

# Neither EV nor LV: Independent Biblical Translation in the Wycliffite Old Testament Lectionary

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## I. The Wycliffite Bible and Liturgical Texts

The first full translation of the Bible into English was completed in the fourteenth century, as part of an endeavour whose precise extent, execution, and contributors still remain largely unknown. This translation, commonly associated with the followers of the heterodox Oxford theologian John Wyclif (c. 1330-84), was disseminated very widely and survives in a larger number of manuscripts than any other Middle English text. The evidence suggests that the Wycliffite Bible was the most successful English text before the advent of print – more than 250 full and partial copies survive, far outnumbering even the best attested Middle English poem, *The Prick of Conscience* (more than 125 manuscripts).<sup>1</sup> The Wycliffite Bible translation is preserved in two distinct versions, both of which are based on the Vulgate: the Early Version (EV) is an extremely literal rendering of the Latin, whilst the Late Version (LV) is more idiomatic in English, although still following the Latin closely. The Wycliffite endeavour was not limited to an isolated translation in two versions, but it entailed a number of related initiatives of impressive scope and sophistication, such as translations of biblical commentaries, treatises, and liturgical texts.<sup>2</sup>

Translations of liturgical texts are primarily preserved in the Old Testament Lectionary (OTL), which translates into English the readings, or lections, from the Old Testament which were read aloud at Mass according to the Use of Sarum.<sup>3</sup> OTL occurs exclusively in Wycliffite manuscripts which contain only a translation of the New Testament (rather than the entire Bible), thus complementing these manuscripts from a liturgical point of view. At every Mass there were at least two lections: the epistle reading, which could be taken from the Old Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, or the Book of Revelation, followed by a reading from the gospels. The materials in OTL manuscripts were intended to be used jointly for following the liturgical readings: whilst the gospel readings (and the epistle readings from the New Testament) could be found in the translation of the New Testament, the relevant

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<sup>1</sup> The most up-to-date list of manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible can be found in {Solopova 2017 #6: 484–492}. For a list of manuscripts of the *Prick of Conscience*, see {Hanna 2013 #15275552: 378–383}.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of recent scholarship on the Wycliffite Bible and related texts, see {Solopova 2017 #6}. Further key studies include {Dove 2007 #4}, {Ghosh 2002 #15275553}, {Solopova 2016 #8}, and the seminal study by {Hudson 1988 #80}.

<sup>3</sup> Discussions of different aspects of OTL are contained in {Hudson 1988 #80: 198–199}, {Dove 2007 #4: 61–65}, {Solopova 2016 #8: 7–17}. My forthcoming edition of OTL with the Early English Text Society (2022) will contain the first comprehensive analysis of these liturgical texts.

epistle readings from the Old Testament were contained in OTL. The Lectionary is more than a collection of extracts from the Old Testament, as it is presented in the manuscripts as a continuous, structured text with its own titles, rubrics, scholarly indexing tools, and complex system of cross-references. The visual presentation of the OTL in most manuscripts speaks to a consistent and well thought-out effort to make the text easy to navigate and use in conjunction with other texts and materials. One of the materials which frequently accompany such manuscripts is a Table of Lections, which provides a list of both epistle and gospel readings for each feast throughout the liturgical year, and thus acts as an indexing tool which guides the reader to relevant sections in OTL and the New Testament.<sup>4</sup>

OTLs occur in Wycliffite manuscripts of both EV and LV, and survive in 39 manuscripts and fragments.<sup>5</sup> There are around 109 Wycliffite manuscripts which contain complete or partial New Testaments,<sup>6</sup> which means that roughly 36% of Wycliffite New Testament translations contain an OTL – a significant number, testifying to the popularity of this textual model. Evidence of the contemporary ownership of these manuscripts is sparse, but largely points towards the clergy and the religious as frequent owners and patrons of books containing an OTL. London, British Library, MS Egerton 1171 was made for a nun of the Benedictine nunnery of Barking,<sup>7</sup> New York, Columbia University, MS Plimpton Add. 03 has a medieval shelfmark belonging to Norwich Cathedral priory,<sup>8</sup> and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 531 contains a note which is signed ‘by me Ric(ardus) merton chanon’.<sup>9</sup> This evidence fits well with the findings of recent scholarship on the ownership of Wycliffite bibles, which primarily points towards the aristocracy and the clergy as owners and patrons of Wycliffite translations.<sup>10</sup> This is somewhat unexpected given the suspicions of heresy which surrounded the Wycliffite Bible, and the restrictive fifteenth-century legislation aimed at curbing the distribution of Wycliffite translations.<sup>11</sup> However, it appears that in practice this legislation was only sporadically enforced, and that many owners of Wycliffite Bibles were themselves entirely orthodox, and unaware of the heterodox origin of these translations.

The question as to how the Lectionary was used has been controversially debated in Wycliffite scholarship.<sup>12</sup> An obvious way in which clerics and educated laypeople alike could have used the translations of liturgical texts was for private study and devout reflection on the liturgical readings, and in the case of priests, as an aid to preparing homilies in the vernacular. Many OTL manuscripts are of a small, portable size (e.g. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 665, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 531, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C. 259), and are likely to have been designed for private use. There is, however, a considerable number of larger size manuscripts, such as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS

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<sup>4</sup> On the Tables of Lections, see {Peikola 2013 #3} and {Solopova 2016 #8: 6–12}.

