Review Article

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Duces caecorum: On Two Recent Translations of Wyclif

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Abstract

Two recent publications have greatly increased the amount of Wyclif available in translation: the *Trialogus*, translated by Stephen Lahey, and a thematic anthology translated by Stephen Penn. This review article documents the failings that make these translations worse than useless. A post mortem leads the author to claim that the publication of these volumes, the first of which has already been warmly received, is a sign of a gathering crisis in medieval studies, and one that we should take steps to avert.

Keywords

Stephen Penn, *John Wyclif: Selected Latin Works in Translation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 2019. xvi + 335 pp. ISBN 9780719067648.

Stephen Lahey, *Wyclif*, Trialogus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013. viii + 363 pp. ISBN 9780521869249.

Every medievalist needs to know something about Wyclif, and some of us could do with knowing rather more. For six centuries, though, it has been an arduous task to get past all the propaganda and see what he had to say for himself. By the time his works started to appear in print, the intellectual frame-work needed to understand them had been largely forgotten,[1] and the recovery of this framework over the past century has been offset by the decline of Latin as a reading language among students and scholars alike. Until recently, the only texts available in translation were the *De universalibus* (1985) and the *De simonia* (1992), plus a scattering of abridgements, extracts, and short pieces.[2] And this for an author said to have written about two hundred works![3] The publication of the two volumes under review is thus an exciting development, not so much for Wyclif scholars, who should be able to read him without such

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1 An exception must be made for the *Trialogus*, which was printed in 1525. Otherwise, be-sides a *Protestatio* quoted in Walsingham's *Chronica* for 1378, plus the related *Libellus* and an open letter to Urban VI printed in J. Foxe, *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum commentarii pars prima* (Basel, 1559), 8-12, 16, Wyclif's only works to appear before 1858 were a *Confessio* on the eucha-rist and a *Determinatio* defending the king's legal rights, both printed in J. Lewis, *The History of the Life and Sufferings of the Reverend and Learned John Wicliffe* (London, 1720), 272-281, 363-371. The publication history is continued engagingly, albeit with uncritical reverence for the editorial methods of Rudolf Buddensieg (cf. n. 29 below), in H. Spencer, "F.J. Furnivall's Last Fling: The Wyclif Society and Anglo-German Scholarly Relations, 1882-1922," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 65 (2014), 790-811.

2 *On Universals*, trans. A. Kenny (Oxford, 1985); *On Simony*, trans. T. McVeigh (New York, 1992). The *De veritate sacre scripture* is abridged in *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, trans. I. Levy (Kalamazoo, 2001); the *De officio pastorali* and parts of the *De eucharistia* are abridged by Ford Battles in *Advocates of Reform: From Wyclif to Erasmus*, ed. M. Spinka (Philadelphia, 1953), 21-90; and it is still worth noting Robert Vaughan's abridgement of Book IV of the *Trialogus*, even though it was made from the 1525 edition (*pace* Lahey, p. 31 n. 70): *Tracts and Treatises of John de Wycliffe* (London, 1845), 131-216. Ten chapters (5%) of the *De civili dominio* are translated by John Kilcullen in *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts, vol. 2: Ethics and Political Philosophy*, ed. A.S. McGrade, J. Kilcullen, and M. Kempshall (Cambridge, 2001), 587-654; two excerpts (4%) from the *De officio regis* are translated by Cary Nederman in *Medieval Political Theory: A Reader*, ed. C. Nederman and K. Forhan (London, 1993), 222-229; and the open letter to Urban VI is translated in J. Dahmus, *The Prosecution of John Wyclyf* (New Haven, 1952), 141-142. Other modern languages fare no better; Italian readers, for instance, can find a *Determinatio*, an abridged chapter of the *De officio regis* (trans. Stefano Simonetta), and a *Petitio* (trans. Sandro Buzzetti, from the ME version) in *Le due chiese. Progetti di riforma politico-religiosa nei secoli XII-XV*, ed. M. Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri (Milan, 1998), 145-194.

3 A. Hudson, "From Oxford to Prague: The Writings of John Wyclif and his English Followers in Bohemia," *Slavonic and East European Review* 75 (1997), 642-657, at 648. Hudson arrived at this estimate by taking the 435 items in Thomson's catalogue of Wyclif's works (cit. n. 57 below) and telescoping the individually listed sermons into "four collections plus four out-riders". A similar approach to the biblical *Postilla* (which Thomson divided into 71 items, of which 22 were not known to have survived) would further reduce the total to about 130.

assistance, as for the many researchers who work in adjacent fields, and for the many teachers who need to give guided tours of this *terra incognita*. The translators have therefore taken on an important responsibility: they are, to use a phrase that Wyclif himself borrowed from scripture, "leaders of the blind".[4]

1   Penn's *Selected Latin Works in Translation*

Stephen Penn's volume is the first Wyclif anthology in print. Despite the title, only three short works and three letters are translated in full; the other selections are extracts, arranged thematically under six headings.[5] Frustratingly, the volume does not provide a list of the works in question. In decreasing order, a third of the material is taken from Wyclif's *Postilla*, *De ecclesia*, and *De officio regis*; the *De septem donis Spiritus Sancti* is translated in full; there are substantial extracts from the *De eucharistia*, *De Christo et suo adversario Antichristo*, *Trialogus*, *De veritate sacre scripture*, *De ordinatione fratrum*, *De civili dominio*, and *De eucharistia et penitentia*; and the remaining quarter comes from seventeen other works.[6] Genre-wise, this gives a reasonable cross-section of Wyclif's output after he had turned his attention to theology in the mid-1360s.[7] It is a

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4   Matthew 15:14: *sinite illos, caeci sunt et duces caecorum*. Wyclif borrows the phrase in two sermons, and he quotes it explicitly in a third sermon and twice in the *De veritate sacre scripture*; cf. also n. 72 below.

5   "Logic and metaphysics" (pp. 34-52); "Scripture and truth" (53-105); "Sacramental questions" (106-144); "The eucharist" (145-169); "The church and the Christian life" (170-224); "Wyclif's political theory" (225-271). The three opuscula are collected under "Shorter texts and polemical tracts" (272-299), bringing the number of Wyclif selections to 52. An appendix provides three documents pertaining to the condemnation of his teaching (300-310).

6   In decreasing order, there are sizeable extracts from the *De dominio divino* and *De potentia productiva Dei ad extra*, and both the *De solutione Sathane* and the *De demone meridiano* are translated in full. The tail end consists of extracts from the *De potestate pape*, *De apostasia*, *De logica tractatus tertius*, *Opus evangelicum*, *De schismate*, and *De blasphemia*; the letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury; snippets from the *De volutione Dei*, the *Purgans errores circa universalia in communi*, and the preface to the *Sermones super evangelia dominica*; the letters to Urban VI and to the Bishop of Lincoln; and a paragraph from the *De universalibus*.

7   Penn describes the *De logica tractatus tertius* as "probably having been completed before 1363" because "it would seem unlikely that Wyclif would have chosen to produce a second logical treatise so long after the publication of [his introductory textbook]" (pp. 7-8). This argument will not overturn the standard dating of the *Tractatus tertius* to the early 1370s, not least because Wyclif, probably born 1330×1332, uses the fact that he has reached 40 (*ego fui quadragenarius*) as an example of a truth that cannot cease to exist: *Tractatus de logica*, vol. II, ed. M. Dziewicki (London, 1896), 188. See further M. Thakkar, "Wyclif's *Logica* and the *Logica Oxoniensis*," in *Before and After Wyclif*, ed. L. Campi and S. Simonetta (Turnhout, in press).

shame that his rich and idiosyncratic sermon collections are not represented, though we do get the standalone sermon *De demonio meridiano*, here billed as a "treatise" (p. 294). Still, it is good to see a strong showing from the underappreciated biblical *Postilla*. Thematically speaking, Penn's approach is conservative: the topics are ones that already have a place in the secondary literature. This would have been more understandable if the literature had always been cited, so that the volume could have functioned as a companion piece for the Latinless reader.[8] As it is, the selection feels a little unimaginative; it would have been easy to include, say, one of Wyclif's rants about women.[9]

Penn has packaged his translations with a fair amount of supporting material. Each selection is introduced with a paragraph or two, and although the footnotes are not uniformly helpful,[10] readers are rarely left unassisted for more than two pages at a time. The broader context is provided in an overview of two or three pages at the start of each thematic chapter, and nearly half of the introduction is devoted to a selective outline of Wyclif's thought that almost

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8   For instance, the selection illustrating the "problem of the virtuous heathen" (p. 204, #29) does not come with any references, even though it is discussed not only in John Marenbon's recent book *Pagans and Philosophers* (Princeton, 2015), 217-218, but also in Gordon Whatley's classic article "The Uses of Hagiography: The Legend of Pope Gregory and the Emperor Trajan in the Middle Ages," *Viator* 15 (1984), 25-63, at 56-59.

9   Wyclif has much to say about women in his discussion of the ninth commandment (*non desiderabis uxorem proximi tui*) in *De mandatis divinis*, ed. J. Loserth and F. Matthew (London, 1922), 434-453. He discusses them more briefly in a sermon on Mark 6:17-28 (Herodias): *Sermones*, ed. J. Loserth, vol. 11 (London, 1888), 159-165.

