

[Essays in Medieval Studies 5](#)

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Piers Plowman:
In Search of an Author

David C. Fowler

University of Washington

John Trevisa was born in Cornwall, studied at Oxford University, and, having come to the attention of the Berkeley family, he was instituted vicar of Berkeley, a position he held until his death in 1402. Even these few facts are not easy to come by, and I must confess to a complete ignorance of this man until some ten years after completing my graduate work in English. At the time I was writing a book on *Piers the Plowman*, a fourteenth-century alliterative poem existing in three versions, the earliest of which (the "A"-text) I had edited as a dissertation and later published (1952), in posthumous collaboration with Thomas A. Knott. Since the circumstances of my discovery of Trevisa are importantly related to some of my theories about him, it seems only proper to relate briefly how he came to my attention.

The book I was working on was *Piers the Plowman: Literary Relations of the A and B Texts* (1961), and one of the problems I faced in writing it was identifying, in a chapter entitled "Principles of Order in the B-Continuation," the literary sources or influences that determined the shape of the latter half of the "B" text or second version of *Piers the Plowman* (B passus XI-XX). One of those influences, I concluded, was the fourteenth-century Latin chronicle by Ranulph Higden known as the *Polychronicon*, and almost immediately this brought Trevisa to my attention, since his English translation was included in the Rolls Series edition of the Latin *Polychronicon* published in nine Volumes in 1865-86.

One of the distinctive features of Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon* is his inclusion of notes, usually prefixed by his name, commenting on the text he is translating. These notes are often quite opinionated, and I noticed right away that the views of

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Trevisa seemed in close harmony with those of the author of the "B" text of *Piers the Plowman* (who is separate in my mind from the author of the "A" text). In one instance Higden (monkish author of the Latin original) relates that when Roger, Earl of Shrewsbury, was seriously ill, he made himself a monk in hope that this would aid his recovery. To this Trevisa (a secular priest) appends the following note (*Poly*. vii, 355):

A wise man would ween that Earl Roger had as much meed of that he was a monk, as Malkyn of her maidenhood, that no man would have, and not a deal more.

Could Trevisa have known *Piers the Plowman*? In the earliest version of the poem the author is addressing wealthy men, and warns them against relying on external religiosity as a means of achieving salvation (A 1 157-8):

Ye haue no more merit in mass ne in houres
Than Malkyn of hire maydenhod that no man desireth.

The traditional allusion to Malkyn as a country girl of loose morals is not at issue here, since this Malkyn has her virginity intact (whether or not it is to her own credit), a point stressed epigrammatically in both of these quotations and nowhere else to my knowledge.

In addition to the *Polychronicon*, another source of influence in the shaping of the B-continuation of *Piers the Plowman*, it seemed to me, was the medieval drama. Yet after I had read through the four major biblical cycles in Middle English, with one eye on the B version, passus XI-XX, I was disappointed in that, apart from certain general

parallels (and one important connection with the Chester *Doomsday*), there was nothing very specific to authenticate my conviction that the poet was influenced by the drama. Then I remembered a fact acquired in graduate school: there was a fifth cycle of medieval drama in England, little known because it was in a different language: the Cornish *Ordinalia*.

Not really expecting to find much, but for the sake of completeness, I began plowing through the ten thousand lines of Cornish biblical drama, with the aid of a translation by Edwin Norris (1859). What I found, in brief, were two important passages

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that were remarkably similar to corresponding passages in the B-continuation of *Piers*, thus supporting my belief that the drama had indeed influenced the poet. But the Cornish drama? How many people outside Cornwall could have understood it? I can still remember the moment when these two separate discoveries, one in Trevisa's *Polychronicon* and the other in the Cornish *Ordinalia*, came together in my mind with the recollection of an old rhyme:

By tre, pol, and pen
Ye shall know the Cornish men.
Trevelyan, Polwhele, Penrose, *Trevisa*.

My eventual conclusion from all this was that Trevisa, a Cornishman, although too young to have been the author of the A text of *Piers* (c. 1362), may possibly have been responsible for the revision and continuation of that text in the two forms known as the B and C texts. On the strength of this belief I added a chapter to *Literary Relations* entitled "About the Author" in which I frankly set forth the Trevisa hypothesis. But subsequently my main efforts were directed toward learning more about the man himself and his corner of the world: medieval Cornwall. Before going to Britain for the first time I taught a seminar in the Cornish language, barely keeping ahead of the students in the small grammar by Caradar (A. S. D. Smith) that we were using. Two of the students in this seminar eventually visited Cornwall and did significant work in Cornish literature.