<sup>5</sup> These include two manuscripts which preserve full lectionaries of both Old and New Testament readings (London, British Library, MS Harley 1029, and London, British Library, MS Harley 1710). A complete list of all extant OTLs is appended to this article.

<sup>6</sup> {Dove 2007 #4: 18}.

<sup>7</sup> {Solopova 2016 #77}.

<sup>8</sup> {Solopova 2017 #78}.

<sup>9</sup> {Solopova 2013 #15: 345–346}.

<sup>10</sup> {Solopova 2017 #78}.

<sup>11</sup> On heterodoxy, anti-Wycliffite legislation, and its effects on writing in the vernacular, see {Gillespie 2011 #1527555}. On broader historical context and development, see {Hudson 1988 #80}.

<sup>12</sup> For a summary of different views, see {Peikola 2013 #3: 367–371}.

Ashmole 1517, London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 455, and Cambridge, University Library MS Ll. 1. 13, which could have been intended for use on a lectern, whether in church or elsewhere. The evidence suggests, however, that lections are unlikely to have been read aloud at Mass in the vernacular. There are only few lections which mention details of liturgical practice, and as Mary Dove has pointed out, these details are focused on what the hearer can expect visually and aurally.<sup>13</sup> OTL contains barely any contextual information which would be helpful for those performing a more active role in Church services. This is most obvious in the troped lection on Christmas morning, which has a detailed rubric explaining that the lection is sung in the pulpit by two voices, one of which sings the text from Isaiah, and the other a kind of gloss on the text:

On Cristemasse morewe þe firste lessoun at þe firste Masse, þe whiche lesson is sungun in þe pulpit, þe firste vers and þe laste of two togidre. But alle þe myddil vers oon syngiþ oon, and anoþer syngiþ anoþer. The firste vers of þo þat ben sungen bi hemsilf, is of þe tixte of Isaye þe profete. And þe answe is as it were a glose of þe tixte. And so it is bi and bi, þoruþout þe lessoun, of whiche þis is þe first vers þat is sungen of boþe togidre. (f. 230<sup>v</sup>)<sup>14</sup>

This rubric gives the impression of being written as an explanation of the alternating voices intended for the hearer, rather than as an instruction for someone performing an active role at Mass. The lection can only have been sung in Latin, and the translation seems aimed at those who were eager to follow along in English. The textual evidence, then, points more toward a use of the OTL for private study, scholarship, and devotion, than for public reading in the vernacular.

## II. Translation strategies in the Old Testament Lectionary

Textually, the 39 extant OTLs differ in their inventories of lections and in their use of translations. Translations which are used include EV and/or LV, as well as independent translations of the Latin sources. The choice of translation can vary from lection to lection. In general terms, there is a difference between the Wycliffite Bible translation and OTL in the way in which they relate to the underlying Latin sources. Whilst the Wycliffite Bible is based primarily upon the Vulgate, OTL uses as a second source the liturgical use of the biblical text in the Sarum Missal. In many lections, there is little difference between the biblical text and its liturgical use, but in some cases, the liturgical form of the text can show significant differences to the Vulgate. Thus, OTL had to be treated as a text distinct from the biblical text in the Vulgate, which required its own set of translation strategies.

An investigation of Wycliffite translation strategies is not without methodological problems due to the uncertainties attached to the two main Latin sources. There is a large

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<sup>13</sup> {Dove 2007 #4: 64}.

<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from OTL and folio references are based on Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 665. Capitalisation, word division, and punctuation have been modernised.

amount of variation in thirteenth-century copies of the Vulgate (the so-called ‘Paris bibles’) and their scribal errors are famously denounced in the General Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible, where the biblical translators mention their endeavour to correct the Latin text: ‘to make o Latyn Bible sumdeel trewe’.<sup>15</sup> There is a similar difficulty with establishing a firm textual basis of the Sarum Missal in its fourteenth-century form and variants.<sup>16</sup> In spite of these problems, it is clear that OTL uses the Sarum Missal as the basis of its translation especially in lections where the liturgical text differs from the text of the Vulgate. The Sarum Use contains several lections which edit or abbreviate the biblical text to a significant extent, which is particularly apparent in so-called ‘composite lections’. These composite lections modify the biblical text to fit a particular liturgical occasion, and can include extracts from various different biblical chapters or even books.<sup>17</sup> A note in Hereford Cathedral, MS O. VII. 1 explains just this practice:

it is to undirstonde þat not ech lessone of þe oolde lawe is writen in þe Bible word bi word as it is red in chirche, but sum is taken a resoun of o chapitre and þe remenaunt of anoþer, and summe ben taken of mo chapitris, and þat in diverse placis, and 3it not accordinge fulli to þe text of þe Bible<sup>18</sup>

This note demonstrates that the translators of OTL were aware of the textual differences between the Vulgate and the Sarum Missal, and many of the extant manuscripts reveal attempts to highlight these differences, usually by adding various chapter numbers and indexing letters to composite lections, and underlining specific passages which contain liturgical additions. Composite lections are of particular interest in connection with the translation strategies used in OTL. Based on their use of sources and their inventory of lections, the 39 extant lectionaries fall into three broad types: Type I, Type II (with subgroups A-D), and Type III. Type I manuscripts are marked by the greatest sophistication of their scholarly referencing tools, as well as a striking uniformity of presentation and textual material. Texts of Type II are more variable in their textual features and visual aspect. Type III follows a specific textual model in which a Lectionary is inserted into a Table of Lections. Most of these groups use both EV and LV as sources, as well as using independent translations for specific composite lections. The only exception is subgroup II D, which uses exclusively EV and independent translations as sources, and is therefore very likely to represent an early stage in the chronological development of OTL. Some of the lections which use EV in Group II D were likely revised at a later stage and replaced by LV (once it had become available) in later lectionaries of Type II, Type II A-C, and Type III. It is unclear how many translators’ hands were at work, and whether this revision was carried out by the same translators responsible for the initial translation of the earliest OTLs.