10   Non-specialists are unlikely to benefit from a note that reads "*Digesta* I.8; *CICi* vol. 2, pp. 11-12" (p. 37 n. 5), and not only because "vol. 2" should be vol. 1, or because the reference should be narrowed down to *Digesta* I.8.1 (p. 11a in the Latin edition); it would have been helpful to refer to the English translation edited by Alan Watson (Philadelphia, 1985/1998). A note on Richard FitzRalph that reads "*De Quaestionibus Armenorum*, fos 130-1" (p. 40 n. 8) leaves it up to the reader to discover Jean Le Sueur's edition (Paris 1512) inaccurately cited in the introduction (p. 26 n. 68); the reference should be narrowed down to f. 130va, and it would have been worth mentioning the edition and translation in James Gorman's MLitt thesis (Trinity College Dublin, 1999, available online). Two manuscript references serve no obvious purpose (pp. 14 n. 45, 248 n. 37); conversely, Penn's references to the secondary literature are too infrequent, one example of a conspicuous absence being P. Gradon, "Wyclif's *Postilla* and his Sermons," in *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale*, ed. H. Barr and A. Hutchinson (Turnhout, 2005), 67-77 (citable e.g. on pp. 8, 53). Finally, to foreshadow a worry raised in n. 13 below, a sophism is not "a proposition that may be true in one sense but not in another" (p. 44 n. 14), but one that can apparently be conclusively proved and conclusively disproved (not necessarily because of ambiguity).

matches the thematic arrangement of the chapters (pp. 16-30).[11] At the back of the volume (pp. 311-320) there is a glossary of forty-odd technical terms "that Wyclif uses frequently" (p. 33); this could have been expanded to include other predictably difficult terms,[12] and it should have been more accurate.[13]

The volume has not been edited with care. In the overviews that introduce each chapter, eleven selections are not discussed at all, while three others are not explicitly referred to;[14] there is no such overview for the three documents in the appendix, one of which lacks an introductory paragraph (p. 302). Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* is confused with Knighton's chronicle (p. 3 n. 11), Bonaventure is confused with Bradwardine (p. 272 n. 1), and a translation of Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* entitled *Teaching Christianity* is cited five times as "*Translating Christianity*" (pp. 68-69 nn. 32-39). There are

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11   The thematic headings in the introduction are "Wyclif's metaphysics" (ch. 1), "Freedom, necessity and divine omnipotence" (ch. 1), "Scripture and the nature of scriptural truth" (ch. 2), "Lordship, the king and the church" (ch. 5-6), and "The eucharist and the other sacraments" (ch. 3-4). The last two could just have been swapped around, and an even closer match with the chapters (n. 5 above) would have been possible.

12   The misleading term 'foreknown', for instance, recurs throughout the volume (e.g. pp. 44, 125, 143, 153, 251) but is only explained once ("predestined to damnation", p. 170). Even terms that appear less often could usefully have been included in the glossary; 'capitular', for instance, is explained in a footnote on p. 139, but there is no cross-reference when it recurs in the next selection (pp. 142-143), and it is not indexed either.

13   Logical terminology fares particularly badly. The glossary defines a "consequent" as "something that occurs as a consequence of something else", adding that the term is often used "to consider the consequence of a particular premise or assumption" (p. 313); this obscures the simple fact that a *consequens* is the conclusion of an inference or (where the antecedent is hypothesized) the consequent of a conditional, and it does not help that Penn translates '*consequentia*' (inference) as "consequence(s)" (e.g. pp. 38, 51, 236). The entry for "paralogism" defines it as an "argument that was based on false premises, and which was therefore necessarily erroneous" (p. 315); this is very wrong, but in any case the entry is redundant, as Penn correctly translates '*paralogismus*' as "fallacy" (p. 284). The "syllogism", a paradigm case of deduction, was obviously not represented in the *Prior Analytics* as "a form of induction" (p. 319); Penn's attempt to give an example from Wyclif is hampered by a broken cross-reference to selection "20" that is too vague to fix (the most plausible candidate being #22) but in any case the example is not in syllogistic form. As for non-logical terminology, the entry on the "absolute and ordained powers of God" illustrates a side-effect of Penn's decision not to support the glossary with references to the literature: when he says that this famously thirteenth-century distinction "was introduced in the twelfth century" (p. 311), readers with an interest in such things are left to guess whether this is a discovery or a mistake.

14   Selections ##5, 11ii-15, 18-19, 26 and ##21, 34i, 40 respectively.

numerous typos,[15] inaccurate dates,[16] and faulty references,[17] and the index, which was prepared by a professional, is poorly conceived and astonishingly incomplete.[18] Still, these issues could be fixed in a paperback reprint, and they do not preclude Penn's anthology from providing a viable introduction to Wyclif's thought. It remains only to examine the translations that are the volume's *raison d'être*.

Inevitably, there is scope for disagreement about precise choices of terminology, as when Penn translates *sensibilis* as "sensible" (e.g. p. 141) instead of perceptible. Less inevitably, these can shade into mistakes, as when *infidelitates* is translated as "infidelities" (p. 143) instead of heathenisms, and

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15   A selection: "Ann Hudson" for "Anne Hudson" (pp. ix, 2 n. 3, 5 n. 19), *vel* for *sive* (p. xii), *scriptorium* for *scriptorum* (p. 1 n. 1), "Beropols" for "Brepols" (p. 8 n. 28), *Powers* for *Power* (p. 13), "⟨in⟩ the sacrament" (p. 13), "Gillesprieste" for "Gillespie" (p. 16 n. 49), "Tractaus" for "Tractatus" (p. 17 n. 51), *Armenorm* for *Armenorum* (p. 26 n. 68), *Hispaliensis* for *Hispalensis* (p. 63 n. 18), *475* for *1475* (p. 64 n. 19), "Ronald" for "Roland" (p. 65 n. 20), *apprehender* and *comprhendere* for *apprehendere* and *comprehendere* (p. 84 n. 72), "(i)" omitted for selection #27i (p. 172), *Retratactiones* and "Ramsay" for *Retractationes* and "Ramsey" (p. 192 n. 45), *temporales* for *temporalia* (p. 320), "Sacriptural" (p. 324), "Grossetetste" (p. 330), "atomisitic" (p. 334).

16   Seven of the Wyclif editions listed on p. xii are dated incorrectly: 1884 for 1885 (*De Civ. Dom.*), 1885 for 1886, 1884-89 for 1893-99 (3 vols), 1853 for 1863, 1910-11 for 1913, 1885-86 for 1895-96, 1882-83 for 1883. Elsewhere, the worst mistakes are 1828- for 1872-77 (2 vols) (p. xiv) and 1840 for 1946 (p. 90 n. 80).

17   A selection: "3 vols" for "4 vols" (p. xii, *Sermones*); a URL with a Stirling proxy (p. 30 n. 77); "pp. 4-5" for an unpaginated part of a book (p. 100); 653-65 for 653-71 (p. 186); 591-610 for 591-96 (p. 235). A remark about the 1570 edition of Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* is supported with a reference to the 1583 edition (p. 3 n. 9). Some selections are cross-referenced wrongly: 9ii/iii for 9i/ii (p. 9), 11ii/iii for 11i/ii (p. 9), 37 for 38 (p. 10). And there are unhelpfully vague instructions to "consult the relevant section of the Introduction" (p. 54 n. 2), find something "described in the Introduction" (p. 114 n. 11), and "See the discussion in the Introduction" (p. 197 n. 52).

18   Typical examples: there is no entry for Oxford or for university, but there are entries for Balliol, Merton, and Queen's College; there is no entry for crusade, but there is an entry for the Despenser Crusade; there is no entry for law, but there are entries for canon law, civil law, and Gratian; in the entry for Augustine, there is a subentry for *On the Nature of the Good*, but not for any of his other works. Wyclif's own works are scattered throughout the index under translations of their titles, so that his logical works must be sought under O for *On Logic*, C for *Continuation of Logic*, and T for *Third Treatise on Logic*; there is an entry for logic, but it has no overlap with these three, or with the separate entry for Aristotelian logic. As for completeness, two examples should suffice: the entry for Grosseteste omits some pages where he is referred to as "Lincolniensis" (pp. 58, 112, 158); and the entry for Antichrist only points to pp. 117-119 and 276-277, even though he also rears his head on at least pp. 104-105, 122, 142, 154, 198, 200-203, 214, 218, 221-222, 267, 286, 288, 290-293 and 298.

descriptio as "description" (e.g. p. 138) instead of definition.[19] One example of terminological inexactitude is worth pausing over: Penn translates *philocaptus* as "philo-captive", glossing it in a footnote as a "compound coined by Wyclif to describe scholars who, in his opinion, had fallen victim to fashionable philosophical trends that could only hamper their pursuit of knowledge" (p. 194). In fact, *philocaptus* means "love-captive", and it is thought to have been coined, albeit not as a pejorative, by Ramon Llull in the late thirteenth century.[20] Wyclif knew it from the medical context of lovesickness,[21] so an accurate translation would be "besotted" or "infatuated" (with worldly matters, that is, judging by his usage elsewhere).[22]

It is also unfortunate that Penn has not taken the opportunity to correct any of the errors that bedevil the Latin editions. For instance, when Wyclif's views on scriptural truth were apparently faced with the objection that "any

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19   This problem is particularly acute in a passage from the *De dominio divino* where Wyclif defines *dominium* and *servicium* (pp. 229-232). After explaining the precise wording of his definition of lordship, for instance, he says *"patet tota descripcio"*, which Penn translates as "this is the whole picture" (p. 230).

20   For a history of the term, see F. Gabriel, "Philocaptus," in *Mots médiévaux offerts à Ruedi Imbach*, ed. I. Atucha, D. Calma, C. König-Pralong, and I. Zavattero (Porto, 2011), 535-545.

21   Witness the *De mandatis divinis*, 238, where Wyclif elaborates on Innocent III's depiction of the newborn as clothed in "a revolting blood-stained membrane" by noting that the blood is menstrual and that *cum tali panno ex eius abhominacione amor hereos fugatur a philocapto secundum ingenia medicorum* (with such a cloth, via disgust for it, lovesickness is driven from the besotted man following the ingenuity of the doctors). Witness also Wyclif's psychological account of infatuation in *De ente predicamentali*, ed. R. Beer (London, 1901), 115: *nisi moveatur ... a forti impressione sensibilis in sensu interiori, ut patet de philocaptis, qui quasi †inniti* [*recte inviti*] *necessitantur ad cogitandum vigilando et dormiendo de sensibilibus quibus afficiuntur* (unless he is moved by a strong impression of something perceptible in his internal sense, as is clear from the besotted, who are compelled, as if unwillingly, to think in their waking and sleeping hours of the perceptible things to which they are devoted).

22   Wyclif's explicit associations of *philocapti* with *mundana*, *temporalia*, and *seculum* are easy enough to find. A weaker association might also be made with the *philocosmi* (world-lovers): "in carne apparuit ut vita et verbo erudiret †philocosinos [*recte* philocosmos] impietatem et secularia desideria abnegare": *De condemnatione xix conclusionum*, in *Fasciculi zizaniorum*, ed. W. Shirley (London, 1858), 488; cf. *De veritate sacre scripture*, vol. III, ed. R. Buddensieg (London, 1907), 225. Wyclif knew the *philocosmi* from the non-authorial preface to John Damascene's *Source of Knowledge*; his testimony supports the consensus that the preface and the work itself were translated by Grosseteste: "in sermone qui intitulatur De †philocofinis et philoreis [*recte* philocosmis et philotheis], id est amatoribus mundi et Dei, qui sermo premittitur ut prologus libris Johannis Damasceni, quem eciam cum illis transtulit Lincolniensis": *De civili dominio*, vol. III, ed. J. Loserth (London, 1903), 98; cf. 151. The preface is printed in *Sancti patris Ioannis Damasceni opera*, ed. H. Gravius (Cologne, 1546), 1-6 (cf. esp. 1-2).