In the spring of 1959 I went to Cornwall and enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. E. G. R. Hooper, who was named Grand Bard of Cornwall later that same year (after the death of R. Morton Nance), and there I learned for the first time of the movement to revive the Cornish language, which had died out some century and a half previously. Quite apart from the documentary research that I did there, the experience of meeting people like Mr. and Mrs. Hooper enabled me to get a sense of the Cornish culture within Britain, still seeking to maintain itself even after all the centuries that had passed since the time of Trevisa. My indebtedness to many friends in Cornwall gained over the years can never be fully expressed.

In addition to the Cornish phase of my studies I wanted to follow Trevisa's path, first to Oxford and eventually to Berkeley (including some time in London at the British Museum and Public

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Record Office). In Oxford I learned much that was new by consulting the long rolls of Queen's College, as well as having the experience of seeing Oxford itself and working there for the first time. Much of what I learned there was incorporated in subsequent publications, and for this I am deeply indebted to the late Neil Ker, then Reader in Paleography, whose learning was matched by his generosity in helping novices like me find their way in the study of medieval manuscripts. Excellent as was my graduate training at Chicago, nothing I learned then could have prepared me for the complex task that I faced in the Bodleian Library in 1959.

Going to Berkeley was perhaps to some extent a sentimental journey: I simply wanted to see the castle and the church where Trevisa had been vicar in the final years of his life. Yet the possibility of new discoveries also beckoned, since the muniment room of the castle contained much of importance, and had not been available to researchers for many years. Even A. J. Perry, whose edition of Trevisa's minor works (1925) contains the fullest and best account of the translator's life, was unable to have access to the castle.

My efforts over a period of time to gain entry to the Berkeley muniment room (ultimately successful) will not be detailed here. Needless to say, I am very much indebted to Major John Berkeley and to the Trustees of the Estate for

making it possible for me to work there. What is still vivid in my mind from the first visit to Berkeley in 1959 is the church, which is very little changed from what was likely to have been its appearance when Trevisa was vicar. I arrived there on a beautiful spring afternoon, completely anonymous, intent only on visiting the church for my own satisfaction. The setting is beautiful: it is very near the Castle but hidden by a wall and almost surrounded by a grove of trees. The birds were singing and sunlight illuminated the glass of the west window as I entered. In the south aisle was the tomb of Thomas III, Lord Berkeley, who may have originally been responsible for giving Trevisa the opportunity to study at Oxford.

While I was sitting in one of the pews, thinking fourteenth-century thoughts, and completely alone in that large church, I walked a black-robed figure, a man who turned out to be the Vicar of Berkeley. When I was later recounting this experience to a colleague in Seattle, he responded anxiously: "Do you mean the *present* Vicar of Berkeley?" And indeed it was Canon J. H. W.

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Fisher, Vicar from 1945 to 1967. I am much indebted to him, as well as to Canon J. E. Gethyn-Jones, Vicar from 1967-1976, whose interest in Trevisa has found expression in an ingenious fictional recreation of his life (*Trevisa of Berkeley*, 1978). On the occasion of my first visit there Canon Fisher rolled back the carpet and showed me the stone which local tradition says marked the burial place of John Trevisa. He also generously placed at my disposal everything he had been able to discover from local sources, especially concerning the restoration of Berkeley church by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1866.

Although I have since been occupied with other kinds of research in subsequent visits to England in 1962-63, 1969-70, 1975-76, the summer of 1979, and in 1982-83, my interest in Trevisa has persisted, and my memory of the original visit of 1959 remains a strong factor in motivating me to write a biography of John Trevisa, an effort made possible by the aforementioned leaves of absence from the University of Washington. Constructing the life of a somewhat obscure fourteenth-century scholar and translator can scarcely be called "biography" in the modern sense, since the facts are few, and about all one can do is try to fit these facts into a hypothetical account within a historical setting (a procedure that I find myself referring to as "drawing lines to connect the dots"). In the case of Trevisa we have a little more evidence of personal views than might be expected, in his notes to the *Polychronicon*; without these we might well despair of ever getting inside his mind.