Whilst most lections use EV or (in groups other than II D) LV as sources, there is a small but stable number of lections which are not indebted to EV or LV in a straightforward

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<sup>15</sup> {Dove 2010 #15275556: 80} . On textual deviancy in medieval copies of the Vulgate, and the Wycliffite translators, see {Hanna 2017 1 #19}.

<sup>16</sup> The two main editions of the Sarum Missal are by {Wickham Legg 1916 #17} and by {Dickinson 1861-1883 #18}. Neither of these editions is ideal for an investigation of Wycliffite texts, as Wickham Legg’s edition is chiefly based on thirteenth-century texts, whilst Dickinson used the early printed Sarum Missals. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from the Sarum Missal in this article refer to Dickinson’s edition.

<sup>17</sup> {Frere 1935 #51: 92}.

<sup>18</sup> Hereford Cathedral, MS O. VII.1, f. 5v. I follow Mary Dove’s transcription here ({Dove 2007 #4: 62}).

way, but which must have been translated independently. These lections occur in manuscripts of all extant groups, and are never completely replaced by LV in later lectionaries.<sup>19</sup> There are seven lections which use an independent translation in all manuscripts,<sup>20</sup> in addition to three lections which partially use EV/LV and partially independent translations.<sup>21</sup> All of these independent translations occur in composite lections, a fact which is most easily explained by the nature of these lections. Since composite lections do not follow the biblical text in a linear way, it is obvious that to translate such a lection using EV or LV would have taken considerable effort: the translator would have had to find the various relevant passages in the biblical text and compare it to the liturgical text, find the appropriate passages in an EV and LV translation, and then use them in a way so as not to obscure the sense of the lection. This would have been particularly difficult with lections which are based on a large number of different biblical verses from different books. For a translator it would have been more time-efficient simply to translate these lections independently, and this is the solution which is chosen in the OTL. As independent translations also occur in what are likely to be the earliest lectionaries in Group II D (which do not use LV as a source), these independent translations must have been completed very early – possibly concurrently with, or even earlier than EV. The independent translations are therefore of particular interest in relation to the early history of the Wycliffite endeavour, and the development of Wycliffite translation strategies in general terms.

A close textual comparison makes evident the differences between EV, LV, and the independent translations. OTL contains a commemoration for clear weather, which is a composite lection based on the book of Lamentations (Lam 2:19-20; Lam 3:54-58). The first verse is given below in its liturgical form in the Sarum Missal, and its translation in the OTL in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 665:

**Sarum:** Consurge, lauda in nocte in principio vigiliarum; effunde sicut aquam cor tuum ante conspectum Domini Dei tui. Leva ad eum manus tuas pro animabus parvulorum tuorum qui defecerunt fame in capite omnium compitorum. (802\*)<sup>22</sup>

**OTL:** Rise up togidre, preise in þe nyȝt, and in þe bigynnyng of þi wakyngis, and schede out þin herte as watir bifore þe siȝte of þe Lord, þi God; lifte vp þin hondis to hym for þi children soulis, þe whiche han failide for hungir in þe heed of alle feterid men. (f. 265<sup>r-v</sup>)

This translation is markedly different from both EV and LV:<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> A exception to this rule is the troped lection on Christmas morning sung by two voices (Is 9:2-7), which uses an independent translation in Type II and III, but is replaced by LV in Type I lectionaries.

<sup>20</sup> These are: the lection on the Octave of the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas, the lection on the feast of St Silvester (*Ecce sacerdos magnus qui in vita sua*), the lection on the feast of St Nicholas (*Ecce sacerdos magnus qui in diebus suis*), the lection on the feast of St Andrew (*Benedictio domini super caput iusti*), the commemoration for brothers and sisters, and the commemoration for clear weather. The lection on Christmas morning sung by two voices uses an independent translation in all but Type I OTLs (see n. 19 above).

<sup>21</sup> There are: the lection of the Octave of Assumption, the lection on the feast of a confessor and doctor (*Dedit dominus*), and the lection on the feast of a virgin and martyr (*Sapientia laudabit animam suam*).

<sup>22</sup> This and all following quotations from the Sarum Missal refer to the edition by {Dickinson 1861-1883 #18}.

<sup>23</sup> These and all following quotations from the Wycliffite Bible are based on the edition by {Forshall, J. and F. Madden 1850 #22}.

**EV:** Ris, preise thou in the nyȝt, in the bigynnyng of wacchis; heeld out as water thin herte, byfor the siȝt of the Lord; rere to hym thin hondus for the soule of thi litil childer, that for hunger pershen in the hed of alle many weies in to oon.

