on the recognition of the references he makes to the Bible, Shakespeare, Dante, Milton and others. Toki Miyashina's poem *Psalm 23 for Busy People* works through its obvious association with the familiar version:

The Lord is my pace-setter, I shall not rush;
 he makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals,
 he provides me with images of stillness,
 which restore my serenity.⁴³

Just as we are unable to stand back from the well-known words of the King James version which have been so firmly embedded in our literature, so it was to be expected that the first receivers of this new translation of the Bible would find it difficult to transfer their allegiance from the popular Geneva Bible if Puritan or from the Rheims version with its newly published Douay Old Testament if Roman Catholic. The translators were very much aware of this fact, and knowing that every previous translation had been badly received by some section of the community, were somewhat on the defensive when the Bible was finally produced. Two members of the final editing panel, Miles

Smith, who had Puritan leanings, and Thomas Bilson, Bishop of Winchester, who was high church, shared the task of writing the epistle dedicatory and the preface. The dedication begins with a description of how James dispelled the uncertainty which lay over the State at the death of Elizabeth and has much praise for his "zeal towards the house of God"⁴⁴ which prompted his furtherance of the translation project. The writer describes James as "principle mover and author of the work" and craves his approbation "since things of this quality have ever been subject to the censures of illmeaning and discontented persons". If the King looks favourably on the translation it will protect the translators against the "calumniations and hard interpretations" of either "Popish persons" or "self-conceited Brethren who run their own ways". King James was the first monarch who had wholeheartedly committed himself to a vernacular translation of the Bible and shown so much interest and concern in its execution. With his patronage the interests of the translators must be protected.

Even those well-disposed towards the project had difficulty in adjusting to the new translation. The Geneva version was still extremely popular among scholars and ordinary people; so much so that Launcelot Andrewes when preaching, made references to it in preference to the King

James.⁴⁵ Perhaps more surprisingly, when Miles Smith quoted Scripture during the writing of the Preface to the King James version, it was from the Geneva Bible that he took his quotations. The more familiar version sprang most easily to mind for both himself and Andrewes and it is quite possible that as he sat writing the preface ready for the printer he did not have a copy of the new Bible beside him.

The preface begins with a long section devoted to the expected reception of the work. Such enterprises, says the writer, are "welcomed with suspicion instead of love, ...and if there be any hole left for cavill to enter, (and cavill, if it do not find a hole, will make one) it is sure to be misconstrued".⁴⁶ The defensive tone continues with examples of worthy people who were not properly appreciated for their efforts to improve things. However, the King knew that "whosoever attempteth any thing for the publike (specially if it pertain to Religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God) the same setteth himself upon a stage to be glouted at by every evill eye".⁴⁷ Even so, the writer is aware of how much importance is attached to religion, having been born into a century which had seen more change than any other in that area. "For he that meddleth with men's Religion in any part" he observes, "meddleth with their custom, nay with their freehold; and

though they find no content in that which they have, yet they cannot abide to hear of altering".⁴⁸ There follows a discussion of how central the Bible is to the study and practice of religion, then the writer delivers the crux of his argument: "But how shall men meditate in that, which they cannot understand? How shall they understand that, which is kept close in an unknowen tongue?"⁴⁹ He answers himself in language which could easily have come from the King James Bible:

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernell; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water...
...Indeed without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacob's well (which was deep) without a bucket, or something to draw with...⁵⁰

The preface continues with a survey of the translations of the Scriptures since "the translation of the *Seventy interpreters*" of the Hebrew septuagint into Greek for King Ptolome. Bede and Alfred are said to have worked on the psalms but there is no mention of Wyclif. John Trevisa, however, is categorically stated to have been involved in the vernacular translation process: "Much about that time, even in our King Richard II dayes, *John Trevisa* translated them (the Scriptures) into English, and many *English* Bibles in written hand are yet to be seen with divers, translated, as is very probable, in that age".⁵⁰ The writer gives the

impression that translations of the Bible not only exist in many languages but are freely available. "The Syrian translation of the New Testament" he tells us, "is in most learned men's libraries... and the Psalter in *Arabick* is with many".⁵¹ All the information the writer provides goes towards substantiating his premise that "to have the Scriptures in the mother tongue, is not a quaint conceit lately taken up... but hath been thought upon and put in practise of old".⁵²