Even the facts about Trevisa have been strangely elusive, however, perhaps in part because there has been no standard biography, and even the valuable introduction to his life published by Perry in 1925 is not widely known. Probably most readers would likely rely on the *Dictionary of National Biography*, where there are two columns devoted to him which contain more than a half-dozen misleading statements: both dates are wrong; he was not born at Crocadon; he was not a canon of Westbury-on-Severn; his writing of verses from the Apocalypse on the walls of a chapel is not in Berkeley church; he is not the translator of the Methodius tract or Vegetius' *De Re Militari* (the latter was indeed completed in 1408, but that was six years after Trevisa's death); there is no internal evidence (beyond the allegation of John Shirley) that the *Gospel of Nicodemus* was translated at the request of Lord

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Berkeley; and finally Ussher does not attribute a genealogy of King David of Scotland to Trevisa (a mistake originating with Tanner in 1748). On the other hand it should be said in defense of C. L. Kingsford, who wrote the *DNB* article before 1909, that when he does his own verifying of sources, he is very accurate indeed. Thus he correctly states that Trevisa was at Exeter College from 1362 to 1369, despite the fact that the authoritative *Registrum Collegii Exoniensis*, edited by C. W. Boase (1894), indicates that Trevisa remained in Exeter College only until the winter of 1365.

The comedy of errors surrounding efforts to determine the dates of Trevisa's birth and death may serve to illustrate the problems facing a would-be biographer. Even Chaucer's birth-date is not known, so it is not surprising that we have no record of the year of Trevisa's birth. And it is to the credit of the earliest writers who refer to him that they do not try to guess the date, but merely affirm that he was born in Cornwall. But beginning with Thomas Fuller in the seventeenth century, efforts were made to fix upon a date, with the result that Trevisa is said to have been born at times ranging from 1322 "or before" to 1342. This wide divergence, however, can be explained.

The very early dates for Trevisa's birth are guesses based on William Caxton's curious change in the date of completion of the translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*. Trevisa had written the following conclusion (modernized):

God be thanked of all his deeds. This translation is ended in a Thursday, the eighteenth day of April, the year of our Lord 1387, the tenth year of King Richard the second after the conquest of England, the year of my lord's age, sir Thomas lord of Berkeley, that made me make this translation, five and thirty.

For whatever reason Caxton in 1482 printed this same passage with the completion date changed to 1357. It was not a mere misprint, for he then proceeded to change the regnal date to "the 31st year of King Edward the Third" which is correct for the earlier date he had inserted. Afterwards when John Smyth of Nibley was writing his *Lives of the Berkeleys* (about 1622, though the work was not published until much later), he accepted Caxton's date, but

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noticed that the age of Thomas Lord Berkeley did not accord with the date 1357. Thomas III, who died in 1361, was 65 in 1357, and so Smyth records the completion of the *Polychronicon* as in "the year of my lord's age ... the 65th," adding in the margin, "misprinted 35 for 65." Smyth apparently did not notice that 1387 was the 35th year of Thomas IV, and furthermore he failed to realize (something that Ussher did notice later) that the 18th of April fell on a Thursday in 1387 whereas in 1357 it did not. But such was the power of Caxton's influence that almost every subsequent effort to fix the date of Trevisa's birth was affected by the supposition that the translation of the *Polychronicon* was completed in 1357.

This can be seen easily in the speculations of Thomas Fuller, writing in the middle of the seventeenth century:

- . . . (Trevisa) died full of honour, quiet, and age, little less than ninety years old, For,
1. He ended his translation of *Policronicon*, (as appeareth by the conclusion thereof) the 29th of Edward the third, when he cannot be presumed less than 30 years of age.
 2. He added to the end thereof, fifty (some say more) years of his own historical observations.

It is this sort of conjecture that gave rise to the assortment of early dates that we find in most later notices. Thus Boase and Courtney (1874-82) have 1326, and this is repeated by Kingsford in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, who gives Trevisa's dates as 1326-1412.