**LV:** Rise thou togidere, herie thou in the nyȝt, in the begynnyng of wakyngis; schede out thin herte as watir, bifore the siȝt of the Lord; reise thin hondis to hym for the soulis of thi litte children, that failiden for hungur in the heed of alle meetyngis of weies.

Some of the differences between these versions can be explained by the differences between the biblical and the liturgical text: the phrase ‘þi God’ is a liturgical addition which occurs in the Sarum Missal (‘Dei tui’), but not in the Vulgate.<sup>24</sup> In terms of syntax and general approach to translation, OTL tends to be closer to LV than EV. It follows the same characteristic way of translating prefix and base of the Latin verb separately, as in ‘rise up togidre’ as a translation of ‘consurge’. In some places, OTL adheres to the same word choices as LV (‘wakyngis’ rather than ‘wacchis’, ‘schede out’ rather than ‘heeld out’), although the translation of ‘lauda’ as ‘preise’ in OTL agrees with EV rather than LV.<sup>25</sup> In other places, however, the word choices in OTL are markedly different to both EV and LV. ‘Leva’ is translated as ‘lifte vp’ in OTL, but as ‘rere’ in EV and ‘reise’ in LV. Both EV and LV prefer the analytic construction ‘for the soule of thi litil childer’ (EV) for translating the genitive in ‘pro animabus parvulorum tuorum’, whilst OTL has the synthetic construction ‘for þi children soulis’. OTL also translates the Latin third person plural perfect active indicative in ‘defecerunt’ with the periphrastic construction ‘han failide’ rather than the past tense ‘failiden’ as in LV. Perhaps most strikingly, OTL chooses the puzzling translation ‘in þe heed of alle feterid men’ for ‘in capite omnium compitorum’. EV and LV have different translations for this phrase, but both translate ‘compitorum’ in the sense ‘crossroads’ (EV: ‘alle many weies in to oon’; LV: ‘alle meetyngis of weies’).<sup>26</sup> It is unclear why the translators of OTL interpreted this rather straightforward noun as ‘feterid men’ – possibly a confusion with the noun *captivorum*, pointing towards scribal error in the translators’ Latin source text.

The subsequent sentences of this lection reveal a similarly independent approach to translation, which is different from the two versions of the Wycliffite Bible:

**Sarum:** Vide, Domine, et considera, quem vindemiaveris ita. Ergone comedent mulieres fructum suum, parvulos ad mensuram palmæ? Si occiditur in sanctuario Domini sacerdos et propheta? (802\*)

**OTL:** Se, Lord, and bihold, for þus þou hast rerid vp oure vynezherdis, þerfor lete not wommen ete her fruyt, her smale children at þe mesure of an hound. And þe prest and þe profete ben killid in þe sentuarie of þe Lord. (f. 265<sup>v</sup>)

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<sup>24</sup> All references to the Vulgate are to the edition by {Weber 2007 #9}.

<sup>25</sup> It is a well-known fact that Forshall and Madden’s edition does not provide a comprehensive picture of the extent of variation in the manuscripts; nonetheless, it provides a good textual basis for comparison with OTL, and is indicative of larger-scale differences between the two texts, even if it does not reliably record all variants.

<sup>26</sup> The entry for *compitum* in {Ashdowne 2018 #15275554} does not give any indication that the word had a meaning beyond that of ‘crossroads, meeting-place’ in medieval usage.

**EV:** See, Lord, and behold, whom thou hast to-pullid; so therefore lest shuln ete wymmen ther frut, litil childer at the mesure of a spanne; for slayn is in the seyntuarie of the Lord the prest, and the profete.

**LV:** Se thou, Lord, and byholde, whom thou hast maad so bare; therfor whether wymmen shulen ete her fruyt, litle children at the mesure of an hond? for a prest and profete is slayn in the seyntuarie of the Lord.

Once again, it is clear that the translation in OTL is not based on either EV or LV. Some parts of this section seem closer to the more idiomatic syntax in LV than the closely literal rendering in EV, such as ‘þe prest and þe profete ben killid in þe sentuarie of þe Lord’ rather than the inverted word order in ‘slayn is in the seyntuarie of the Lord the prest, and the profete’. Nonetheless, as in the previous section this passage contains some rather idiosyncratic translations which are unrelated to EV and LV. The verb *vindemiare* means ‘to harvest grapes’, and both EV and LV interpret this in a figurative sense as ‘to-pullen’ (‘to scatter’) or ‘make bare’. The translation in OTL implies the exact opposite: ‘þou hast rerid vp oure vynezherdis’ paints before the reader’s eyes an image of abundance rather than desolation. It is unclear whether this translation is the result of a misinterpretation of the text on the translator’s part, or whether it was caused by a variant or error in the source text. The same is true for other translations which are notably different in OTL. For instance, the enclitic interrogative particle *-ne* in ‘ergone’ is reflected in the syntax of EV and LV, but in OTL this is translated as a negative particle in the imperative ‘lete not’ rather than being interpreted as an interrogative clause. In manuscripts with variable spelling and word division, the difference between ‘ne’ as an enclitic particle or as an adverb would have been ambiguous, which offers a ready explanation for these differences. What these differences do confirm, however, is that the translators of OTL either completed their translation without access to EV and/or LV, or even if they did have access to them, that they deliberately chose different translation strategies for specific lexical items and grammatical constructions.