Having established the authority for making a vernacular translation, and having demonstrated the Church of Rome's reluctance to do so except under necessity, the writer addresses the next predicted objection. If a new translation is necessary, was the former translation incorrect or misleading? "Was their translation good before? Why do they now mend it? Was it not good? Why then was it obtruded to the people?".⁵³ The explanation offered is that previous translations are valued and honoured as those "that breake the yce, and give the onset". Certainly considerable use was made of the earlier versions by the King James translators, even the Rheims New Testament, as has been demonstrated. Tyndale's idea of his own translation as "a thing not having his full shape, but as it were born before his time, even as a thing begun rather than finished"⁵⁴ is echoed in the words of Miles Smith:

Yet for all that, as nothing is begun and perfitted at the same time, and the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser, so if we building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labours, do endeavour to make better that which they left so good; no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us.⁵⁵

Miles Smith's perspective of Scriptural translation begins with the first printed version made by Tyndale. He takes no account, for it is outside the scope of his writing, of earlier events which made the Englishing process a possibility. He sees the process as one progression from the basic but sound work of the first translator to the hopefully more knowledgeable work of the King James group. He does not claim the translation under discussion to be definitive and could not have known how lasting its impact was to be, or for what reasons, but he does appreciate its position as part of a system which has been developing, as he sees it, over the best part of a century, and which in reality owes its origins to even earlier trends. It is only with the enthusiasm of hindsight that words such as "landmark" and "miracle"⁵⁷ have been applied which give the impression that the King James version arose out of nothing and had no acknowledgements to make to previous events or versions.

Miles Smith touches upon some interesting theories of translation in the Preface to the 1611 version. For example he subscribes to the idea that "the very meanest

translation of the Bible in English...containeth the word of God, nay is the word of God".⁵⁶ Every translation, however poorly done, reflects the original in the same way as the King's speech translated into French, Dutch, Italian and Latin, remains the King's speech "though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expresly for sence, everywhere".⁵⁷ He seems to be implying that however poor the rendering, the content remains intact. Modern theories of translation as rewriting would find it difficult to accommodate this view and in the light of Tyndale's deliberate ideological challenge through translation, Smith seems either to be displaying a particular naivety, or stating his faith in the invulnerability of the word of God however it is expressed. Erasmus touched on a similar point when he maintained that the entire Scriptures were not made invalid by a few mistakes in translation. This percentage view of correctness is perhaps more realistic in a translation of the nature and variety of Scripture where the range of material is so vast and complex, but does not take into account the possibility of intentional manipulation of material.

One of the deliberate policies of the King James translators was not to tie themselves to "an uniformitie of

phrasing, or to an identitie of words".³⁹ They were unwilling to be restricted by the consistent use of the same word in the source text. They undertook to translate a word as the sense dictated but made a deliberate effort to use a variety of "good English words": "For is the kingdome of God become words or syllables? why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely when we may use another no lesse fit, as commodiously?"⁴⁰ This illustrates firstly that the translators were confident enough to use synonyms and did not feel bound to the literal word, and secondly that they were actively promoting the target language, in other words "englishing" rather than simply translating out of the source texts. A deliberate policy of varying words does pose problems in the New Testament, however, in those places where quotes from the Old Testament are a part of the text. For example in Luke 3:4 there is a quote from Isaiah 40:3 which does not have exactly the same wording as the Old Testament section, although it is recognisable as the same passage:

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,
prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight
in the desert a highway for our God (Isaiah 40:3)

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare
ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight
(Luke 3:4)

The following verse shows a similar pattern of deviation:

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain
and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall

be made straight and the rough places plain...
(Isaiah 40:4)

Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.. (Luke 3:5)

F.F. Bruce gives an example of the use of "rejoice", "glory", and "joy" all used to translate the same Greek verb in Romans 5:2, 3 and 11 and points out that "there are times when the recurrence of the same word is exactly what is required".⁶¹ To be fair to the King James translators, they have not generally applied this policy expressly for the sake of providing variety but have retained repetitive phrases when appropriate. In Corinthians 13:6 they have (Charity) "Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth" and in the following verse, "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things". Nor did they repeat the errors of the translator of the earlier Wycliffite version who, having only the Latin source text from which to work, fluctuated between "life" and "soul" as a rendering of "anima" in John 10:11-17 and as a result made less sense of the passage. The King James translation has "life" throughout.