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scriptural proposition would have to be accepted, however sinfully spoken" (p. 80), the last phrase should have raised an eyebrow, and a little sleuthing might have exposed the unattested adverb '*recidive*' as an error for '*recitative*' (in reported speech). Again, when Wyclif apparently claimed that it was "not an act but a defect that redeems sins" (p. 112), this should have raised both eyebrows, and a glance at the apparatus would have exposed '*peccata redemit*' as an error for '*peccata redeunt*' (sins return). An especially glaring example has Wyclif making the outrageous claim that "everything that is absolutely necessary is contingent" (p. 43); here it turns out that the manuscript used by the editor had omitted '*non*' before '*absolute*'.[23] It might be protested that editorial questions are beyond the translator's remit; for reasons that should become clear, my own view is that Wyclif must always be approached with daggers drawn, but I might add that John Kilcullen's translation of part of the *De civili dominio* provides numerous corrections to the 1885 edition, mostly from collation against two manuscripts, and that Penn has ignored these as well.[24]

Still, to linger on such niceties would be to fuss over the arrangement of the deckchairs on the Titanic. The looming catastrophe is that Penn's translations are full of unforced errors that are collectively fatal to the enterprise. This is a serious charge, and it will therefore require more documentation than is customary for a review. I will start with a paragraph each on the four kinds of error that have driven me to this unhappy conclusion.

Firstly, Penn's translations are vitiated by failures to identify the scholastic terminology that Wyclif "scatters liberally throughout his writings" (p. 33). For instance, '*simpliciter*' (without qualification) is sometimes omitted (pp. 36, 235, 259-260) but otherwise receives a mishmash of translations, most of which are not opposable to '*secundum quid*' (in a certain respect); thus e.g. "in a simple way" (p. 75), "wholly", "completely" (p. 112), "alone" (p. 196), "directly" (p. 224), "in simple terms" (pp. 236, 241, 258), "in any simple sense", "naturally" (p. 238), and even "implicitly" (p. 260). The *contingens ad utrumlibet* is not "contingent on either of these two" (p. 43) but contingent either way. The putative *locus a testimonio Aristotelis* is not "a passage from the work of Aristotle" (p. 68) but a maxim licensing an argument from the testimony of Aristotle. *Philosophia sermocinalis* is not "philosophy of preaching" (p. 70) but the philosophy of language, i.e. the trivium of grammar, logic, and rhetoric; *philosophia realis* is

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23 Wyclif, *Tractatus de logica*, vol. III, ed. M. Dziewicki (London, 1899), 169: "omne necessarium ⟨non⟩ absolute est contingens ad utrumlibet." Predictably, this passage (167-170) is full of errors, with '*partes*' for '*tempus*', '*applicacio*' for '*ampliacio*', '*omnes*' for '*eius*', and '*unit*' for '*finit*' (among others) all in the first paragraph.

24 Penn's first extract from the *De civili dominio* (pp. 234-241) corresponds to pp. 591-596 of Kilcullen's more accurate translation (cit. n. 2 above); the emendations are on p. 650.

not "practical philosophy" (*ibid.*) but the philosophy of reality, which includes mathematics, physics, and metaphysics. In a disputation, someone who is *red-argutus* is not "rejected" (p. 80) but refuted, and a proposition that is *proposita* is not "cited" (*ibid.*) but proposed. A *propositio copulativa* is not a "copulative proposition", i.e. "one in which a subject and predicate are linked by a copula" (pp. 86-87), but a conjunction. When grammar teaches us the *quid nominis* of terms, we learn not their "names" (p. 92) but their meanings. When the popes *concludebant* their authority from the life of Peter, they did not "close [it] off" (p. 198), they inferred it. And so on.

Secondly, the translations play havoc with the structural devices that are crucial to scholastic prose. For instance, reason-giving '*enim*' and '*nam*' (for) are often omitted or mistranslated as "now" or "indeed" (and even, on p. 43, "paradoxically, therefore"). '*Sed*' and '*autem*' (but), marking the minor premiss, are generally ignored. '*Ergo*', '*igitur*', and '*ideo*' (therefore) are mistranslated as "now" (pp. 40, 51), "and" (pp. 142, 194), "nevertheless" (p. 80) and "indeed" (p. 141); '*cum*' (although) is mistranslated as "whenever" (p. 44); '*cum*' (since) as "indeed" (p. 80); '*tamen*' (nevertheless) as "therefore" (p. 198); '*nec*' (nor) as "accordingly" (p. 271). Bullet-point '*item*' (also), announcing the next argument in a series, is often mistranslated as "now" or "indeed", and once as "so" (p. 43). When '*principaliter*' modifies an adverb like '*secundo*' to indicate a first-level numbering of arguments, it is mistranslated as modifying the verb (pp. 104, 237, 270). '*Per idem*' (by the same token), appealing to a parallel argument, is often omitted or disguised as "in the same way" (e.g. p. 241). A parallel is ruined when '*illud secundum est necessarium … ergo et primum*' (the second is necessary, therefore so is the first) is glossed as "the second is necessary … therefore, the first also [applies]" (p. 43). Forward-looking '*ad hoc quod*' (in order for it to be the case that) is mistranslated as "to whatever" (p. 264). A double error allows '*arguitur ad idem per hoc quod*' (the same conclusion is argued for on the grounds that) to become "it is argued on this same point that" (p. 200). Wyclif's standard closing formula '*Et tantum* [*sufficiat*/*dixerim*] *de*' (and this much about) goes unrecognized, so that '*tantum de morali disposicione affectum subiecti nostre sciencie disponente*' (so much for the moral disposition that inclines the mood of its subject to our science) comes out as "only a sufficiently moral disposition inclines our mood towards knowledge" (p. 91). The regimented word order that underpins scholastic logic is ignored, so that '*alicuius hominis non omnis filius*' (of some man not every son) comes out as "not every son of man" (p. 44). And so on.

Thirdly, the translations are shot through with misinterpretations of ordinary Latin words. What is in Peter's power is not to "claim" that the heavens were the remote cause of his free action (p. 40) but to *make* it so (*facere*). The

mystical sense of scripture is not "literal to the highest degree" (p. 69) but *most often* the literal sense (*ut plurimum*).[25] Important points of metaphysics are not "judged to be sophisms of absences" (p. 79) but *nowadays* judged to be sophisms (*impresenciarum*). Colours are misjudged not by a "hysterical person" (p. 91) but by a *jaundiced* person (*hictericus*). Logic can solve not "debates concerning the presence of God" (p. 93) but *puzzles* about his *foreknowledge* (*dubia*, *presciencia*). The pope regards the theologian not as "an unwieldy character" (p. 103) but as *unqualified to* hold office in the church militant (*inhabilis ut*). When absolution is commercialized, the faithful should not "wipe away" avarice (p. 126) but *expose* it (*detegere*). Unspoken contracts are made by not deaf people and "others" (p. 141) but deaf people and *dumb* people (*muti*). The quantity and quiddity of the church are not things we generally "ignore" (p. 143) but things we generally *are ignorant of* (*ignoramus*). Judges go wrong not "whether they make" judgements about predestinates or devils (p. 143) but *as if they were making* such judgements (*ac si judicarent*). If the clergy concealed the truth about the eucharist, heresy would sully not an "impressionable Christian" (p. 150) but a *perfectly teachable* one (*valde disciplinabilis*). Wyclif defends his position on the eucharist not because Grosseteste "raises objections" (p. 164) but because *it is argued by appeal to* Grosseteste (*arguitur per*).[26] Faced with doctors who seem to think otherwise, Wyclif concludes not that they can be "interpret[ed] as specious" (p. 168) but that they can be *glossed*, i.e. interpreted so as to remove the difficulty (*glozari*). The ideal of poverty was recognized by Ockham, Bonaventure, and other friars not "by the glory of the Lord" (p. 212) but *worthy of praise* (*laude digni*). And so on.

Fourthly, the translations are riddled with misconstruals of Latin syntax. For instance, after noting that Jews are in a sense sons of Abraham, Wyclif apparently adds that "as the apostle said, we, together with those following our [Christian] customs, are sons and imitators of Abraham" (p. 44); but the Latin is '*eciam nos sequentes ipsos in moribus, ut dicit Apostolus, sumus filii Abrahe imitatorii*' (we too, following them in customs, are, as the Apostle says, "sons

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25   In Ian Levy's *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, which exhibits the same defects to a less alarming degree, this phrase is mistranslated differently: the mystical sense "belongs to the fullness of" the literal sense (cit. n. 2 above, p. 43). Wyclif is actually just saying that the literal sense of scripture *usually* goes beyond the merely grammatical sense (cf. n. 51 below).

26   This mistake distorts the whole chapter, where, according to Penn's summary, Wyclif "argues that Grosseteste wilfully misinterprets [Ambrose and Augustine] in relation to the question of real presence" (p. 163). If his bones had not been disinterred and burned – by a bishop of Lincoln, of all people – Wyclif would have been turning in his grave at this misreading of his reverential treatment of his intellectual hero.

of Abraham", imitative ones).²⁷ Arguing against the authority of the pope, Wyclif apparently suggests that "that fiction, imitating the devil, is established" (p. 198); but the Latin is '*ista simulata ficcio in dyabolo est fundata*' (this simulated fiction is founded on the devil). Dismissing the metaphysical reduction of lordship to its individual *relata*, Wyclif apparently says: "Nor should we even entertain the laboured reasoning of slick logicians in relation to this question" (p. 231); but the Latin is '*nec est difficile argucias ad hoc nitencium statim tollere*' (nor is it hard to immediately demolish the stratagems of those who strive to do this). Lamenting the state of his country, Wyclif apparently pauses to reassure us that "The kingdom of England is blind to such worldly prosperity and love of the name of the world" (p. 295); but the Latin is '*Ad tantum enim mundana prosperitas et nominis temporalis cupiditas regnum Anglie excecavit*' (for this is how far worldly prosperity and desire for temporal renown have blinded the kingdom of England).²⁸ For that matter, Wyclif has also just accused Englishmen of being "blinded to such an extent that" (*adeo excecati quod*) they believe that the church prevails against God's law; here Penn has him saying they have become blind "because" they believe this (p. 295).²⁹ And so on.