A closer look at the rest of this lection reveals that these choices are systematic and consistent. The first passage discussed above has already shown the OTL translators’ choice of rendering the Latin perfect as a periphrastic construction with ‘haue’ + past participle.<sup>27</sup> The remaining verses, based on Lam 3: 54-58, clearly demonstrate the same strategy.

**Sarum:** Inundaverunt aquæ super caput meum: dixi, perii. Invocavi nomen tuum, Domine, de lacu novissimo. Vocem mean audisti: ne avertas aurem tuam a singultu meo et clamore. Appropinquasti in die qua invocavi te: dixisti, ne timeas. Judicasti causam animæ meæ, redemptor vitæ meæ, Domine Deus meus. (803\*)

**OTL:** Watris han goen aboute myn heed; I haue seide þat I perischide. I haue clepide þi name, Lord, fro þe laste lake. Thou hast herd my voice, fro þe snobbingis and my criyngis turne not away þi face! Thou hast come nyȝ in þat day þat I haue inclepide þee; þou hast seide: Drede þee no þing. Thou hast demyd þe cause of my soule; þou art raunsomer of my soule, my Lord and my God. (f. 265<sup>v</sup>)

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<sup>27</sup> The past tense and the present perfect are not yet sharply distinguished from each other in Middle English usage. See {Brunner 1984 #98: 300-301; 366-378} for further details.

Throughout this section, the Latin perfect active indicative is translated as a construction with ‘have’ + past participle. By contrast, both EV and LV consistently translate these verbs in the past tense, as is apparent from the following list of verbs (in order of appearance in the lection) which compares the versions in OTL, EV, and LV:

**inundaverunt:** han goen OTL, floweden EV, flowiden LV

**dixi:** haue seide OTL, seide EV, seide LV

**invocavi:** haue clepide OTL, inwardli clepede EV, clepide to help LV

**audisti:** hast herd OTL, herdest EV, herdist LV

**appropinquasti:** hast come ny3 OTL, ne3hedist EV, neizidist LV

**invocavi:** haue inclepide OTL, inwardli clepede EV, clepide [...] to help LV

**dixisti:** hast seide OTL, seidist EV, seidist LV

**judicasti:** hast demyd OTL, demedest EV, demydist LV

It is striking that OTL frequently chooses the same Middle English verb as EV and LV, but in all cases renders the Latin tense in a different way. This consistent translation strategy can also be observed in other independent lections in OTL, such as in the commemoration for brothers and sisters, which translates ‘benedixit’ in Is 19:25 as ‘haþ blessid’, whilst both EV and LV have ‘blesside’. Perhaps most strikingly, the same strategy is used in a rather complex composite lection for the feast of a confessor and doctor (*Dedit dominus*, Ecclus 47:9-13 and 24: 1-4). The first verse of this lection uses an independent translation in all lectionaries, whilst later lectionaries (Type I, Type II A-C, Type III) use LV for the remaining verses of Ecclus 47 (10-13). The second part of the lection, based on Ecclus 24, switches back to an independent translation in all lectionaries. The first verse shows the same characteristic way of translating the Latin perfect. The verb ‘dedit’ in Ecclus 47:9 is translated as ‘haþ 3oue’ in all lectionaries, as opposed to ‘3af’ in EV and LV. In the earliest lectionaries (Type II D), the entire lection occurs in an independent translation, and employs the same strategy of translation the Latin perfect throughout.

It is somewhat surprising that LV is used as a source for Ecclus 47:10-13 in later lectionaries. If LV was available during the production of these later lectionaries, why was the independent translation of the first verse not replaced by LV as in the following verses? The explanation is likely to be found in the differences between the Sarum Missal and the Vulgate: Whilst Ecclus 47:10-13 in the Vulgate occur in the liturgical text without alterations, Ecclus 47:9 appears in the Sarum Missal with some adjustments:

**Sarum:** Dedit Dominus confessionem sancto suo, et excelso in verbo gloriae

**Vulgate:** in omni opere dedit confessionem Sancto et Excelso in verbo gloriae

The differences between the two versions prompted a range of interpretive approaches by the translators. Whilst Group II D lectionaries interpret ‘sancto suo’ as ‘to his seynt’ (New York, Columbia University, Plimpton Add. 03, f. 264<sup>v</sup>), Group II B manuscripts such as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 665 supply ‘to his holi God’. Type I lectionaries present the

more literal translation ‘to his holi’ without supplying a noun. The translators of OTL appear to have been aware of the differences between the biblical text and its liturgical form at the start of this lection, and this is likely to have been the reason why they chose not to replace the independent translation by LV in the first verse.

The remainder of this lection is based upon Ecclus 24:1-4, and occurs in an independent translation in all lectionaries. This part of the lection was never replaced by LV even in later lectionaries, as was the case with the preceding section. This might have been simply a matter of convenience for the translators – since the lection does not follow the biblical text in a linear fashion but uses passages from different chapters of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, it would have taken time and special effort to find the relevant LV passage from Ecclus 24 for this composite lection. When revising the translation based upon LV (a process which led to the later lectionaries), the translators may have preferred to copy the independent translation which was more easily accessible. The evidence might also indicate that only particular parts of the LV translation were available to the translators of OTL at the time of the revision. Very little is known about the details of the Wycliffite endeavour, the workshop setup, the number of translators and the extent of collaboration between individuals, but it is clear from the selective use of EV and LV by the translators of OTL that there must have been a great deal of interchange. The momentary availability of specific books and chapters of the biblical translation as well as of the Latin sources could have changed depending on individual translators working on specific passages, and in this case the choice of an independent translation over LV could have been necessitated by the practical circumstances of the translation project.

