

TWO ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF EUSEBIUS' *ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORIES*: A LEXICAL ANALYSIS

Acknowledgements

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With over three hundred quotations Meredith Hanmer's *Auncient Ecclesiastical Histories* (London, 1577, STC 10572) is one of the top 1000 sources of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED henceforth). About sixty of these quotations come from his translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, which is cited as the source for the first evidence of a number of words, including religious and church-related vocabulary, such as Septuagint and clergyman, and senses, such as the adverbs earthly and necessarily. The reformed clergyman Meredith Hanmer was not the first translator of the Church history, however. The first five books survive in a manuscript translation by the niece of Sir Thomas More, Mary Roper Clark Basset, which has been dated between 1547 and 1553, and is therefore to date the earliest known English translation of the famous work by Eusebius.¹ No study of the relationship between Hanmer's and Basset's translations has been undertaken so far, a gap in the state of the art that this note intends to remedy starting from a comparison of their vocabulary. The aim of this note is to record any instances of agreement between Basset and Hanmer in their choices of English equivalents for the source-text, and thus to verify the dating of the OED entries listing Hanmer's text as their source. The value of a comparative study of these two translations further lies in what they can teach us about the history of early modern English in a narrow time span, caught against the backdrop of the Reformation, and across the socio-cultural divide between a Catholic noble woman in the 1550s and a reformed clergyman in the 1570s.

¹ British Library Harley MS 1860. On the date of the manuscript, see Jaime Goodrich, 'The Dedicatory preface to Mary Roper Clarke Basset's Translation of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History', *English Literary Renaissance*, xl (2010), 301-28.

This note presents the results of the collation of Hanmer's printed text and Basset's manuscript. The terms selected are the ones listed as first evidence for a particular word or sense in the OED. These are summarised in table 1. The criteria used for classification are etymology of the word and word function in context, which result into four groups of terms and phrases. The first and second columns of the table list Hanmer's and Basset's choices. Some brief remarks on a selection of terms illustrate the trends observed.

The results indicate that the equivalents chosen by Basset and Hanmer are in the majority of cases different, and that Hanmer's text is the most innovative, with several coinages and first use in specific senses that are not reflected in Basset's translation. From this selection, Hanmer's vocabulary appears to be more synthetic and closer to the Greek source, two features that contribute to characterise his erudite style. The OED dates can be confirmed in all but two instances. There are in fact one word and one sense for which an earlier date can be proposed, the one attested in Basset's manuscript and the other retrieved through search of the *Early English Books Online* database (EEBO henceforth).

Table 1. Collations of STC 10572 and Harley MS 1860.

	Hanmer (STC 10572)	Basset (Harley MS 1860)
<i>Group 1</i>	milkesoppes Samaritans cleargie man	mylke and pappe samarytes clargye
<i>Group 2</i>	(speake) earthlye Apostolicall succession Cerinthian heresie Ionicke	earthly thynges successors of the Apostles cerinthyans born in Ionia
<i>Group 3</i>	Atheists, or godlesse men estraynge figments foremartyres septuagintes assumption character dialectes elementall introduction foode impugned manchet procuratorship pyncke sifte out Syndone warde moued and madd	reprobates and goddes very enemyes dyscever from the bodye faynynges and invencyons chayf and moste gloryouse martyrs lxx interpretors ascensyon fourme tongue fyrste pryncyple meate fought against breade governaunce paynte bryng forth lynnen castell wroth and dyspleased

<i>Group 4</i>	consonancy vnapparelled (a heady) cockbrayne bayne him selfe made figuratiue make an embushment metaphrastically to alter Millenarie my dissoluing necessarily recorded registry resting place, or tombe the tribunall seate	combynyng and setting together unloosyng hys gyrdell and slyppying of hys clothes (behaviour) farther then wysdome be washte sygnyfy vyolently to invade and assawte to alter and chaunge thowsand yeres I muste departe owt of thys world shoulde serve recorde place where bodyes were entered and buried the iudges seate
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Group 1. Same etymology / same function

The use of milksope in the figurative sense ‘he fead the flocke committed vnto his charge, with more absolute and profound doctrine, least that they lingering in their milkesoppes, and smothe exhortacions, waxe old through negligence, in childish nurture’ (71) is one of Hanmer’s innovations (OED 2.b).

We find samaritans derived with suffix –an in Hanmer (70) but in the older non-adapted form ‘samarytes’ in Basset (fol. 234).