These kinds of errors are often found in combination. To take a simple example, Jesus's famous aphorism that "many are called, but few are chosen" (*multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi*) is jaw-droppingly mistranslated as "many of the elect are called poor" (p. 292). Naturally, matters do not improve when the prose is more complex. For instance, in his inaugural lecture as a master of theology, Wyclif makes the revealing claim that logic is useful *cum ipsa detegit veritates inertibus absconditas, dilucidat universales substancias plebeis incognitas, et extendit presenciam successivorum et per consequens permanencium extra instans* (because it reveals truths hidden from the unskilled, elucidates universal substances unknown to common people, and extends the presentness of successive entities and thus of permanent entities beyond the [present] instant).

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27   Penn does not identify the reference, presumably to Galatians 3:7 (but cf. Romans 4): *qui ex fide sunt, ii sunt filii Abrahae*. See also Wyclif's *Postilla* on Lamentations 5:7: *Judei sunt filii Abrahe carnales, sicut nos filii imitatorii in fide vel spirituales*: G. Benrath, *Wyclifs Bibelkommentar* (Berlin, 1966), 62 n. 144.

28   Eagle-eyed readers will have spotted that '*excecavit*' is singular. This needn't preclude a compound subject, but I suspect that the subject is just '*cupiditas*' and that '*mundana prosperitas*' is an error (perhaps archetypal) for '*mundane prosperitatis*'; cf. Wyclif, *Sermones*, ed. J. Loserth, vol. III (London, 1889), 367: "cupiditatem prosperitatis mundane".

29   Actually, Penn has Wyclif saying that Englishmen believe that *they* prevail against God's law. In this, he is just following the text of the *De demonio meridiano* printed by Rudolf Buddensieg, who characteristically chose an erroneous reading in his base manuscript (*activam*) over the correct one in his three other MSS (*ecclesiam*): *John Wiclif's Polemical Works*, ed. R. Buddensieg, vol. II (London, 1883), 419.

Penn's translation omits the opening conjunction, stumbles over the technical term '*successivum*', misconstrues the syntax twice, and silently adopts a conjecture from Smalley's edition (*in visceribus nature*) that was corrected in Benrath's edition (*inertibus*):[30] "It reveals truths hidden in the bowels of nature, explains unperceived universal natures to the common people, and extends the presence of successive instants. It thereby extends the presence of those permanent things beyond instants" (p. 93).[31]

Sentence by sentence, these errors conspire to make Wyclif unintelligible. Take, for instance, the opening paragraph of the *De ecclesia*, where he tries to motivate the treatise. In the first half of the paragraph, Penn has him claiming irrelevantly that "among all the metaphysical systems [*metaphysicas*] under the orbit of the sun, none is held to be more necessary than the Christian one [*non reputo quod sit alia christiano necessarior*]" (p. 173). The major error here is an untenable construal of the syntax, Wyclif's claim being instead that the metaphysics of the church is more necessary *for a Christian* than any other metaphysics under the sun. His argument for this claim is itself subjected to at least ten further errors; he ends it, for instance, with the observation that both the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed contain professions of belief in the Catholic church ('*credo ecclesiam catholicam*' *dicit utrumque simbolum*), which Penn translates as: "the words 'I believe in the Catholic church' represent a symbol everywhere!" (p. 173). Errors continue to plague the second half of the paragraph, where Wyclif gives a separate argument (not identified as such in the translation) as to why it should please the bishops that a treatment should be given of the Christian belief on the quiddity of the church (*quod tractetur fides christiana de quiditate ecclesie*) – or, as Penn mystifyingly has it, "that the Christian faith is drawn from the quiddity of the church" (p. 173).

Finally, as an illustration of the broader pitfalls that await the reader, take the concluding paragraph of Wyclif's argument against the presiding authority

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30   Beryl Smalley misread '*inertibus*' as '*in crtibus*' and conjectured (on the basis of subsequent remarks about the usefulness of natural philosophy) that this was a corruption of '*in visceribus nature*': "Wyclif's *Postilla* on the Old Testament and his *Principium*," in *Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus* (Oxford, 1964), 253-296, at 291. This would have been implausible enough without Gustav Benrath's correction of the reading (*Wyclifs Bibelkommentar*, 341); and cf. e.g. Wyclif, *De civili dominio*, vol. 1, ed. R. Poole (London, 1885), 59: "legem Dei cum veritatibus stultis in ea absconditis".

31   Elsewhere, Wyclif apparently professes himself unable to "deny that successive instants [exist] together" (p. 42); here the Latin is '*negare huiusmodi successiva*' (to deny such successive entities). Successive entities are things that cannot exist all at once but only over an interval, e.g. periods of time, changes, spoken words; permanent entities are things that do exist all at once, e.g. regions of space, lines, thoughts. A useful reference would have been Robert Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671* (Oxford, 2011), ch. 18.

of the papacy in his late work *De Christo et suo adversario Antichristo*. Here he has just said that hardly anyone dares to speak the gospel truth in this matter for fear of punishment. And now Penn has him saying: "I protest that nobody saying these things, if he was taught or if any viator knew how to teach, that that sentence is contrary to the faith of scripture or to reason, would wish humbly to revoke it" (p. 198). Charitably parsed, this amounts to a stubborn assertion that his conviction is unshakeable. And yet Wyclif's own words say quite the opposite: "but the person asserting these things solemnly declares that if he is taught, or if any earthly pilgrim can teach him, that this opinion is contrary to the authority of scripture or to reason, he wishes to humbly retract it" (*persona tamen hec asserens protestatur quod si docta fuerit, vel aliquis viancium docere sciverit, quod ista sentencia sit fidei scripture vel racioni contraria, vult ipsam humiliter revocare*). This is, in fact, a familiar kind of proviso, highlighted as a *protestatio* in the margins of some of the manuscripts; it is easy to find similar declarations elsewhere in Wyclif's works.[32]

Anyone with reading competence in Latin will be able to add to my examples by opening the book at random.[33] The upshot is that, throughout the volume, Penn's translations manage at best to obscure Wyclif's thought and at worst to make a nonsense of it. The rot goes so deep that it would be a pedagogical crime to inflict this material on students. It is worrying enough that "scholars in the field" (as the blurb has it) might consult the index to find out what Wyclif thought about, say, tithes, in which case they will read that "priests could easily do without temporal lordship and tithes and gifts, which is part of

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32   E.g. Wyclif, *Sermones*, vol. III, 37: "protestor quod si ipse [sc. dictus frater] vel alius docere voluerit, vel racione vel scriptura, quod quecunque sentencia quam ego detego sit falsa vel ad edificacionem ecclesie non dicenda, volo paratissime ipsam revocare"; *ibid.*, 254: "Ego autem protestor, sicut sepe confessus sum, quod si quidquam scripsero vel dixero in quacunque sciencia quod non sit fundabile in scriptura, illud dolenter revoco, confitens quod sepe erraveram, et rogo ut ecclesia illud habeat ut errorem."

33   Here are six test cases from a chapter on marriage (pp. 137-139): "disagreement or even murder between men, together with many other inappropriate things that philosophers believe emerge from nature" (*hominum contentio atque occisio cum multis aliis inconvenientiis quas vident philosophi naturales*); "Two men would thus become married when they were affectionately united to their wives as spouses" (*et sic duo viri uxorati et caritative sociati ex hoc contraherent conjugium*); "the base acts of the adulterer exist falsely under the cloak of matrimony" (*tales permanent graves adulteri ex falsa palliatione matrimonii*); "The conversion of virgins … must therefore be blessed" (*ideo benedicta sit conversatio virginum*); "the human proscription that says that love between people is forbidden not only by kinship but also by affinity" (*humana ordinatio quae dicit non solum ex cognatione sed ex affinitate amorem inter homines dilatari*); "since each partner combines with the other to produce offspring" (*cum utrique conveniat prolem producere*).

what satisfies the Lord" (p. 269).[34] But some scholars, at least, will be able to spot howlers of this magnitude, whereas students are guaranteed to take them on trust. And as Wyclif himself warned, "a rotten foundation gives rise to many baseless conclusions".[35]

2   Lahey's *Trialogus*

In view of this disappointment, the obvious fallback for anyone wanting an introduction to Wyclif's thought is Stephen Lahey's translation of the *Trialogus*. This is a more sparsely annotated volume – on average, there is barely more than one footnote for every three pages of translation, with readers left on their own for tens of pages at a time (e.g. pp. 156-186, 217-242) – and the help that is provided is underwhelming, not least when it comes to references,[36] cross-references,[37] and notes on vocabulary.[38] Moreover, the introduction

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34   From Wyclif's letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury: *sacerdotes et levite debent carere dominio temporali et de decimis et oblacionibus que est pars Domini contentari* (priests and deacons should do without temporal lordship and be satisfied with the tithes and gifts that are the Lord's share); cf. e.g. Numbers 18:23-24.

35   Wyclif, *Sermones*, vol. III, 446: "fundamentum putridum gignit multas vanas sentencias consequenter". Wyclif rarely talks about rotten foundations as such (e.g. *ibid.*, 264: "Supponunt ... fundamentum nimis putridum inficiens facta sua") but he frequently warns of the dangers of a weak (*debile*) rather than firm (*stabile*) foundation.

36   In n. 21 on p. 63, Lahey cites a non-existent article of his own: "God's Knowledge of Privatives: Wyclif's *De Ideis* and his Theory of Insolubles," allegedly in "*The Modern Schoolman*, 2010"; the reference should be to his "Of Divine Ideas and Insolubles: Wyclif's Explanation of God's Understanding of Sin," *TMS* 86 (2009), 211-232. Other puzzles are easier to solve: "*Ecologa Theoduli*" (p. 3 n. 5), "*Summa Logica*" (p. 73 n. 5), "*Timae Plato*" (p. 79 n. 8), "*Philobiblion*" (p. 147 n. 3), "*De Materia et Forma in Miscellenea Philosophia* vol. 1" (p. 194 n. 9). Few readers are likely to benefit from a note that just says "Decreti II, caus.33, q.5, c.20, lib.II Sententiarum Isidori" (p. 245 n. 7) or "Robert Grosseteste, dicta 135, p. 110 ra; see www.grosseteste.com/index.htm" (p. 267 n. 17; it is not Lahey's fault, of course, that since 2017 the URL has pointed to a website selling penis pumps).