Interestingly, the very same verses from Ecclus 24 appear at the start of a different lection for the feast of a virgin and martyr (*Sapientia laudabit animam suam*). This lection consists of the two sections Ecclus 24:1-5 and 21-22. As this lection contains the same verses as the lection previously discussed, we may have expected an independent translation to have been used here, just as in the previous lection. However, it is striking that in all lectionaries, including the earliest ones, Ecclus 24:1-4 is not translated independently in this lection, but is based on EV. The remainder of the lection (Ecclus 24:21-22) uses an independent translation. It is somewhat puzzling that EV is used as a source for the first part of this lection, even though the lection discussed above contains the very same passage from Ecclus 24:1-4 in an independent translation. In other words, why do these two lections contain two different translations of the very same verses? If the earliest lectionaries use EV for these verses in one of the two lections, why is the same not true for the other? The explanation might once again be related to convenience and ease of access for the translator. The passage in question, Ecclus 24:1-4, occurs at the beginning of *Sapientia laudabit animam suam*, yet at the end of *Dedit dominus*. The use of the independent translation in the concluding verses Ecclus 24:21-22 of *Sapientia laudabit animam suam* follows the same pattern discussed above – where a composite lection switches to a section taken from a chapter or verse which is different from the introductory verses, independent translations are often preferred. In this lection, the first part is based on EV, whilst in *Dedit dominus* the first part is based on LV (in later lectionaries). In both lections, the second part is thus an independent translation which is never replaced by EV or LV. For a translator using a pre-existing translation (EV or LV) it would have been very laborious to find the Latin source text of second part of the lection in

the Vulgate and compare it closely to the Sarum Missal for any liturgical changes before copying the relevant parts in OTL. The use of an independent translation may have seemed a more straightforward solution to the translator, but the momentary availability of source texts (as discussed above) may also have played a role. The evidence of these two lections demonstrates that this strategy was used both at an early stage in the process of composing OTL – when only EV was available – and also in later lectionaries, when some parts of independent lections were replaced by LV.

At any rate, the independent translation of Ecclus 24:1-4 in *Dedit dominus* reveals a number of notable translation strategies, as the following comparison will demonstrate:

**Sarum:** Sapientia laudabit animam suam, et in Domino honorabitur, et in medio populi sui gloriabitur. Et in ecclesiis Altissimi aperiet os suum, et in conspectu virtutis ipsius gloriabitur. In medio populi exaltabitur, et in plenitudine sancta admirabitur. In multitudine electorum habebit laudem, et inter benedictos benedicetur.

**OTL:** Wisdom schal preise his soule, and he schal be ourned in oure Lord, and he schal be glorifiede in þe myddis of his puple. And he schal opene his mouþ in þe chirchis of moost hiȝe, and in þe biholdynge of þe vertu of him he schal be glorifiede. In þe myddis of his puple he schal be hizede, and in holy fulhede he schal be merueilid. In þe multitude of chosun he schal haue preisyng, and among þe blesside he schal [be] blesside.<sup>28</sup>

Some aspects of this translation appear to be more literal even than the translation in EV. The translator of OTL has taken great care to render Latin passives as passive constructions in the Middle English also. For instance, ‘gloriabitur’ is translated as ‘he schal be glorifiede’, whilst EV has ‘he shal glorien’ and LV ‘he schal haue glorie’; similarly, ‘admirabitur’ is translated as the rather unidiomatic passive construction ‘he schal be merueilid’ in OTL, as opposed to the active constructions ‘he shal myche wudren’ in EV<sup>29</sup> and ‘he schal wondre’ in LV. Other phrases in this translation reveal an equally close adherence to the syntax and phrasing of the Latin source: ‘in þe biholdynge of þe vertu of him’ is a literal translation of ‘in conspectu virtutis ipsius’, which is rather difficult to follow in English – perhaps even more so than the version in EV, ‘in the siȝte of the vertue of hym’. The Latin ‘inter benedictos’ is translated in OTL literally as ‘among þe blesside’, whilst both EV and LV supply the noun ‘men’ to make the phrase more idiomatic in English.

It is generally accepted that more literal translations of the Latin represent an earlier stage of the translation project than more idiomatic ones.<sup>30</sup> Extremely literal translations of the type we find in the independent translations may thus indicate that OTL was translated very early in the course of the Wycliffite project – a conclusion which is also suggested by the lectionaries of Group II D, which contain exclusively EV and independent translations. As a close analysis of the translation method behind the independent translations has revealed, the

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<sup>28</sup> The emendation [be] is supplied based on the readings found in other manuscripts of the same group (II B) as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 665.

<sup>29</sup> See, however, the variant ‘ben wundred’ recorded here by Forshall and Madden.