The term used to denote members of the clergy, clergyman is a new entry of this period. Basset has the collective clargye, ‘not of the clargye onely but of the temporalty to’ (318v), while Hanmer goes for the compound ‘Not after the manner of a cleargie man, but of the laye people’ (95), which the OED gives as earliest evidence. The EEBO corpus reveals in fact that the compound was already in use ten years earlier; we find it in a controversial work by the Bishop of Winchester Robert Horne (*An Answere [...] to a Booke entituled The Declaration*, London, 1566, STC 13818), and in John Foxe’s 1570 edition of the *Acts and Monuments* (London, STC 11223).

Group 2. Same etymology / different function

The first evidence of the adjective Cerinthian in English, from the name Cerinthus, one of the earliest heresiarchs, comes from Hanmer’s translation. The noun Cerinthian, which the

OED dates 1607 (OED B), is in fact already attested in Basset: ‘Cerinthus hymself, who was the fyrst begyner of the heresy called the cerinthians’ (164).

The use of the term succession by Hanmer is in the specific sense of ‘the act of succeeding to the episcopate, the continued transmission of the ministerial commission through unbroken line’ (OED 7) first attested only a decade earlier in John Jewel’s *Apologie or answer in defence of the Church of Englande* (London, 1565, STC 14591).

The adjective ‘Ionicke’ (Ionian in present day English) used by Hanmer (85) is evidently a loan from the Greek source (Eusebius has Ἰωνικός), where Basset goes for the phrase ‘born in Ionia’ (286v).

Group 3. Different etymology / same function

Basset reads ‘reprobates and goddes very enemyes’ (207v) where Hanmer goes for the loan Atheists (63). Hanmer’s choice is innovative. This is the first attestation of the term to denote ‘One who practically denies the existence of a God by disregard of moral obligation to Him; a godless man’ (OED 2). The loan was very recent also in its earliest sense ‘One who denies or disbelieves the existence of a God’ (OED 1, first evidence 1571). Atheist is not found in the EEBO corpus before the 1570s and it frequently occurs in conjunction with the noun and adjective godless, which appears to be the favoured equivalent throughout the period.

Hanmer and Basset have different terms to denote the reception into heaven of Christ. Hanmer has ‘The wonderfull resurrection of our Sauour, and his assumption into the heauens’ (20) where Basset reads ‘The wondrefull resurrectyon of owr savyour and hys glorious ascensyon in to heaven’ (64). At the time of its acquisition into English in the 13th century, the word assumption specifically denoted ‘The reception of the Virgin Mary into heaven, with body preserved from corruption’ (OED I. 1. b), while the term ascension was the earliest to indicate specifically ‘The ascent of Jesus Christ to heaven on the fortieth day after His resurrection’ (OED). The shift of the term assumption to the assumption of Jesus

Christ might tentatively be a reflection of the process of decline of Marian piety in reformed theology. It may also be due to the fact that the term ascension had already been undergoing widening and semantic shift to denote simply the action of ascending, going upward, of a celestial body, or in alchemy (senses 3 and 4 in the OED attested since the 14th c.).

In this group we can further note the difference in the translation of the Greek protomartyres (Eusebius πρωτομάρτυρες) which Basset interprets as precedence in term of importance ‘chief and most glorious martyrs’ (254v), while Hanmer translates as ‘foremartyrs’ (76) through the use of the affix fore-, introducing a potential ambiguity between the senses of precedence in terms of position or rank (i.e. the most prominent martyrs) and time (i.e. the earliest martyrs).

Group 4. Different etymology / different function

Hanmer chooses the noun consonancy in the sense of ‘harmony’, i.e. ‘Who patched together, I wot not what kind of mingle mangled consonancy of the Gospells’ (74). In Basset’s version we have a verbal derivative for abstract noun of action: ‘makyng I wote nere howe, as yt were a certayne combynyng and setting togyther of the fowr gospells’ (246v). Other equally synthetic equivalents are Hanmer’s ‘millenarie’ (51) and ‘resting place’ (52) are both cases of earliest evidence of the use of the adjective (in present day English millenarian), and in the sense of ‘grave’, respectively. Note Basset’s use of the defining relative clause ‘the place where bothe theyr bodyes were after theyr departyng hense entered and buried’ (167v).

In Hanmer’s version the adverb metaphrastically modifies the verb to alter: ‘Some reporte that he presumed metaphrastically to alter the wordes of the Apostle’ (74). The phrase translates Eusebius μεταφράσαι, aorist infinitive of μεταφράζειν, to paraphrase (OED). This is another of Hanmer’s coinages, where Basset translates ‘he presumed also to alter and change the apostles owne wordes’ (246v).

Basset 'unloosyng hys gyrdell and slyppyng of hys clothes' (218v) is in Hanmer's translation the single word derived from a French head 'The fyery pyle being prepared, he vnapparelled him selfe' (66), providing one further example of Hanmer's synthetic and innovative vocabulary.

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