37   Cross-references are vanishingly rare. The one on p. 312 to "note 24" is erroneous; n. 33 is meant. The one on p. 349 to "p. 243 n. 5" should really have referred to p. 287, and so should n. 5 on p. 243. "Armachanus" is identified as FitzRalph parenthetically on p. 135 and in a more helpful footnote on p. 296, but not on p. 227.

38   On p. 278, explaining his use of the nonce-word 'illiberate' to translate '*illiberant*' (his typo for *illibertant*), Lahey ignores the three previous occurrences of the verb, which he translated as "compel" (pp. 183, 185; cf. "keep in bondage", p. 339); he notes the verb's absence from Latham's *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List* (1965), but not its coverage in the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, fasc. V (1997); its adoption by Jan Hus and Jean Gerson would also have been worth noting. On p. 292, noting that 'victuals' is his translation of "Wyclif's word ... '*vesciblia*'" (Lahey's typo for *vescibilia*), he ignores the

(pp. 1-37) is marred by wild speculation about the purpose of the *Trialogus*[39] and the significance of its characters,[40] and by factual errors concerning early modern historiography[41] and the transmission of the *Trialogus* in

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previous occurrences of the noun, which he translated variously as "food(s)", "foodstuffs", "comestibles", and "eating" (pp. 163-164). And on p. 346, referring to the medieval Latin '*spongiositatibus*' in a passage that I discuss at n. 63 below, he claims that "OED marks first English usage as 1400"; in fact, 'spongiosity' is first attested in the OED in around 1541, and 'spongy' (Lahey's translation) in 1539; the date of 1400 may have been taken from the entry for 'spongious' (from the Classical Latin *spongiosus*).

39   Lahey believes that the *Trialogus* forms part of Wyclif's "plans for an evangelical crusade" to be carried out by an anti-fraternal cadre of poor preachers, plans "cloaked in the form of respectable theology" (pp. 14-17). The uncloaking proceeds via an argument that may be summarized as follows: (1) given Wyclif's "remarkable" admiration for Aquinas, it would be "logical" for his plans to follow the tripartite (albeit unfinished) schema of Aquinas's *Compendium Theologie*: faith and the creed, hope and the Lord's prayer, love and the law; (2) in the *Floretum* and the *Rosarium*, Lollard pastoral florilegia compiled after Wyclif's death, the four most cited of his works are the *Sermones*, the *Trialogus*, the *Opus evangelicum*, and the *De mandatis divinis*; (3) in these four works we may discern a "hypothetical structure" that fits the tripartite schema: faith is "effectively covered" by the *Trialogus*, and the creed by two of his 245-odd sermons; the Lord's prayer is discussed in one sermon, two of the 30 chapters of the *De mandatis divinis*, 14 of the 210 chapters of the *Opus evangelicum*, and the *De oratione dominica*; and love and the law are discussed in the *De mandatis divinis* and the *Opus evangelicum*. Not only is this a poor argument, it also relies on a premiss known to be false. The 185-odd Wyclif quotations in the *Floretum* include over 80 from the *Sermones*, over 70 from the *De mandatis divinis*, and over 20 from the *Opus evangelicum*, but not one from the *Trialogus*, while those in the *Rosarium* include just one from the *Trialogus* (on the three types of deficiency in faith, p. 117); for details, see C. von Nolcken, "Notes on Lollard Citation of John Wyclif's Writings," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 39 (1988), 433-437, though the near-absence of the *Trialogus* from these florilegia is equally evident from the pioneering surveys by Anne Hudson that Lahey cites in support of his claim.

40   Lahey claims that Pseustis, Wyclif's captious objector, "is a friar" (p. 3). There is no evidence for this in the text, whose silence on the point would be odd given how often the other characters complain about the friars. He then uses this claim to join the dots between Wyclif's Pseustis and the Athenian goatherd of the same name (misgendered as a "maiden") who "represents the pagan mythos" in the *Eclogue* of Theodulus: since "many" friars used classical images in their sermons, maybe Wyclif "intended the reader … to be on the alert for opponents likely to trot out pagan myths if given half the chance" (p. 4). This, too, will require some brave hermeneutics; besides a few unremarkable references to Plato and Aristotle, Wyclif's Pseustis makes only one classical reference, which is to the Trojan War as an example of a historical event (p. 172).

41   Lahey claims that John Bale "named [Wyclif] 'morning star of the Reformation'" (p. 25). In fact, although Bale wrote in 1548 that Wyclif "shone out as the morning star in the midst of a cloud" (*illuxit enim ut stella matutina in medio nebulae*), the label 'morning star of the Reformation' is not known to have been used before the eighteenth century, as Margaret Aston established in the 1965 article that Lahey cites in support of his claim. Aston's *terminus ante quem* of 1732 may now be pushed back a little: William King, *Miscellanies in Prose*

manuscripts[42] and in printed editions.[43] From a textual point of view, one misapprehension is particularly worrying. According to Lahey, the nineteenth-century critical edition of the *Trialogus* "frequently suggests the optimal reading of a word or phrase when the [variant readings] might lead to confusion" (pp. 29-30). This puzzling remark is explained by a later footnote: "Text has *regitivam*, editor prefers *vegetivam*, which I translate" (p. 84). That is, in the 2400-odd places where the editor had recorded a rejected reading from the *editio princeps* in the apparatus and marked it with "ed. pr.", Lahey took this to mean "editor prefers".[44] And although '*vegetivam*' is the only error that he admits to resurrecting in this way, I have noticed a few others in passing, so this may be just the tip of the iceberg.[45]

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and Verse (London [1709]), preface: "The *Reflections* on *Varillas* his Account of *Wicliff* contains some Memoirs of that Great Man, who was as it were the Morning-Star of the Reformation."

42 Firstly, Lahey claims that one of the eight manuscripts that transmit the *Trialogus* is "a *registrum* used by the English Hussite Peter Payne in Prague" (p. 29). In fact, this *registrum*, MS Prague NK X.E.11, is not one of the eight witnesses; Lahey has confused it with MS Prague KMK O.29. It is also at best a fudge to say that Payne "used" an index that is explicitly ascribed to him (on which cf. A. Hudson, "*Accessus ad auctorem*: The Case of John Wyclif," *Viator* 30 [1999], 323-344, at 333-337). Secondly, Lahey claims that MS Vienna ÖNB 4516 "only contains *Trialogus*" (p. 30). In fact, the *Trialogus* begins on f. 88r, and it is preceded by Marsilius of Padua's *Defensor pacis* in a copy whose Wycliffite connections are incidentally evident from the rubricated annotations (e.g. f. 66r, "*Electionis potior modus per satrapas est diminutus*"; cf. n. 58 below). Thirdly, Lahey claims that MS Florence BML Plut. XIX 33, not used in the editions, "is likely to be the nearest to an autograph we are likely to find" (p. 30). He gives no evidence for this, though it may be related to his naive claim that the chapter divisions must be "later introductions" because they are absent from the Florence manuscript (p. 106 n. 26). Nor can I see any evidence to support his vague claim that he "made use of this manuscript in this translation"; on the contrary, cf. nn. 45, 50, 52 and 53 below.

43 Lahey claims that the 1753 edition of the *Trialogus* was edited "from a different manuscript" than the *editio princeps*, a manuscript "likely to have been lost" (pp. 28-29). In fact, the 1753 edition is a literal but delinquent reprint of the *editio princeps* of 1525, as Gotthard Lechler caustically demonstrated in the critical edition: G. Lechler, ed., *Joannis Wiclif Trialogus cum supplemento Trialogi* (Oxford, 1869), 19-20.

44 The abbreviation 'ed. pr.' sometimes stands for *editio prior*, but usually for *editio princeps*; "editor prefers" is Lahey's invention. In Lechler's edition (cit. n. 43 above) the apparatus to the prologue shows that *editio princeps* is meant. Lechler himself denied the admissibility of the 1525 edition as a witness in its own right ("*Hac in re editio princeps nullius omnino ponderis esse poterat*", p. 28), but cf. n. 52 below.

45 In a phrase that I discuss at n. 48 below, Lahey (p. 80) has 'intellective' where the *editio princeps* had '*intellectivis*' and Lechler (p. 88) correctly had '*intensivis*'. In a paragraph that I discuss on p. 376 below, Lahey (p. 67) has 'understandability' where the *editio princeps* had '*intelligibilitatis*' and Lechler (p. 72) correctly had '*intellectivitatis*'. And in a passage on sense perception and the eucharist, Lahey (p. 207) has Wyclif claiming that mice have knowledge "*innate to them* about the substance ⟨of the⟩ bread" where the *editio princeps*

Nevertheless, my main concern is with the translation itself. Bearing in mind my criticisms of Penn's anthology, it is only fair to say upfront that Lahey's *Trialogus* is even worse: here we find the same kinds of mistakes, but they are more frequent and more flagrant. Lahey might have expected a free pass on scholastic terminology, because he reassures us that Wyclif mostly "leaves the technical terminology behind" (p. 36). But this claim is belied by the fact that even the workaday scholastic term '*instantia*' (objection) and its companion '*tollere*' (to dispose of, demolish) are repeatedly mistranslated, e.g. "this is the way to take the sophists' arguments" (*sic tollitur instantia sophistarum*, p. 42); "the sophists would take up every one of these instances" (*sophistae tollerent omnes istas instantias*, p. 93);[46] "To the third instance, having touched it widely when I was a logician, I raise it now" (*Ad tertiam instantiam, tollebam eam diffuse quando fui logicus et nunc tollo eandem*, p. 127); "that I … take your issues seriously" (*ut … tollam tuas instantias*, p. 186); "in taking on this case" (*ad tollendum tuas instantias*, p. 187);[47] "we should address a sophistic problem" (*tollamus instantiam sophisticam*, p. 355). Occasionally, '*instantia*' even becomes "instant", e.g. in the bizarre claim that a certain argument "scampers under the same in a trifling instant" (*currit sub eadem instantia frivola*, p. 161). Conversely, '*illae quandalitates non sunt instantia*' (these whennesses are not instants) is misread as involving *instantiae*: "there are not instances of these whennesses" (p. 75). Unsurprisingly, '*instantia*' is not the only scholastic term that has been lost in translation; to take a more technical example, '*partes intensive*' (intensive parts) is translated as "intensity" (p. 114) and, resurrecting an error from the *editio princeps*, as "intellective [ideal, non-substantial] parts" (p. 80).[48]

Let's rewind to the first half of the prologue, where Wyclif justifies his use of the dialogue form: *Cum locutio ad personam multis plus complacet quam locutio generalis* (since personal discourse is more agreeable to many people

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had '*sibi innatam*' and Lechler (p. 260) correctly had '*servatam*' (retained); here the significant error shared by Lechler's MSS ABC is also shared by MS Vienna ÖNB 4516 (f. 165v) but not by the Florence manuscript (cit. n. 42 above, f. 119v).