Although the King James version was immediately popular, running to fifty editions by 1640, it did not eclipse the Geneva Bible until 1644 when the last Geneva

edition was printed.⁴² Each new edition was corrected of previous errors but the text remained substantially untouched until mid-Victorian times, when a more thorough revision became necessary owing to changes in the language and progress in Biblical scholarship. During the two and a half centuries that it was used exclusively it became embedded into the language and literature of the culture. Even the revision of 1870 retained as much as possible of the original version and aimed at a similar but more intelligible tone and phrasing. "It has given countless proverbs and proverbial phrases" writes J. Isaacs, "even to the unlearned and irreligious. There is no corner of English life, no conversation ribald or reverent it has not adorned".⁴³ A text which has dominated for so long and had such an effect on the culture necessarily assumes a unique position in the perspective of English Biblical translation. English Biblical translation itself provides a unique model for the diachronic study both of the developing strategies employed in the translation processes and also for the political and ideological attitudes which can influence the translation of a text. The final task is to attempt to define those processes and attitudes within the context of recent translation theory.

References to Chapter Twelve

1. C.S. Lewis *Literature in Sixteenth Century England* (excluding drama) (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1954) p.1
2. C.S. Lewis p.1
3. Bacon was the first to write in and popularise essay form, Sydney's *Art of Poesie* was the first published attempt at literary criticism.
4. Keats was inspired to write a sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer".
5. Donne was interestingly brought up as a Catholic and was a student and man of fashion in the 1590's taking part in the expeditions to Cadiz and the Azores in that decade. See *John Donne - A Life* by R. C. Bald (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1970)
6. The Puritans, although regarded with some suspicion by Elizabeth were employed for preaching in outlying areas simply because they were excellent preachers.
7. T.S. Eliot *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (London: Faber 1972 edition) p.65
8. Launcelot Andrewes *Sermons* edited by G.M. Story (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1967) p.109 And the Angel said unto them: Be not afraid, for, behold I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be, to all people.
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10. Isaiah 16:1
11. Ezekiel 34:23
12. 1 Peter 5:4
13. Hebrews 13:20
14. John 10:11.
15. *Of the Nativitie: Christmas 1610 Sermons* p.25
16. *Sermons* p.109
17. Olga S. Opfell *The King James Bible Translators* (Jefferson and London: McFarland 1982) p.29
18. Christopher Haig *Elizabeth I* (London: Longman 1988) p.175
19. Haig p.164
20. Christopher Durston *James I* (London and New York: Routledge 1993) p.7
21. In 1604 James produced the treatise "A Counterblast to Tobacco".
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24. *Basilicon Doron* book 2 p.107

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28. Jonathan Goldberg *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 1983) p.153
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31. Daiches p.65
32. Richard Hooker *Treatise on the Laws of Ecclesiasticall Politie* Book 5 Everyman edition (London: Dent & Co undated)
33. William Barlow quoted by Daiches p.65
34. Akrigg p.229
35. *Translating for King James* translated and edited by Ward Allen (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press 1969 London: Penguin Press 1970) p.139
36. Opfell p.117
37. Ward Allen Preface p.viii
38. Opfell p.139 rule 1
39. Opfell p. 139 rule 8
40. Opfell p. 140 rule 14
41. Even the 1870 Revision was not intended to change anything unnecessarily but to make as few alterations as possible and those in the language of the King James version.
42. Opfell p.98
43. Toki Miyashima "Psalm 23 for Busy People" in *The Lion Book of Famous Prayers* edited by Veronica Zundel (Tring, Herts: Lion Publishing 1983)
44. C.S.Lewis p.211
45. Opfell p.142
46. Opfell p.119
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48. Opfell p.145
49. Opfell p.147
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54. *The Works of William Tyndale* edited by G.E.Duffield
(Appleford: Sutton Courteney Press 1964) p.28 note.
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57. J. Isaacs "The Authorised Version and After" in *Ancient
& English Versions of the Bible* edited by H. Wheeler
Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1940,1954)
58. Opfell p.160
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ConclusionTHEORIES OF TRANSLATION APPLIED TO THE PROCESSES
OF ENGLISHING THE SCRIPTURES