A death date is usually easier to find: we know that Chaucer died in 1400. But even here Trevisa did not escape the curse of inaccuracy. The first person to cite the date of his death was John Smyth of Nibley (in his *Lives of the Berkeleys*, c. 1622, I, 22), who gives it as 1412, citing the Worcester episcopal register. This date is repeated toward the end of the seventeenth century by Henry Wharton (who consulted Smyth), and thereafter by Tanner, Towneley, Babington, Rogers, Boase and Courtney, Cooke, Jeayes, C. W. Boase, and Kingsford in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. It was not until the present century that Wilkins (1915) and Perry (1925) discovered the correct date (1402) in the Worcester Episco-

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pal Register of Bishop Clifford. The earliest birth date cited is 1322 (Cooke, Wilkins), and this seems to be based partly on Fuller's speculations ("little less than ninety years old") and partly on the erroneous death date, since 1322 subtracted from 1412 yields ninety years. Wilkins adds "or before," since he knew that 1412 was wrong, but failed to realize that Fuller's calculations were based on the erroneous date for completion of the *Polychronicon* translation.

Ironically, the best guess for the date of Trevisa's birth (1342) first appears in Fabricius (1735) as an apparent misreading of an entry on Trevisa in Bale's *Catalogus* (1557), which erroneously states that Trevisa's continuation of the *Polychronicon* extended from 1342 to 1397. Fabricius seems to have read the first figure as Trevisa's birth date. This is then picked up by Rogers (1870) who states flatly that Trevisa was "born in the year 1342." To my knowledge the only person to arrive at the date 1342 as I have (based on the date of his arrival in Oxford: 1362) is C. W. Boase in his edition of the Registry of Exeter College (1894), where he gives the date of Trevisa's birth as "about 1342." But old traditions die hard. Even the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, I, 467 (1974) cautiously gives the birth date as c.1330.

One might suppose that this discussion of dates is much ado about nothing, but in the case of Trevisa, at least, this is not so, because important inferences have been made by the use of these dates. Thus the attribution to Trevisa of the Pedigree of the Berkeley family, for example, which records the birth dates of children ending with the birth of John on 21 January 1351, is based on the assumption that he was already an educated adult attached to Lord Berkeley in the thirteen-fifties. John Smyth had first proposed this in his *Lives* (I, 7), whence it was picked up by Shrapnell (1808), and in turn by Jeayes who, in his published catalogue of the muniments in Berkeley Castle (1892), carries it a step further and says that Select Roll 102 (the document in question) "was the original production, if not in the very handwriting of John Trevisa." Both Wilkins and Perry list this Roll among Trevisa's works without question. A translation of Vegetius' *De Re Militari* is dated 1408, and was attributed to Trevisa until this century, when the true date of his death was discovered. I should add that some uncertainty remains: when did Trevisa become chaplain to Lord Berkeley? when vicar of Berkeley?

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The first three chapters of my biography (on Cornwall, Oxford, and Berkeley) will deal directly with Trevisa's life, beginning in each case with what is known or can be inferred. The chapter on translations will discuss Trevisa's known works, and the final two chapters will present hypotheses in which I have associated Trevisa with translation of the Early Version of the Wyclif Bible (in the thirteen-seventies), and with revision of *Piers the Plowman* (B version 1378-83; C version, c. 1388 or later). Students of medieval literature will certainly be aware that these latter chapters are highly theoretical, but it is well at this point to acknowledge publicly that the final two chapters of my biography will not represent an accepted point of view. Naturally it is my hope that subsequent research by others, with more specialized knowledge than I have, will disprove or (preferably) confirm the truth of these two hypotheses concerning Trevisa, who has suffered enough (as we have seen) from the slings and arrows of misinformation.

By way of conclusion let me say that colleagues in the field of *Piers Plowman* studies have treated me kindly. After all, it might have been tempting to brand me as a Baconian, but they have not done so, and for that I am grateful. Their silence I interpret as respectful and skeptical. One of the few scholars to address the question directly in recent years has been John M. Bowers in his book *The Crisis of Will in Piers Plowman* (1986). In the opening chapter he develops a hypothesis that the poet's education went no farther than a cathedral school, perhaps that of Worcester, which was not far from the Malvern Hills mentioned in the poem. In arguing against the suggestion that the author was educated at Oxford, Bowers remarks "the reader of *Piers Plowman* is forced to conclude that the poet was very much unlike John Trevisa" for the following reasons: the B-poet shows no signs of being a foreign traveler, admits to behaving contemptuously to social superiors such as Lord Berkeley would have been, and betrays little of the encyclopedic lore to be gained from Bartholomeus or the historiographical method to be found in Higden.... (p. 18)

Since offering my Trevisa hypothesis I have tried to avoid defending it at every turn, but let me now make an exception to

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this rule and comment briefly on Bowers' argument. First, to the assertion that the B-poet shows no signs of being a traveler, I respond by asking what signs would be required beyond his references to "Lombardes lettres" (V 251-1), the monetary transactions in Bruges and Prussia contemplated by the worldly merchant who exemplifies covetousness on Haukin's coat (XIII 392-99), and the references to Rochmadore (XII 37) and Pamplona (VII 252)?