46 Here Pseustis is accusing Phronesis of giving a treatment of immortality that even an undergraduate could demolish, *ac si dormiens vel a peritis absconditus loqueretur* (as if talking while asleep or out of earshot of experts). Lahey renders this as "spoken as if asleep or unmindful of experience" (p. 93).

47 After this sentence – in which, incidentally, '*ac si intenderetur*' (as if it were meant) is translated as "and if it might have been spread" – Lahey inexplicably omits over 630 words of the text (ed. Lechler, 231-234).

48 See my remarks at nn. 44-45 above. In both passages, Lahey's failure to identify '*partes intensive*' as a technical term obscures a piece of Wyclif's intellectual autobiography; cf. the notes on his *Physics* commentary in the last few pages of M. Thakkar, "Wyclif, The Black Sheep of the Oxford Calculators," in *Quantifying Aristotle. The Impact, Spread and Decline of the* Calculatores *Tradition*, ed. D. Di Liscia and E. Sylla (Leiden, in press).

than impersonal discourse), *et mens multorum qui afficiuntur singularibus ex tali locutione acuitur* (and the mind of the many who are fond of singulars is sharpened by such discourse), *videri posset multis utilis quidam trialogus* (a certain trialogue could seem useful to many people). Lahey's translation reads (p. 38): "It is more pleasing to speak to an audience of many people who desire more than common talk, and it is more influential to the minds of all those who need more than a single voice, whose minds are sharpened by dialogue; so it is suitable to make use of a 'Trialogue'." From this half-sentence alone, it is clear that we are in for an extremely bumpy ride. We may as well finish the prologue, since the second half provides the *dramatis personae*: *ubi primo tanquam Alithia solidus philosophus loqueretur, secundo infidelis captiosus tanquam Pseustis objiceret, et tertio subtilis theologus et maturus tanquam Phronesis decideret veritatem* (in which firstly a solid philosopher would speak as Alathia [Truth],[49] secondly a captious unbeliever would object as Pseustis [Liar], and thirdly a subtle and mature theologian would determine the truth as Phronesis [Wisdom]). Here Lahey's translation is wobbly but not bizarre (p. 38): "where first one named Alithia speaks solid philosophy, then a second fallacious unbeliever named Pseustis makes objections, and a third subtle and mature theologian named Phronesis leads the discussion to the truth."

Matters deteriorate at the start of Book I. Alathia argues that everyone should believe that God exists: we must concede that *something* exists, on pain of instant self-refutation, and a first-cause argument will then demonstrate the existence of God. This opening speech receives another wobbly translation,[50] but we are back in the realm of the bizarre when Pseustis gives his three objections. The first is that it is not formally self-contradictory for nothing to exist, because *ex nulla negativa sequatur formaliter affirmativa* (no negative

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49   Lechler noted (p. 38) that his four manuscripts had '*Alathia*' throughout; since the same is true of both the Florence manuscript (cit. n. 42 above) and the Vienna manuscript unknown to Lechler (ÖNB 4516), the '*Alithia*' of the printed editions seems a heavy-handed intervention. A more interesting textual question concerns Alathia's characterization. Lechler found it obvious (p. 7) that Alathia could not be differentiated from Phronesis (the *subtilis theologus et maturus*) unless his MS D was right to call Alathia a *solidus philosophus*, as against the *solidus theologus* of his MSS ABC. The fact that the latter camp also includes the copies unknown to Lechler (Florence f. 57v, Vienna f. 88r) should at least give us pause for thought, especially as Alathia clearly has *some* theological training rather than being a mere philosopher. A philologically informed critical edition from all the known witnesses might shed some light on the matter; readers of this review may be interested to note Lahey's stated hope of producing such an edition (p. 30).

50   It does not help that Lechler's edition (p. 39) wobbled here as well. In '*illud vel est finitum vel infinitum, sive sic, sive sic; vel illud vel causa illius est Deus*', the semicolon belongs after '*infinitum*'. A less obvious error is confirmed by the Florence manuscript (f. 57v): for '*quia si aliquid est*', read '*Quod si aliquid est*'.

proposition formally entails an affirmative proposition); or, as Lahey has it, "an affirmative can follow formally from a nothing." The second is that *stat veritatem esse cum hoc quod non sit aliquid, cum veritas potest esse quod nihil sit, et tunc non est aliquid* (it is possible for there to be a truth even if there is not anything, because it may be a truth that nothing exists, in which case there is not anything); or, as Lahey has it, "this truth – this, which is not a something, truly can be – holds with this – this is a nothing; and so it is not a something." And in the third objection, Pseustis illustrates the possibility of infinite causal chains by observing that *diviso lumine in suas partes proportionales, minores versus luminosum, prima pars proportionalis causatur a secunda, et sic in infinitum* (if light is divided into its proportional parts [e.g. half, quarter, etc.], decreasing in the direction of its source, the first proportional part is caused by the second, and so *ad infinitum*); or, as Lahey has it, "one might divide light into its proportionately lesser parts, as against luminosity, the first part is proportionately caused by the second, and thus infinitely". Phronesis' reply is likewise garbled from start to finish (pp. 40-41). And this is just the first chapter.

As will already be apparent, it is the schoolboy errors that make Lahey's translation so hopeless. Clauses are routinely dismembered and reconfigured, so that, to take one example out of at least a thousand, '*Samaritanus noster usus fuit signis*' (our Samaritan used signs) becomes "in our use the Samaritan was a sign" (p. 195). Vocab errors often make matters worse, as when '*adhuc mussitas penes quid attendi debeat gravitas peccati*' (still you hesitate over what the gravity of a sin should be attendant on) becomes "to this muttering, the penalty should attend the gravity of the sin" (p. 127). Ironically, the word '*grammaticus*' (grammarian) is a case in point: '*pro intellectu sano laboret et interim in litera tanquam grammaticus conquiescat*' (he should strive for a sound understanding, and meanwhile, like a grammarian, be satisfied with the literal text)[51] becomes "he ought labor hard for understanding, and in the meantime agree with the letter and the grammar of the word" (p. 194); '*Similiter tales blasphemi includunt[52] praelatos insolubiliter in negligentia quo ad grammaticos, cum grammatici doceant verba supradicta Latina construere*' (similarly such blasphemers include prelates inextricably in negligence towards grammarians, because grammarians teach people to construe the above Latin words)

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51   As usual in the *Trialogus*, this recommendation is aimed at the faithful Christian (*fidelis*); cf. *De civili dominio*, vol. IV, 403: "Sensus tamen litteralis scripture dupliciter potest intelligi: vel pro sensu quem ignari grammatici et layci primo eliciunt, vel pro sensu quem ex doctrina Spiritus Sancti doctor catholicus debet primo elicere; et iste sensus est spiritualis circa quem doctores sacre pagine debent specialiter laborare."

52   Here Lechler (p. 261) noted that the *editio princeps* had '*involvunt*' (implicate); this reading is preferable, and it proves to be shared by the Florence manuscript (cit. n. 42 above, f. 119v).

becomes "Priests inextricably include similar such blasphemies in grammatical negligence, since they would teach to construe grammatically the above-mentioned Latin words" (p. 208); and '*sciant isti rudes grammatici ... notitiam terminorum*' (these untrained grammarians should be versed in the knowledge of terms) becomes "these fools should know the grammar of terms" (p. 275).

The resulting philosophy is unintelligible. Take, for instance, Wyclif's argument against a recursive hierarchy of ideas (pp. 67-68). Here Lahey misses several genitives, so that e.g. '*ydea universalium*' (the idea of universals) becomes "a universal idea" and '*ydeae alia est ydea*' (of an idea there is another idea) becomes "the idea of something is another idea". The latter construction is misread in other ways besides: '*ydeae est ydea*' (of an idea there is an idea) becomes "an idea of an idea", and '*quantitatis est alia quantitas*' (of a quantity there is another quantity) is glossed as "[the generation] of a quantity is another quantity". Wyclif's accusations of nugatory repetition are misrepresented by translating '*incongruus*' (ungrammatical) as "incongruous" or "inconsistent"; the *nugatoriae incongruitates quas balbutiendo objicimus* are not "incongruities that are nonsensical, with which we might emptily object" but nugatory solecisms that we interject in stammering. The regress-avoiding conclusion that *standum est in primo* (the process should stop at the start) is enigmatically rendered as "We must adhere to the first." A farcical note is intruded when the verb '*geminare*' (to double, repeat) is mistranslated as "croak aloud", so that '*sic geminantes intelligunt superflue atque male*' (those who iterate like this have a redundant and faulty understanding) becomes "croaking aloud in this way they understand wastefully and evilly". Finally, though this is not an exhaustive list of the problems in this short stretch, Wyclif concludes that *tam grammatica quam metaphisica destrueret talem vagationem frivolam ultra limites rationis* (both grammar and metaphysics would abolish this kind of frivolous straying beyond the bounds of reason) – or, as Lahey has it, "they cause havoc as much in grammar as in metaphysics with such silly rambling beyond the limits of reason."

There are also pitfalls for historians who are not interested in the precise content of the arguments. For instance, Wyclif apparently says "I have left a special treatise of perspective about these objects of the five interior senses" (p. 86). The Latin, though, reads: '*de objectis istorum quinque sensuum interiorum tractatum specialem reliqui*[53] *perspectivis*' (I have left the specific treat-

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53   Here Lechler (p. 96) noted that his MS D and the *editio princeps* had '*relinquere*'; this reading proves to be shared by the Florence manuscript (f. 72v), and it is surely correct. The perfect-tensed '*reliqui*' is awkward and unparalleled in Wyclif's other works, and '*relinquere*' would fit with the preceding words: "*debet fidelis ... quantum expedit ad intellectum scripturae ac salutem animae de istis notitiam moderate accipere et*". The conjunctive error is again shared by MS Vienna ÖNB 4516 (f. 109r) and Lechler's MSS ABC (cf. n. 45 above).

ment of the objects of these five internal senses to the perspectivists).[54] What's worse, this ghost treatise is identified by Lahey as the *De actibus anime*, "so described because of the treatise's relation to the *Perspectiva* of Vitellius." It is true that the *De actibus anime* enumerates the acts of the internal senses in the first paragraph,[55] but the treatise (or what survives of it) deals with the metaphysics of mental acts in general rather than specifically with their objects;[56] and as for its relation to Witelo's *Perspectiva*, here Lahey has relied on an excited paragraph in Thomson's catalogue that was quickly deflated by Ivan Mueller and that collapses completely on further investigation.[57] Again, to take an example that will frustrate anyone interested in Wyclif's relationship with the church, he apparently says he has sent three conclusions about the eucharist "to various satraps, since a presentation is due" (p. 210). There is a minor slip in

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54   For an explanation of the perspectivists' concern with internal senses, and for much else, see A.M. Smith, *From Sight to Light: The Passage from Ancient to Modern Optics* (Chicago, 2015), ch. 6-7, esp. 256-277.