Investigation into the nature of translation as a literary and cultural activity has been the focus of several contemporary studies. "What is translation?" asks Andrew Benjamin in *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy*; - "It is both a plurality of activities and has a plurality of significations".¹ André Lefevere in *Translation, History Culture* concentrates on another of the several aspects of the subject when he asserts that "Translation has to do with authority and legitimacy and ultimately with power".² The study of processes involved in the translation of Scriptures demonstrates the validity of both these premises, since the history of Bible translation includes a multiplicity of translation activities and is concerned throughout with the ultimate authority, that of the word of God, and the way in which that authority is validated within another cultural system and transferred into another language. In fact Scriptural translation is often a source of practical examples of the various aspects of translation theory.

Benjamin continues his philosophical exploration of

the nature of translation by taking the idea of knowledge as revelation through text: "The move from seeing the lexical as an end in itself to seeing the lexical as something essentially limited and indicating something beyond itself introduces a transformation both on the level of the experiencing subject and on the level of the object of experience".³ The idea of meaning beyond the signified in the Scriptures occupied commentators for centuries and resulted in a system of exegesis so complicated that it had to be partly dismantled before translation out of Latin could be attempted. The exegetical constraints upon the translation of Biblical texts provides one type of practical example of "meaning beyond the signified" and the way in which it complicates the translation process. As Andrew Benjamin concludes, "the suggestion that emerges here is that what cannot be translated is the event of plurality".⁴ The "event of plurality" in the Bible can be the subject of commentary, hence the long and involved medieval commentaries, but cannot be satisfactorily translated in a way which covers all possible ranges of meaning. The perceived need to cover the several meanings of a single phrase explains why the early translators translating out of Greek into Latin felt obliged to double up on adjectives and abstract nouns much to the annoyance of Lorenzo Valla.⁵ The same "event of plurality", the impossibility of translating all the meanings of a

plural text, accounts for the reluctance of the fourteenth century English churchmen to allow unauthorised direct translation, although they did not articulate the reasons for their reluctance in terms of translation theory.

Lefevere makes the link between translation and authority, and this brings us to the other reason for the reluctance of the Church to allow translations of the Bible, the maintenance of authority. The question of upholding authority underlies the whole process of translating the Scriptures. The authority of the divine author, of the human authors and of the interpreters and preachers of the text depends on the legitimacy of the translation. As Lefevere points out, it is not only the authority of the text which requires validating but also the authority of those whose power relies on the text. "It may just be possible", he says, "that the West has paid so much attention to translation because its central text, the Bible, was written in a language it could not readily understand, so that it was forced to rely on translators to legitimise power".⁶

In view of the unique position of the text in question, its central position in both the hierarchical structure of authority and the literary system, the study of its translation cannot be properly undertaken without

reference to its literary and historical context. This present description of the processes involved in Englishing the Scriptures has therefore adopted a combination of the Polysystems theory and the approach of the Manipulation group in order to attempt coverage of a wider area of influence.

The Polysystems theory was first formulated by Even-Zohar⁷ in the 1960s and later taken up and developed by Gideon Toury.⁸ It was based on the idea that a (translated) text is not an isolated entity but functions within a literary system. The literary system in turn interrelates with a set of other systems which may be literary or political or historical and which together make up a hierarchical cultural system.