Second it is the Dreamer, not the B-poet, who "admits to behaving contemptuously to social superiors." Such a blurring of the distinction between Dreamer and author would never be tolerated in Chaucer studies, and it is even more important to guard against it in "Langland" studies where the practice is rampant. But even if we tolerated it in this case, what is to be done with those numerous passages in the B text reflecting aristocratic interests (See Appendix, "Berkeley" for examples)?

Third, Bowers sees little evidence of the method of Higden or the lore of Bartholomeus in the poem. As regards the former I am at a loss, since he makes no attempt to invalidate my numerous examples of connections between the B-text and the *Polychronicon* both as regards the general structure of the B-continuation and its poetic details. As for Bartholomeus, we should not be surprised at the absence of his lore from the B-text, written perhaps a decade before

the translation of the *De Proprietatibus Rerum* was undertaken.

Finally, Bowers is skeptical that one person could have had time to write *Piers Plowman* and also translate so many works. Of course no one can provide a certain answer to such an objection, and I should add that my theory of authorship remains just that: a theory. But that theory includes a hypothetical chronology: Trevisa's shorter translations were probably completed during his stay in Exeter College (1362-69); his help with the Wyclif Bible occurred at Queens during the period 1370-78; revision of *Piers Plowman* was undertaken following his expulsion from Queens in the years 1378-83; the *Polychronicon* translation was completed in 1387; translation of the *De Regimine Principum* of Aegidius Romanus probably belongs to the period 1388-92 along with the C-revision of *Piers Plowman* accomplished during that same time; and finally the encyclopedia of Bartholomeus was translated during 1394-99.

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In reciting the above chronology I may sound a bit more confident than I am. But in the midst of so much uncertainty it is probably best to be decisive. My theory that John Trevisa was responsible for the B and C versions of *Piers Plowman* may indeed be improbable; the only thing more improbable, in my opinion, is the theory that they were written by William Langland.

University of Washington

Appendix

The following citations are intended to illustrate the application of my hypothesis that John Trevisa (c. 1342-1402) wrote the B and C versions of *Piers the Plowman*. Catchwords are used to suggest the period or aspect of his life reflected in the passage. Passus and line numbers are from W. W. Skeat's parallel text edition in 2 Volumes (Oxford 1886), B text unless otherwise indicated. Further references are given in a note at the end.

travel	V 251-2: Lombardes lettres. See <i>Review</i> 2.247 (note to C VI 246). Trevisa traveled abroad more than once, and made use of Lombards letters in doing so (CCR 1392-96, p. 524).
London	X 78-9 (from Schmidt's B text; not in Skeat): (<i>Review</i> 2.219) "For God is deef nowadayes and deyneth noght his eres to opene, That girles for hire giltes he forgrynt hem alle." These lines are in B MSS RF only and appear to be added at a later date (though Kane-Donaldson and Schmidt think not. See the continuation of Higden's <i>Polychronicon</i> by the Monk of Westminster (R.S. ix 14) July 1382: "Eodem tempore fuit epidemia Londoniae sed maxime puellarum et puellorum." In the C text (when this epidemic was presumably no longer in the headlines) "girles" is replaced by "good men" (C XII 62).
Oxford	X 256-90 Critique of bishops (dobest), directed especially against Thomas Brinton for lending his prestige to the Black Friars Council (summer of 1382) and perhaps especially for his prominent role as an inquisitor at Oxford in preparation for Archbishop Courtenay's Convocation there on 13 Nov 1382. See <i>Review</i> 2.230-1,248-9.
Berkeley	X 312-3: "Litel had lordes to done to 3yue londe fram her heires To religious that haue no reuthe though it reyne on here auteres" This concern for how lords dispose of their lands befits a man who was chaplain to Thomas IV Lord Berkeley. See <i>Traditio</i> 18.314n99; <i>Review</i> 2.245-6. And see esp. XV 310-36.
Oxford	XI 49-102 A primary purpose of the B-continuation (XI-XX) is to expose the self-serving practices of the friars. Trevisa translated FitzRalph's <i>Defensio Curatorum</i> , and makes his view of the friars quite clear in notes to his translation of the <i>Polychronicon</i> .
Berkeley	XI 191-209 The poor and uneducated do not have a monopoly on virtue. Having a wealthy patron tends to inhibit hasty generalizations about wealth and poverty (cp. A-text).
priest	XI 274-308 Critique of the priesthood. One might say that the criticism of the friars (XI 49-102) is here balanced with a rebuke to secular priests. But one only has to read the two passages to see that the friars are denounced, whereas priests are subjected to in-house criticism. The author clearly writes as an experienced and concerned parish priest.