55   Wyclif, *Miscellanea Philosophica*, vol. 1, ed. M. Dziewicki (London, 1902), 1: "sensacio, ymaginacio, estimacio, fantasiacio et memoracio vocantur actus †continue [MS: quinque] sensuum †necessariorum [MS: interiorum]."

56   Scholarship on this work is still in its infancy; it has not even been noticed that the text edited by Dziewicki (cit. n. 55, 1-127) is a series of extracts from three different treatises (unsurprisingly, given that this part of the codex, MS Cambridge CCC 103, consists of extracts). The first extract (1-57) concerns the quiddity of mental acts; it is truncated, leaving two *dubia* unanswered. The second extract (59-116) concerns possibility; it begins *in medias res*, rejecting the "*secunda positio*" (mistranscribed as *pars*) that accidental truths about the past are contingent (59-87) and that only self-contradictory affirmatives are impossible *simpliciter* (87-104) before giving Wyclif's own view (105-116). The third extract (116-127) concerns quality; it answers in full the question of whether a quality is a *res absoluta* that can exist *per se*. All three of the treatises are apparently from the eight-book *summa* hypothesized by Ivan Mueller (cit. n. 57 below): the third extract is presumably from Book 2 on quality and quantity, the first is probably from Book 5 on mental acts (which was followed by three books on mental qualities, ending with the habit of knowledge), and the second may be from Book 4 on, at a guess, power or volition.

57   W. Thomson, *The Latin Writings of John Wyclyf* (Toronto, 1983), 8; I. Mueller, "A 'Lost' *Summa* of John Wyclif," in *From Ockham to Wyclif*, ed. A. Hudson and M. Wilks (Oxford, 1987), 179-183. The three pillars of Thomson's interpretation can be demolished more directly. Firstly, the phrase '*allegatum est 3° libro scilicet libro 3° questione 16ª vitulonis*' on p. 46 of Dziewicki's edition contains a crucial pair of transcription errors, plus one for good measure; the manuscript has '*allegatum est 3° libro secundum libro 3° conclusione 16ª vitulonem*' (where '*libro 3° conclusione 16ª*' might be a clumsy incorporation of a marginal annotation). Secondly, the *auctor* mentioned on p. 49 of the edition is not Witelo but the anonymous author of the *Liber sex principiorum*, relevantly cited on pp. 35 and 38. Thirdly, the subject of the verb '*ponit*' on p. 59, which Thomson claims "can be none other than 'Witelo'", is either '*secunda positio*' (cf. n. 56 above) or '*prima pars*'. Any lingering doubts can be put to rest by checking Thomson's list of Wyclif's references to books 2 and 3 against Witelo's text: *Witelonis Perspectivae liber secundus et liber tertius*, ed. S. Unguru (Wrocław, 1991).

the first phrase, as Wyclif had actually sent these conclusions *alias satrapis* (on another occasion to the satraps), but the second phrase is disastrously wrong: Wyclif had actually sent the conclusions *cum protestatione debita* (with the due declaration), that is, with the kind of faith-saving disclaimer that we saw Penn making a mess of earlier.[58]

Finally, the idea that Wyclif is trying "to be an entertaining teacher rather than an erudite professor" (p. 36) is reinforced by an unwarranted lowering of the tone. For instance, when he complains that we have fallen into "*castrimargia*" (gluttony), Wyclif gives this word an etymological gloss: *mergens in ventre putrido tanquam castro vescibile datum a Deo* (*sinking* in a putrid stomach – as it were, in a *castle* – the food given by God).[59] The image is certainly unpleasant, but it is trumped by Lahey's translation: "converting the comestibles given by God … into a fart, as in a soldier's camp" (p. 163). Wyclif then complains that gluttony infects the air *faciendo ventrem et os cloacam* (by making the stomach

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58   See the paragraph ending with n. 32 above. The word '*satrapa*' deserved comment (here and on pp. 151, 190, 229, 248). In the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, fasc. XV (2012), its ecclesiastical use is defined neutrally as "prelate, church leader". In Wyclif's mouth, though, it is a derogatory term for the imperious and censorious officials of the church courts. These include the pope (*John Wiclif's Polemical Works*, ed. R. Buddensieg, vol. I [London, 1883], 127); they are said to possess God's law despite being human (*Sermones*, ed. J. Loserth, vol. I [London, 1887], 189); and they are "satraps" because they purport to wield delegated power (*Sermones*, vol. II, 281). In the *DMLBS*, the only non-Wyclif quotation for the ecclesiastical sense is from a letter from the Benedictines at Canterbury in around 1370 complaining that the Archbishop "and all his satraps" have sided with the secular scholars (including Wyclif); here, too, the word connotes delegated power, and the bitter context suggests that the satraps were not merely described "quaintly", *pace* W. Pantin, *Canterbury College Oxford*, vol. 4 (Oxford, 1985), 33. Wyclif, at least, will have seen the hostile etymological gloss (from Uguccio of Pisa, presumably via William Brito) in Nicholas of Lyra's postil on Daniel 3:2: *dicuntur satrape quasi satis rapientes, quia solent bona inferiorum rapere*.

59   The original word is '*gastrimargia*' (γαστριμαργία), first attested in the mid-420s in the *Institutes* (esp. 5) and *Conferences* (esp. 5) of John Cassian, who glossed it as *ventris ingluvies* or *gulae concupiscentia*; cf. C. Stewart, "From λόγος to *verbum*: John Cassian's Use of Greek in the Development of a Latin Monastic Vocabulary," in *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God*, ed. E.R. Elder (Kalamazoo, 1995), 5-31, esp. 19. The medieval form '*castrimargia*' was sometimes explained in terms of chastity, as in Osbern Pinnock's *Panormia* (1148×1179): "per antiphrasin … eo quod minime faciat castos": Osberno, *Derivazioni*, ed. P. Busdraghi et al. (Spoleto, 1996), C xv 9. By the 1190s, a less desperate etymology was available in terms of the "stronghold" of the stomach: "eo quod in castris ventris omnia mergantur": R. Quinto, "The *Conflictus vitiorum et virtutum* Attributed to Stephen Langton," in *Virtue and Ethics in the Twelfth Century*, ed. I. Bejczy and R. Newhauser (Leiden, 2005), 197-267, at 254. Wyclif will have seen this in Guillaume Peyraud's treatment of *gula* (gluttony): *Summa de vitiis* (Venice, 1497), sig. A iv rb.

and the mouth a sewer);[60] or, as Lahey has it, "because of farting and having a stinking mouth". Further on, Wyclif warns that an overfed body *spumat in libidinem* (froths over into lust).[61] Again, Lahey's image is rather different: for him, the body "foams libidinously" (p. 167). This proves to be an amuse-bouche for a portrayal of lust as an illicit desire that apparently involves "the sensations of touching [the genitals]", and whose acts apparently involve "the vigorous touching of the generative members" (p. 168). Wyclif's own words are less lurid: lustful desire is concerned with the perceptible objects of the genitals' sense of touch (*sensibilia sensus tactus istorum membrorum*), while lustful deeds are concerned with the touch(ing) of the nerve-rich generative members (*tactum membrorum generativorum taliter nervosorum*).[62] Finally, in the *De dotatione ecclesie*, which Lahey translates in its traditional role as a supplement to the *Trialogus*, Wyclif gives a medical image of the harm caused to the church by the competitive accumulations of the envious mendicant orders: *tanquam faeces quattuor humorum in corpore sanctae matris ecclesiae videntur in spongiositatibus eius generando apostema et morbos alios residere* (like residues of the four humours in the body of the holy mother church, they seem to settle in its porosities, generating an impostume and other diseases). Lahey's jumbled version is more pungent (p. 346): "They appear to be the spongy feces of the body

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60　Wyclif had a pet theory (or perhaps a recurring nightmare) that the exhalations of the overindulgent were partly responsible for pestilential air, so that plagues, like famines, could be caused by immoderate use of the goods that God had measured out for us; cf. e.g. *De civili dominio*, vol. IV, ed. J. Loserth (London, 1904), 490 ("aer … pestilencialis causatur ex fetore gule, ex infeccione loquele expirate et aliis discrasiis orbis sublunaris"). This aetiology was not, it seems, universally accepted ("ut ego credo", *De mandatis divinis*, 473-474), but sceptics can find a sketch of the causal mechanism in *Sermones*, vol. I, 9-10.

61　This phrase echoes a letter from Jerome (*Ep.* 69) to Oceanus: "vinolentia scurronum est et comissatorum, venterque mero aestuans cito despumat in libidines." Wyclif explicitly quotes the second part of this (albeit with '*spumat*' and '*libidinem*') in *De mandatis divinis*, 227 (and cf. 448: "caro laute pasta spumat in libidinem").