Use of the Polysystems method of analysis of the translation processes involved in Englishing the Bible proved to be essential in the diachronic study of such a central text. Isolation of the complete text from "the network of correlated systems - literary and extraliterary - within society"⁹ distorts the perspective of its development and devalues those connected translation activities such as the early glossings, partial translations and the prose and verse versions which devolved from the main text. Translation studies before

Evan-Zohar had concentrated upon what Gertzler terms "functional notions of equivalence" and "the subjective ability of the translator to derive an equivalent text".¹⁰ The Polysystems approach is far more helpful in understanding the relevance of all the processes at work, since it presupposes that the translator is governed by "the social norms and literary conventions in the receiving culture"¹¹ and makes his decisions accordingly. "Functional notions of equivalence" would cover the ninth century glossing of the Vespasian Psalter, the tenth century glossing of the Lindisfarne Gospels and aspects of the translational difficulties of the Wycliffite group (problems with "anima" as "life" or "soul" for example), but the Polysystems theory accommodates the wider issues of, for instance, Aelfric's reluctance in the tenth century to translate into what he perceived as a low status language;¹² Luther's desire to turn Moses from a Jew into a German;¹³ the use of anachronisms such as "Easter", "church porch", "Whitsuntide", "shire town"¹⁴ by Tyndale, thus avoiding the vocabulary of the Jewish culture, and his choice of deliberately contentious technical terms in order to upset the establishment and promote reform.

Tyndale's use of translation to promote an ideological confrontation is one example of how literature in general and translation in particular can be manipulated for a

particular purpose, and demonstrates the importance of the work of the Manipulation group to the methods used in this thesis. Theo Hermans outlines the common factors of the Manipulation group as being "a view of literature as a complex and dynamic system; a conviction that there should be continual interplay between theoretical models and practical case studies; an approach to literary translation which is descriptive, target-orientated, functional and systemic; and an interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translations".¹³ The work of the Manipulation school takes the Polysystems approach further and investigates the control and regulation of texts by both literary and non-literary sources. "From the point of view of the target literature", says Hermans, "all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose".¹⁴ William Caxton the business man was a text manipulator for financial gain in the 1490s; but he in turn was prevented by the prevailing system of authority from printing anything closer to the Scriptures than the *Golden Legend*. The history of the Englishing of the Bible in the sixteenth century clearly illustrates how a text may be controlled and manipulated by those in positions of power. Henry VIII manipulated the texts of Leviticus and Deuteronomy to support his case for the annulment of his marriage; Tyndale and Luther manipulated the whole text in order to further

their movement towards reform.

The effects of the manipulation of the text of the Scriptures were not always those intended. The burning of Tyndale's version, for example, which was as much an act of manipulation as the way in which Tyndale translated, did not achieve the suppression of the text, since his translation became the foundation of future rewritings. Erasmus was concerned in 1516 to re-authenticate the Vulgate by restoring it to correctness; by printing the Greek text alongside his restored text in order to validate his corrections he unwittingly altered the whole perspective of Scriptural text(s). The Greek text became foregrounded and the Vulgate's function as sole source text was changed into that of translation. William Fulke's intention in publishing the dual Bishops'/Rheims New Testament in 1589 was to invalidate the latter by comparison with the former; he did not realise that his action was promoting the distribution and knowledge of the very text he wished to discredit.

In *Translating, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, André Lefevere takes the idea of manipulation through translation a stage further and considers each translation as a rewriting. "Rewriting manipulates and it is effective", he says, "all the more

reason, then, to study it".¹⁷ As far as the subject of this thesis is concerned, the act of rewriting takes several forms. Translating, as Luther and Tyndale did, into a particular ideology by use of a certain type of language is only one aspect of a wide area of influence. Erasmus rewrote/reconstructed the Vulgate as another text in the same language and filled in missing sections of the Greek manuscript with his own translation/reconstruction. In the fourth century Augustine suggested rewriting difficult passages of the Bible which did not fit in with accepted doctrine:¹⁸ some three centuries earlier, Marcion had carefully expunged all reference to the Old Testament from Luke's Gospel¹⁹ since he found it difficult to reconcile the God of the Old Testament with the Christian teachings of the New. Jerome insisted that his role in constructing the Vulgate was one of editor rather than translator,²⁰ presumably because he felt the responsibility to be less, but as Lefevere demonstrates in his study of *The Diary of Anne Frank*²¹ editing can be just as much of a manipulation as rewriting. Anne Frank's work was rewritten first by herself when she thought there was a possibility of publication, next by her father who wished certain allusions to remain private and a third time by the Dutch translator and the editors whose concern was to make the text acceptable to the authorities and to the 1947 public. Parallels can be drawn here with the sixteenth century