Cornwall	XI 332-353 God's Creation (animals and birds): from the Cornish <i>Ordinalia</i> , <i>Origo Mundi</i> , 123-34. <i>Medieval Studies</i> 23.91-125; <i>Speculum</i> 44.309; <i>Review</i> 2.233-4. John Trevisa was a Cornishman. Several words in BC have as yet no satisfactory etymologies: see e.g. "goky" (XI 299-300) and note <i>MED</i> . personal XII 20-5. The value of recreation. See Kane in <i>New Perspectives in Chaucer Criticism</i> (1981), 11ff; Trevisa's translation of "Anglia plena jods, gens libera digna jocari" <i>Poly</i> . R.S. ii 19, and comment
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	thereon by R. H. Hodgkin, <i>Six Centuries of an Oxford College</i> (1949), 38 contrasting Wyclif's and Trevisa's views; and Glending Olson, <i>Literature and Recreation in the Later Middle Ages</i> (1982), 94n6.
Priest	XII 175-85 Introspective passage on how a priest meets his own spiritual needs in comparison with the layman who is dependent on the expertise of his confessor.
personal	XII 257-9, XV 132-41, XX 287-91 False executors. For Trevisa's performance as an executor, see <i>Traditio</i> , 18.305-6.
Oxford	XIII 21-214 Satirical portrait of the Dominican William Jordan (Oxford convent c.1350-68). See M. E. Marcett, <i>Uhtred de Boldon, Friar William Jordan and Piers Plowman</i> (1938); <i>Review</i> 2.235-6; <i>Poly</i> i 77. On the possible influence of Uhtred (Jordan's opponent) on C XVIII 123-4, see G. H. Russell, <i>JWCI</i> 29.101-16. Russell wonders why this allusion to the clear vision would appear in C and not B, when the discussion took place in 1366; it is worth pointing out in this connection that Uhtred returned to Oxford in 1383 (A. B. Eraden, <i>BRUO</i> i 212) at which time Trevisa also was there.
Oxford	XIII 108-9 Criticism of the recruiting practices of the friars, criticised by FitzRalph in <i>Defensio Curatorum</i> translated by Trevisa EETS OS 167, p. 56. <i>Review</i> 2.236.
Travel	XIII 384-99 Worldly merchant plans his overseas transactions while attending mass, sending his servants to Bruges or to Prussia "to marchaunden with monoye and maken her eschaunges" (XIII 394). For Trevisa's experience with the exchange rate at Breisach see <i>Poly</i> vi 259.
Berkeley	XIII 410-57 Branches of Sloth. Instead of minstrels, lords should include at their feasts the poor, the learned, and the ill or afflicted.
Cornwall	XIV 224-8, 238-43 The efforts of Wrath and Covetousness to overcome the poor are envisioned as a wrestling match. The neck hold (238-9) is the opening position: see B. H. Kendall, <i>The Art of Cornish Wrestling</i> , p. 3. See <i>YES</i> 7.36.