<sup>30</sup> {Hudson 2017 #75: 135}.

independent translations are at times even more literal than the ones which we find in EV.<sup>31</sup> Such translation strategies can also be found in the lection from the Octave of the Feast of the Assumption, another composite lection using different sections of the Song of Songs (Ct 3:11, 4:1, 4:7-13, 4:15; 5:1; 6:8-10; 7:6). Similarly to other lections, this lection switches from LV to an independent translation half way through the lection in later lectionaries. The verse ‘veni in hortum meum soror mea sponsa messui murram meam cum aromatibus meis’ (Ct 5:1) is rendered in the different versions thus:

**OTL:** Come into my garden, sistir, my spousesse, I haue rope my myrre wiþ myn oynementis

**EV:** Cum in to my gardin, my sister, my spouse. I haue gedered my mirre, with my swoote spices

**LV:** Mi sister spousesse, come thou in to my gardyn. Y have rope my myrre, with my swete smellynge spices

OTL here interprets the possessive adjective ‘mea’ as referring only to ‘sponsa’ rather than both ‘soror’ and ‘sponsa’ (the solution chosen in EV and LV). Both interpretations are possible on grammatical grounds, but the latter seems more appropriate both contextually and idiomatically. OTL follows the Latin text in an extremely literal and linear way, as perhaps also exemplified by the fact that it translates ‘aromatibus’ by the single word ‘oynementis’ rather than the multiple word translations chosen in EV and LV. Other sections from the same lection are equally Latinate in terms of word order. ‘Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus’ (Ct 4: 12) is translated as ‘Garden encloside, sistir my spousesse, garden encloside, wel enseelide’ (f. 259<sup>v</sup>-260<sup>r</sup>). It is rather striking how closely this translation follows Latin syntax, including the postpositive participial adjectives in ‘garden encloside’ and ‘wel enseelide’. EV, by contrast, opts for the more idiomatic word order ‘closid gardyn’ and ‘welle selid’.

Such a level of literalness in OTL may be comparable to the cases of ‘stencil’ translation which Anne Hudson has observed in the EV prologues.<sup>32</sup> Hudson’s investigation has revealed that the “slavishness of the prologues translation is clearest in regard to word order”,<sup>33</sup> which follows the Latin syntax extremely closely. As we have seen, the independent translations in OTL contain similar cases of extremely literal translation of the Latin word order, which indicates that these translations in OTL must have been created very early during the translation project, and perhaps even earlier than EV. Nonetheless, the fact that even the earliest OTLs use EV shows that EV was already in existence, or well under way, by the time the earliest OTLs were written. There is, then, good reason to assume that the independent translations were written at least concurrently with EV.

The independent translations in OTL, then, employ translation techniques which are distinct from the ones we find in EV and LV. They are marked by detailed attention to the

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<sup>31</sup> As {Tanabe 1988 #15275551} has shown, the level of literalness in EV varies between different parts of the Bible. Mary Dove interprets this as evidence that “different parts of the Bible were apportioned to different translators” {Dove 2007 #4: 139}.

<sup>32</sup> {Hudson 2017 #75: 136-139}.

<sup>33</sup> {Hudson 2017 #75: 137}.

Latin grammatical constructions and a very literal approach to translation, which is especially noticeable with regard to word order, the use of the passive, and the perfect tense. The use of independent translations is connected to the use of composite lections in the Sarum Missal and their textual features, which make them distinct from the biblical text itself. It is evident that the translators were highly aware of the composite nature of these lections, and worked around this problem by using independent translations where this was useful, and in later manuscripts replacing parts of these independent translations by LV where practical and appropriate.

### III. The liturgical text as authoritative source

Apart from the obvious practical benefits of saving time and labour, the independent translations also testify to the great respect which the Wycliffite translators had for the Use of Sarum. The lections are regarded as texts in their own right, worthy of a translation effort distinct from the translation of the biblical text proper. This respectful interaction with the liturgical text is particularly evident from the palaeographical features of OTL. Like other Wycliffite texts, OTL has a consistent practice of underlining extra-biblical material to indicate that it is not part of the biblical text proper. Such non-biblical material typically falls into one of the following categories: glosses, alternative translations, or additions of words which do not occur in the Latin, but which are necessary in English for clarification or for grammatical reasons.<sup>34</sup> In OTL, there is an additional category of extra-biblical additions, which is by far the most frequent reason for underlining. These are liturgical framing devices introducing and concluding lections. In the Latin liturgical texts, these occur as formulaic phrases for both epistle and gospel readings. The conventional introductions for readings from the Old Testament are ‘In diebus illis’ for narrative passages and ‘Haec dicit dominus’ for readings from prophetic books. Typical closing formulae include ‘dicit dominus deus noster’, ‘dicit dominus omnipotens’, or ‘in saecula saeculorum Amen’.<sup>35</sup> In OTL, these introductions are translated as ‘In þo daies’ and ‘The Lord seiþ þese þingis’, and the closing phrases as ‘seiþ oure Lord’, ‘seiþ þe Lord almyzti’, and ‘fro þe world and til into þe world’, following the Latin text closely. These liturgical framing devices are underlined in most OTL manuscripts to indicate that they are additions and not part of the biblical text itself.<sup>36</sup>

The independent translations, however, are an exception to this underlining practice. This is, in some ways, unexpected – after all, amongst all the lections in OTL, it is the composite lections which edit the biblical text most heavily, and introduce numerous liturgical additions which are not part of the text of the Vulgate. For instance, the lection *Ecce sacerdos magnus qui in diebus suis*, used on the feast of St Nicholas, is composed of individual sections from no less than twelve different verses from the Book of Ecclesiasticus (Ecclus

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<sup>34</sup> {Solopova 2016 #8: 19–20}.