editings and revisings/rewritings of Bible translations undertaken for similar reasons, namely to expunge the inadmissible and make the text acceptable to the authorities and to the readers. In the case of Anne Frank's work this involved the partial reconstruction of a personality and to some extent of history; a considerable amount of reconstruction of a similar nature has taken place also in the field of Bible translation. Writers such as John Foxe (whose work has been supplemented with subsequent martyrs in one modern edition)²² and William Fulke²³ in the sixteenth century, John Strype²⁴ and Walter Scott²⁵ in the nineteenth, George Borrow²⁶ and more recently David Daniell²⁷ as Tyndale's twentieth century editor, have all played a part in reconstructing Reformation history in the image that they required. As a result Bible translation history has also been reconstructed from an exclusively religious perspective which has tended to obscure literary and translational considerations.

The importance of patronage as an agent of manipulation is clearly demonstrated in the study of Bible Translation into English. "Patrons", says Lefevere in *Translation, History, Culture*, "circumscribe the translators' ideological space".²⁸ Both Erasmus and More were limited by the restricted views of their patrons and

were obliged to tailor their views accordingly. More eventually paid for his intellectual integrity with his life in circumstances which have been grossly simplified by subsequent hagiographers whose agenda has been to present him as a martyr of the Reformation. More's Humanist views were in reality more reformist than the orthodox Henry VIIIs. Erasmus was obliged to temper his ideas to align with those of the Church or risk losing patronage altogether.

Theo Hermans refers to patronage as "a control mechanism which regulates and often manipulates".²⁶ Lefevere defines the three areas of the influence of patronage as those of ideology, economics and status.²⁷ The effect of patronage, or lack of it, can be subtle and indirect as well as obvious and direct. Caxton, in the 1490s, unashamedly exploited tenuous links with patrons to give his texts status and authority. It is also quite possible that his reason for not including a translation of the Bible amongst his printing enterprises was that he wished to keep all his options of patronage open. Lack of patronage was Tyndale's reason for taking his translation project abroad in 1523; Coverdale, on the other hand, had the financial support and physical protection of Cromwell to promote his work, although he still took the precaution of dedicating it to the King.

The King James Bible is the best example of how patronage, particularly royal patronage, promotes success. The King not only promoted the idea for a translation of the Bible since it suited his ideology of Kingship, but he also provided the authority under which all the necessary scholars were gathered, gave status to the completed work and ensured economic success through the granting of exclusive printing rights of Bibles to the King's Printers. The Geneva Bible lacked a royal patron but remained popular because of its clarity and practicality: clear print, an extensive commentary and quarto size. The popularity of this version in spite of the fact that it was not an officially authorised translation was a demonstration of how texts could be affected by influences other than patronage. It remained popular also among communities, particularly in Scotland, sympathetic to the Protestant/Puritan cause. The *Soldier's Pocket Bible* printed in 1643 for Oliver Cromwell's men, unsurprisingly had selections from the Geneva Bible.³⁰

What gave eventual monopoly to the King James text was the fact that it was used exclusively in Church services and became the popularly familiar version of the Bible. The completion of the King James Bible did not mark the end of Bible translation into English; nor did the translation itself remain as static as is generally believed, since

every edition subsequent to 1611 had corrections and alterations.³¹ Its influence on Bible translation activity was to slow down the momentum and to consolidate the previous versions into this one politically acceptable authorised text. This text then became a primary source in English to the extent that most subsequent literary references to the Bible were taken from it; quotations from versions of it entered the language and crystallised into an immutable form. It could be said to have both enriched and suspended the development of English. For a time the text was both the popular access to the Scriptures and the Church's official version. Although this translation remained for two centuries the central official English text of the Church, it was eventually replaced as the popular version of the Bible by more modern English translations. This distancing from the popular reader in both time and language gradually made the King James version into what Andre Lefevere calls a "high" text, that is, literature which is read only in educational or religious establishments, literature which is read exclusively in a study context by the professional reader.³²