62　It is tempting to diagnose an error in '*taliter nervosorum*', especially as a recycled text has the smoother '*taliter abusorum*': Stanislav of Znojmo, *De gracia et peccato*, ed. Z. Silagiová (Prague, 1997), 133. Then again, '*nervosorum*' is also found in the Florence manuscript (cit. n. 42 above, f. 102v) and in Vienna ÖNB 4516 (f. 151r); Wyclif's only other use (apparently) of '*nervosus*' also involves the sense of touch ("*corpora nervosa sunt plus sensibilia isto sensu*": *Sermones*, vol. I, 214); and the "*pudenda*" are described as "*membra nervosa*" in a discussion of sexual pleasure from around 1290: L. Cova, "Le questioni di Giovanni Vath sul *De generatione animalium*," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 59 (1992), 175-287, at 223-227. Again, a second critical edition might shed some light on the matter (cf. n. 49 above).

of holy mother church as they generate ulcers from the four humors, residing with the other diseases."[63]

Again, anyone with reading competence in Latin will be able to add to my examples by opening the book at random.[64] The upshot is that, throughout the volume, Lahey's translation manages at best to obscure Wyclif's thought and at worst to make a nonsense of it. Like Penn's anthology, this will be a rotten foundation for the "scholars and students" identified in the blurb as the target readership. And here I might borrow an admonishment from the *Trialogus* itself: "it is necessary for those who involve themselves in this matter to be trained in correct grammar and precise logic."[65]

3   Post Mortem

The publication of work of such conspicuous incompetence is a poor advertisement for the peer-review process. Penn acknowledges the assistance of "Stephen Lahey, reader for Manchester University Press," which helps to explain matters, but there was also an "anonymous reviewer who examined the final manuscript for the press" (p. ix). Lahey's own translation likewise

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63   As an illustration of the dangers for researchers who work in adjacent fields, this has already been quoted as typifying the "vivid imagery and razor-sharp insults" in Wyclif's "highly entertaining" screeds: "in *Trialogus*, for example, the friars are the 'spongy feces' [*spongiositatibus*] of the body of holy mother church": E. Campbell, *The* Gawain-*Poet and the Fourteenth-Century English Anticlerical Tradition* (Kalamazoo, 2018), 24. It is syntactically ambiguous in the Latin whether "they" are the acquisitive friars or the fruits of their actions, but the rest of the paragraph suggests the latter interpretation.

64   Readers who took up the challenge in n. 33 above can get two for the price of one by comparing Lahey's translations (pp. 250-252): "contention among men, even murder, along with many other inconveniences, as the natural philosophers well recognize" (*hominum contentio atque occisio cum multis aliis inconvenientiis quas vident philosophi naturales*); "Thus two married men, associated in love, have entered into matrimony" (*et sic duo viri uxorati et caritative sociati ex hoc contraherent conjugium*); "this leaks through to the seriousness of adultery because of the false semblance of marriage" (*tales permanent graves adulteri ex falsa palliatione matrimonii*); "So blessed are those who remain virgins" (*ideo benedicta sit conversatio virginum*); "human ordering, by which divorce is expanded not only because of consanguinity but because of the affinity of love between people" (*humana ordinatio quae dicit non solum ex cognatione sed ex affinitate amorem inter homines dilatari*); "since both come together to produce a child" (*cum utrique conveniat prolem producere*). No hints, I'm afraid, but for the context of the penultimate example, see Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* xv, c. 16.

65   Or, as Lahey has it (p. 60), "it is fitting that one submit oneself to instruction in right grammar and subtle logic from time to time" (*oportet intromittentes se esse instructos in recta grammatica et subtili logica*).

acknowledges an "anonymous reader for Cambridge University Press" (p. 37). And yet it should be obvious by now that neither volume was given even a cursory vetting by anybody who was up to the task.[66]

But there is worse. Lahey's *Trialogus* has already received five reviews, and these are all unambiguously *positive*. Ian Levy, the leading authority on Wyclif's exegesis, got in early with the claim that Lahey's style of translation "keeps the reader close to the text and thereby reduces the risk of misconstrual". Sean Otto, who had completed a PhD on Wyclif's sermons, followed suit by claiming that the translation "sticks quite closely to Wyclif's Latin"; he further commended Lahey for presenting "an accessible, if sometimes difficult and challenging, overview of the essentials of Wycliffism straight from the founder's pen." Lesley-Anne Dyer, who had also worked on Wyclif, found Lahey's footnotes rather sparse, but reassured us that "the translation itself is carefully edited and does a good job of making a difficult Latin prose text as readable as possible." Jennifer Illig, who was completing a PhD on English Wycliffite sermons, welcomed Lahey's "lucid" translation for its "accessibility". A briefer review by a doctoral student working on the history of Protestantism likewise found the translation "accessible".[67]

The collective failure to hold Lahey to account has been underwritten by the myth that Wyclif's Latin is especially difficult.[68] Henry Kelly's version is

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66 The same goes for a Paulist Press anthology that includes five Wyclif translations by Lahey: *Wycliffite Spirituality*, ed. J.P. Hornbeck, S. Lahey, and F. Somerset (Mahwah, 2013), 63-155. Bearing in mind the detailed exposé in §2 above, one example should suffice: when Wyclif says that oral prayer has "a pair of wings" (*binarium alarum*), Lahey translates this as "its alarum" (p. 125). I might add that the first translation is not from *Sermones*, vol. I, 192-199 (as claimed in n. 1 on p. 378) but from *Sermones*, vol. II, 210-219. Ian Levy has welcomed the volume as a "praiseworthy effort" that allows the texts to be read by "a general audience, which might be unfamiliar with Scholastic Latin": *Theological Studies* 75:1 (2014), 197-199.

67 I.C. Levy, "Wyclif's Theology for the Laity," *Marginalia Review of Books* (2013), 29 May; S. Otto, *The Medieval Review* (2014), 14.04.39; L.-A. Dyer, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65:2 (2014), 412-414; J. Illig, *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 40:2 (2014), 221-224; A. Kloes, *Expository Times* 125:12 (2014), 619-620. After all this backslapping, it is no surprise that Lahey's mistranslations have already started to infect the literature; we saw his 'spongy feces' in n. 63 above, and there are others in E. Tiner, "Sarcasm and Heresy: John Wyclif and the York *Fall of the Angels* Play," in *Words that Tear the Flesh*, ed. A. Baragona and E. Rambo (Berlin, 2018), 271-289.

68 This phenomenon predates the *Trialogus* fiasco. A useless translation in Lahey's *John Wyclif* (Oxford, 2009), 227-243, was welcomed on precisely these grounds in an admiring review by Rory Cox, *Anglican and Episcopal History* 79:1 (2010), 78-80: "Intellectual historians have long been wary of Wyclif's dense and convoluted Latin style: his works are among the more abstruse of scholastic treatises, which is quite some claim. Lahey's translation of Wyclif's 1381 *Confessio* in the Appendix is a useful addition."

overblown but still revealing: "For some reason Wyclif had never learned to speak and write Latin properly; his academic style may have been the worst in medieval Christendom … The great mystery is that he went through the entire master of arts (MA) and bachelor of theology curricula with defective language skills and emerged at the level of theological master."[69] Other verdicts have been more sober, but they share Kelly's confidence that the trouble lies with Wyclif. Here is Penn's, for instance (p. 33): "What makes him especially challenging … is the nature of his Latin, which is uniformly dense and rather eccentric, and his written style, which often appears tangled, repetitive and highly digressive." Lahey himself acknowledges the role of scribal errors, but he adds that Wyclif "was guilty of … occasionally mystifying leaps of association in many of his treatises" (pp. 35-36).

It is high time that this myth was put to rest. Wyclif's Latin is actually quite typical for a fourteenth-century Oxford scholastic. He does use some apparent neologisms – '*ubicatio*', for instance, a short step from '*ubicatus*' as used e.g. by Duns Scotus – but his prose style is not especially difficult for anyone who can read the likes of Grosseteste, Bradwardine, and FitzRalph. Such people will find his Latin to be carefully structured, clearly signposted, and far less mystifying than the translations offered by Lahey and Penn; genuine puzzles can often be traced to mistakes made by editors who were unfamiliar with the intellectual context, which is why no Wyclif scholar can afford to ignore textual questions. Anyone who is not familiar with the idiom of the schools, on the other hand, is bound to find Wyclif difficult. There is no royal road here, but there are at least some useful pointers in a wonderful new booklet by Dylan Schrader that aims "to help remove syntactical and stylistic obstacles to Scholastic Latin".[70]

That said, of the four kinds of error that I catalogued in §1 above, only the first two can be put down to a weak grasp of scholastic Latin in particular. This brings me to a more delicate point, although since I already seem to have my tanks on the lawn, it is probably too late to start tiptoeing around the flowers. The fact is that in countries like the UK and the US, where secondary-school Latin has collapsed outside the private sector, where few medievalists have an undergraduate background in Classics, and where lecturers would be embarrassed to sit in on language classes, most medievalists are only ever taught Latin while they are graduate students. What's more, we have already reached

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69   H. Kelly, *The Middle English Bible: A Reassessment* (Philadelphia, 2016), 33-34. Here Kelly also dismisses Wyclif's *Postilla* as "a routine biblical commentary" that apparently contains "nothing of his own". Penn's selections should scotch that thought (pp. 59-67, 76-99, 155-157, 205-208), but for a different line of attack, see A. Kraebel, *Biblical Commentary and Translation in Later Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2020), ch. 2.

70   D. Schrader, *The Shortcut to Scholastic Latin* (New York, 2019).

the stage where, in some universities, medieval Latin is taught from scratch to graduate students by people who were taught it from scratch when they were graduate students. This is not necessarily unsustainable, but it can only be sustainable if the language is taught seriously and intensively as a major component of graduate study, which it almost never is. And of course the problems we are storing up here are not confined to Wyclif: they will affect almost all areas of medieval studies. If, therefore, we do not drastically improve the level of graduate training in medieval Latin, hopeless misunderstandings of medieval sources will increasingly come to scar the scholarly landscape.[71] In the meantime, it is evidently worth reminding translators and reviewers alike, as Wyclif used to remind his contemporaries, that "if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit."[72]

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71   Some readers might be tempted to dismiss this worry on the grounds that the translations under review are exceptionally poor. Two quick responses must suffice. Firstly, although the following translations (to take a few examples) are indeed better, they are still littered with unforced errors, despite what the reviews say: Petrus Alfonsi, *Dialogue Against the Jews*, trans. I. Resnick (Washington, 2006) ("fine"); Albert of Saxony, *Twenty-Five Disputed Questions on Logic*, trans. M. Fitzgerald (Leuven, 2010) ("Fitzgerald knows and understands the text like no other"); Roger Bacon, *On Signs*, trans. T. Maloney (Toronto, 2013) ("first-class"). Secondly, translators are surely not representative of the wider scholarly community, and even an unscientific survey of published translations should, if anything, be misleadingly reassuring.

72   Matthew 15:14: *caecus autem si caeco ducatum praestet, ambo in foveam cadunt.* Besides his various allusions to this, Wyclif quotes it explicitly in the *De civili dominio*, *De veritate sacre scripture* (twice), *De ecclesia*, and *De paupertate Christi*.