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XV 68-144	Balanced criticism (cf. X1274-309 above) of friars (68-86) and priests (87-144), the latter clearly in-house and presented with a strong consciousness of potentially hostile colleagues (in this connection see also XV 381,412, and 487).
Oxford	XV 115 Quotation of Pseudo-Chrysostom on Matthew, from memory. See Skeat, ii 217f; <i>MP</i> 58.94 item 7 and n. 68; <i>Review</i> 2.258.
Oxford	XV 365-82 Decay of education undermines the priesthood. Children no longer learn French in grammar school (365-9). See Skeat, ii 227; <i>Poly</i> ii 161; <i>Review</i> 2.245. Students no longer know how to respond to a quodlibet; the author "dare not say it for shame" (376) because this is his world. How far did Trevisa progress with his education? Emden lists only the M.A.; John Shirley (c. 1422) says "maystre lohan Trevysa Doctour in theologie" (BL Addit 16165 fol. 94r).
Oxford	XV 383-88, 483-94, 532-38, 572-601 Conversion of Saracens and Jews. The poet's expanded horizon here may come from FitzRalph, <i>Summa in Quaestionibus Armenorum</i> , esp. books xviii, xix. See K. Walsh, <i>Fitzralph</i> (1981), 174.
Oxford	XV 389-408 Mohammed and the dove. See <i>Poly</i> . vi 19-21.
Oxford	XV501-31 Donation of Constantine. See <i>Poly</i> v. 131 and <i>Review</i> 2.259.
London	XV 555-6 A prelate who followed the example of St. Thomas Becket: Simon Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, murdered by a mob during the Peasants' Revolt in June 1381. See <i>MP</i> 77.158-9; <i>Review</i> 2.221-2, 259.
London	XVII1203-350 Spiritual status of participants in the Peasants' Revolt. See <i>Review</i> 2. 262-3.
Cornwall	XVIII131 "likth" (& XI 1145 "hexte"). A southwesternism. See <i>Review</i> L 2.223.
Bible	For Trevisa as Translator of the Bible see <i>MP</i> 58.81-98. The following passages relate to this issue:
"	C XI197 "And of Scripture the skylful and scryuaynes were trewe" See <i>Review</i> 2. 253.
"	XII 147-8 "Ne in none beggares cote was that barne borne / But in a burgeys place of Bethlem the best." See WB EV Luke 2:7; <i>Review</i> 2.235, 257. I believe Trevisa's association with the Wyclif Bible project to

	be with EV only.
"	XVIII153 (C XX153) A crux in the passion narrative (Mt. 27:34, Mark 15:23, Luke 23:36, John 19:28-30). See <i>YES</i> 7.38, <i>Review</i> 2.263.
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"	XVIII 109 (CXXI 114) A crux in the interpretation of Dan. 9:24. See <i>YES</i> 7.38, <i>Review</i> 2.237-8, 263.
Cornwall	XVIII1324-401 The guiler beguiled: for a comparison of this theme in <i>Piers</i> and in the Cornish <i>Ordinalia</i> , see Robert Longworth <i>The Cornish Ordinalia</i> (1967), chapter 4.
Oxford	XVIII1377-85 The extent of Christ's mercy: Trevisa's note on the two hells in <i>Poly</i> vi 461. See <i>Review</i> 2.263.4.
Cornwall	XIX 4-14 The Ascension. See <i>Review</i> 2.265, and the depiction of the Ascension at the end of the Cornish <i>Resurrexio</i> .
personal	XIX 314-25 The building of Piers' barn. See accounts of Exeter College Oxford for L.V. 1363: Item per compt, de xii d solut, pro conductione duorum equorum quando Rector et Johannes Trewyse fuerunt apud West Wyttenham ad componendum cum firmariis pro horreo faciendum.
Oxford	XX Siege of the barn of Unity by Antichrist: the emotional source of this dramatic ending of the poem may be found in the poet's reaction to the crisis of Oxford University in 1382, when those agents of Antichrist (the friars) won a great victory over the secular faculty by means of the Black Friars Council and the subsequent visitation by Archbishop Courtenay in Nov 1382. See "Poetry and the Liberal Arts: The Oxford Background of <i>Piers the Plowman</i> ," <i>Arts Libéraux et Philosophie au Moyen Age</i> , Montreal and Paris, 1969, 715-19. For the specific critique of the friars FitzRalph's <i>Defensio Curatorum</i> should again be consulted. And notice the references to the "wise teachers" of Holy Church who are the embattled seculars (esp. 299-301).
	XX 1-50 The character Need has very complex biblical roots. See Robert Adams in <i>Traditio</i> 34.273-301, especially on the importance of Job 41:13b as interpreted by Gregory in his <i>Morals</i> : "need (egestas) goeth before his face" (AV 41:22b has a different reading). This same verse is discussed by Trevelles in a determination on the infallibility of biblical prophecies concerning Antichrist and the Judgment, and the