<sup>35</sup> {Frere 1935 #51: 91–92}.

<sup>36</sup> How accurate and consistent these underlining practices are, depends to a large extent on the diligence of any particular scribe. However, as a rule Type I OTLs are more thorough and consistent in their underlining than Type II OTLs.

44:16, 17, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27; Ecclus 45:3, 6, 8, 19, 20). The lections freely edit these verses to make them fit into a new context in the liturgy: statements which refer to biblical characters such as Noah and Abraham in their original context are rewritten in order to be applied to the saint whose feast is being celebrated. A section of Ecclus 44:25 in the biblical text runs ‘testamentum confirmavit super caput Iacob’, but appears as ‘testamentum suum confirmavit super caput ejus’ in the Sarum lection.<sup>37</sup> Replacing the proper noun by a pronoun makes the verse more generic, so that it can be used in a liturgical setting with reference to a particular confessor such as St Nicholas. The same strategy is applied at the very beginning of the same lection, which is based on Ecclus 44:16 ‘Enoch placuit Deo’. In its liturgical form, however, this section appears as ‘Ecce sacerdos magnus, qui in diebus suis placuit Deo’. The proper noun has here been replaced with the generic reference to a ‘great priest’, enabling the liturgical use as a lection for a saint’s feast day. In strictly textual terms, sections such as ‘Ecce sacerdos magnus’, and single words such as ‘ejus’, are liturgical additions which are not found in the text of the Vulgate. Following the logic according to which liturgical additions are underlined in other lections in OTL, we would expect the translations of these additions in composite lections to be underlined also, but this is not the case in the manuscripts. Neither early nor late OTL manuscripts contain any visual markers which would alert the reader that phrases like ‘Lo, þe greet preest’ (f. 257<sup>v</sup>) are liturgical additions. This indicates that throughout the textual tradition of OTL, composite lections were regarded as texts in their own right, written for and used in a specific liturgical context. It seems as if the translators felt that comparing the lections to the biblical texts and underlining sections which deviate from the Vulgate was unnecessary, since the liturgical text was seen as an authoritative source distinct from (though not unrelated to) the biblical text. The use of independent translations for composite lections further underlines this respect for the liturgical form of the text by the Wycliffite translators.

This attitude towards the liturgy is not reflective of what we would expect in the light of the polemic in Wycliffite sermons and the Lollards’ wide-spread disregard for the Mass.<sup>38</sup> The evidence of OTL can therefore help us to refine our understanding of Wycliffite views on the liturgy, which appear quite different from what has often been assumed. The lectionaries show that from the very beginning of the Wycliffite translation enterprise, liturgical texts played a crucial role to the translators. The texts of the Use of Sarum were recognised as an authority alongside the text of the Vulgate, and were translated into English using a careful selection of sources which included EV, LV, as well as independent translation with their own consistent translation techniques. The Wycliffite lectionaries had a long afterlife even beyond the Middle Ages: Tyndale’s translation of the New Testament, printed in several editions, contained an OTL which followed the Wycliffite OTL closely in terms of visual presentation, layout, and referencing tools – a witness to the lasting influence of this textual model established by the Wycliffites.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> {Dickinson 1861-1883 #18: 701\*}.

<sup>38</sup> {Hudson 1988 #80: 149-152}.

<sup>39</sup> *The Newe Testament yet once agayne corrected by Willyam Tindale; where vnto is added a kalendar and a necessarye table wherin earlye and lightelye maye be founde any storye contayned in the foure Euangelistes and in the Actes of the Apostles*, STC 2830 (1534).

## List of OTL manuscripts

### **Type I**

Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2073  
Dresden, Saechsische Landesbibliothek, MS Od 83  
London, British Library, MS Egerton 1171  
London, British Library, MS Harley 6333  
London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 532  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 388  
Worcester, Cathedral Library, MS Q. 84

### **Type II**

#### *Group A*

Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS B. 10. 20  
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 75  
Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Eng. 80  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1517  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Selden supra 51

#### *Group B*

Cambridge, Jesus College, MS 47 (Q. D.6.)  
London, Lambeth Palace Library, Sion College, MS ARC L 40.2/E.2  
New York, Public Library, MS 64  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 665  
Oxford, Christ Church, MS 146  
Princeton, William H. Scheide, MS 13

### *Group C*

Berkeley, California, Bancroft Library, MS 128

Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 10068 (formerly British and Foreign Bible Society, Eng 1,2)

Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 6683

Cambridge, University Library, MS Ll. 1. 13

London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 455

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C. 259

York, Minster Library, MS XVI. N. 7

### *Group D*

Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 99

London, British Library, MS Arundel 254

London, British Library, MS Harley 1029 (full OT and NT Lectionary)

London, British Library, MS Harley 1710 (full OT and NT Lectionary)

New York, Columbia University, MS Plimpton Add. 03

### **Type III**

Dunedin, NZ, Public Library, Reed Fragment 20

Orlando, Van Kampen Collection, MS VK 641

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 531

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 265-a

Warminster, Longleat House, MS 5

Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, Takamiya MS 113

### **Uncategorised fragments**

Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk. 1. 8

London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 369

New York, Morgan Library M. 362

### Bibliography