It is helpful to place the development of the shift in function of the King James Bible (from a central authoritative popular text to a less central more elitist

"high" literary text) into a polysystems context. The fact that the translation contains language used in the sixteenth century and is no longer totally accessible has helped to make it into an elitist work; part of its original function has been superseded by later popular versions. The fact that the Church is no longer central to the lives of a large part of the population in the same way as it was in the sixteenth and seventeenth century has made study of the text into a specialised rather than a popular activity. The development of literature to include secular as well as religious themes from the middle of the nineteenth century coupled with the proliferation of Bible translations through the work of the Bible societies at the end of the same century has helped to de-centralise the King James Bible. More recently the central position of the book as the main means of communication of ideas, and the main study and leisure time occupation has been shifted by the advent of other media. A selection of English texts of Bible translations from the tenth to the twentieth century will shortly be available on CD rom with the facility of analysis and categorisation of parts of several texts simultaneously.³³ Apart from the convenience of having each text to hand simultaneously, this will facilitate the detailed comparison of texts and alter textual perspective in the same way that Erasmus's publication of Latin and Greek New Testament side by side

set the Vulgate into a different context.

Another historical phenomenon which eventually changed the face of Bible translation into English and retrospectively made the King James Bible something of a watershed was the colonial expansion which began with the Pilgrims' departure in the Mayflower in 1620. The English language came to be no longer used exclusively by the English but by English speaking people in other cultures, to the extent that when the American Bible Society produced a translation of the complete Bible in 1976, there was a separate British edition "incorporating such changes as are in keeping with British usage".³⁴ This translation was intended for "all who use English as a means of communication", a far wider context than the comparatively small range of language covered by the King James Bible translators.

Readers too have changed since the King James Bible was produced. As the range of both religious and secular texts became far greater in variety and number, so the experience of the reader was widened making him or her far more flexible in response than had been possible before. Public and private readings of the Bible became very different in their function and outcome. Public readings were part of a liturgical programme designed to re-affirm

well-known points of reference, usually of a doctrinal nature. Private reading was originally a way of reinforcing doctrine but with the reader's wider experience of texts it was possible for the Bible to be read as literature or Jewish history. Other cultures prove to have similar literature in terms of creation myths and legends of heroic exploits as in the Old Testament. The Koran echoes some of the prophecies and laws expounded in the Old Testament and features stories of the Prophet in the same way that the New Testament features stories of Jesus. Private reading outside the doctrinal context of the Church can take the form of a reconstruction of the text, another interpretation of the same material, in the way that each recital of the same piece of music may be different in its interpretation and emphasis although the notes remain the same. The reconstruction through reading need not necessarily be committed to record, although retellings of Bible Stories are often written for children and reinterpretations of scenes from the Bible, particularly the Nativity, appear in paintings.

The amount of study material relating to the Bible is infinite and cannot be confined to a single thesis. What I have attempted to bring into focus in this study is how political expediency and religious propaganda have manipulated the translation of this particular text and in

doing so have obscured the literary processes which were also at work in its development. It was necessary to look at the development of the vernacular in conjunction with the level of literacy; to consider the effects of Humanism and the invention of printing as agents in the process of Englishing. It has been interesting to consider the role of glossing and the work of the Anglo-Saxon translator/rewriters; it was revealing to discover that the first complete Bible translation into English was in fact rather a crude attempt despite its promotion by post-Reformation propagandists. The survival of Tyndale's unofficial version through the subsequent official ones is one of the ironies of the story, and the persistence of the Geneva Bible as a popular version demonstrates that practical considerations sometimes outweigh political manipulation. The King James Bible emerges as a political statement from the King made possible by his patronage and subsequently sustained through a period of history in which the monarchy was abolished and reinstated against a background of civil war. I am very much aware that the subject would bear more investigation and that there are many more aspects whose research would make a fascinating occupation,³⁵ however the brief of my thesis ends here.

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30. Bruce p.92
31. Ancient and English Versions p.224
32. Lefevere 1992 p.3
33. *The Bible in English* on CD ROM edited by Sylvia Adamson and Gerald Hammond (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd 1995)
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