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The Present and Past Participles in the Medieval English Translations of St. John's Gospel from Latin

Summary

The present participle and past participle, together with the infinitive, have a long history in English; this is quite contrary to finite verb forms, which mostly developed during the Middle English period. Participles were already in use in the earliest stages of the language and performed functions similar to those of the present active participle and perfect passive participle in Latin. Therefore, one may assume that Latin participles are rendered into Old English and Middle English mostly by means of their English equivalents. It appears, however, that this was not the case. The data provided in our research lead us to the conclusion that the implementation of participles in English was rather difficult and slow, at least when it comes to the Gospel translations. This paper shows what was used instead – for example, various types of clauses; it also shows the reasons for this (such as ambiguity hidden sometimes in participles).

Key words: participles, usage, frequency, alternatives, translation, Latin, Old English, Middle English

Sedanji in pretekli deležnik v srednjeveških prevodih Evangelija po Janezu iz latinščine v angleščino

Povzetek

Sedanji in pretekli deležnik skupaj z nedoločnikom imajo v angleščini dolgo zgodovino za razliko od določnih glagolskih oblik, ki so se večinoma razvile v srednji angleščini. Deležnika sta bila v rabi že v zgodnjih fazah jezikovnega razvoja in sta opravljala podobne funkcije, kot sta jih v latinščini imela sedanji tvorniški in perfektni trpniški deležnik. Tako lahko domnevamo, da sta se latinska deležnika prenašala v staro in srednjo angleščino predvsem kot njuni angleški ustreznici. Vendar raziskave kažejo, da temu vendale ni bilo tako. Podatki zbrani in analizirani v naši raziskavi, nas vodijo do zaključka, da je bilo uveljavljanje deležnikov v angleščini precej težavno in počasno, vsaj kar se tiče prevajanja evangelijev. V prispevku navajamo načine, s katerimi so se prevajali (npr. različne vrste stavkov) in razloge (dvoumnost sporočila, skritega v deležniku).

Ključne besede: deležniki, raba, pogostost, alternative, prevajanje, latinščina, stara angleščina, srednja angleščina.

The Present and Past Participles in the Medieval English Translations of St. John's Gospel from Latin

1. Introduction

The process of biblical translation has been an ongoing one, since every period and every generation so to speak needs its own version of the Bible, a version that is adapted to the current language usage and the contemporary social, cultural and cognitive state. Thus, apart from the importance of accurate religious interpretation of the text, biblical translations have been invaluable sources of knowledge about the dynamic development of a language, its change and maintenance. They reflect not only the written language at a particular time and place, but also the spoken language, since there were intended for the broadest of populations.

It is because of this that biblical translations may be also very useful in the study of various forms and syntactic structures, including the usage and development of participles. Generally speaking, the present and past participles in the Old and Middle English¹ periods share many common features with Latin present active and perfect passive participles.

The Latin participles act as verbal adjectives. Like adjectives, they modify nouns or pronouns, as can be seen, for example, from the expression *arbor florens*, meaning *a blooming tree*, and *discipulus laudatus*, meaning *a praised student* (Gortan, Gorski, and Pauš 1954, 243). Like verbs they express action or a state of being, and occur in both the active or passive voice, e.g. *Animae eum talia dicentem audiebant et lacrimabant*. *The spirits heard him speaking such things and wept; Puella a patre vocata respondit*. *The girl having been called by her father replied* (Goldman and Nyenhuis 1982, 152, 186). More precisely, the Latin present active and perfect passive participles can perform attributive, predicative and adverbial functions. The attributive participle modifies a noun or a pronoun, the predicative complements the verbal predicate which denotes immediate perception, while the adverbial substitutes an adverbial clause.

The present and past participles in the OE language also act as verbal adjectives, as is noticeable, for example, from *forðaem ðaet land waes eall gebun* (*Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader* 1959), *because that land was all inhabited*, where *gebun*, the past participle of the verb *buan*, acts as an adjective and *ða he gefaren haefde*, *then he had gone* (Reznik, Sorokina, and Reznik 2001, 219), where *gefaren*, the past participle of *faran*, *go, travel*, acts as a part of the verbal predicate. Moreover, English participles, just as in Latin, can be declined like adjectives within a developed system of forms indicating gender, case and number.

In the ME period participles are still verbal adjectives. They preserve their nominal syntactic features, but begin to lose the nominal categories of gender, number and case, due to the disappearance of word endings. At the same time their verbal categories of order, voice and aspect become more prominent, as seen in Chaucer, e.g. *The younge sonne hath in the Ram his halve course y-runne*, *The young son has run its half-course in the Ram; engendred is the flour, the flower is generated (born); singinge he was ... al the dai, he was singing all the day* (*The Riverside Chaucer*

¹ Hereinafter abbreviated to OE and ME

2008, 23-4). Thus, at the end of the ME period participles acquire elements of conjugation, thereby shifting from the system of declension.

Despite these changes which occurred over the course of time, it is clear that OE and ME present and past participles may be considered translation equivalents of Latin present active and perfect passive participles. Therefore, one may reasonably expect them to be used in English translations instead of Latin participles, particularly when it was known that the medieval authors generally sought to translate God's Word as literally as possible, both in form and content. However, it appears that this was not the case. While studying St. John's Gospel translations we perceived numerous and quite various deviations from the Latin original. So, in this paper we wish to explore the frequency of usage, the functions and the alternatives of the present and past participles in the OE and ME translations. We also want to suggest the reasons for the observed deviations.

During the research we used as the source text St. Jerome's *Vulgate*² from the beginning of the 5th ct. – that is, the only source for all written English Gospel translations before the Reformation. As the first target text we took the *West-Saxon Gospels*, Cambridge University Library, Ii.2.11., MS "A," (Grünberg 1967, 206.36) by an anonymous author from the 11th ct. This was the first translation which was not composed in the form of glosses, but existed separately from the Latin source. As seen from its name, the translation is written in the West-Saxon vernacular, whose prestige in the period between the 9th and 12th ct. was such that it can be considered a kind of reference for the standard OE language. As the second target text we used the later version of *Wycliffe's Bible*,³ written before 1408; its author is believed to be John Purvey, a follower of Wycliffe. This translation is written in the East Midland vernacular, which included also the dialect of London and which later became the basis of the standard Modern English language. Both target texts are quite prominent.

We have elaborated evidence of 95 participles from the source text. It is a considerable number for a text of such a length and indicates a frequent usage of participles in Latin. In our opinion it is also an adequately large number to show the tendencies towards the usage of participles in the medieval English translations. Of course, for definitive conclusions it would be necessary to collect the data from a greater number of medieval Gospel translations.

The paper is organised into three main parts. Part 1 supplies the data on the Latin present active participle translation, Part 2, the data on the Latin perfect passive participle translation, while Part 3 discusses the reasons for renderings previously shown in the paper and analyzes certain ambiguous Latin participles. Since the present active and the perfect passive participles in the Latin language can perform the attributive, predicative and adverbial functions, the first and the second parts are subdivided into smaller sections accordingly and include statistics in the form of tables.

The evidence provided in the paper is presented thus: we first provide a Latin quotation; an OE and then an ME translation follows, while all three are accompanied by glosses in italics. The Modern English translation, taken from the AV, is finally provided within quotation marks. Further on, each example is preceded by a heading which indicates the type of the perceived

² <http://faculty.acu.edu/~goebeld/vulgata/newtest/john/vjo11.htm>, accessed on July 25, 2006

³ <http://www.s bible.boom.ru/wyc/joh1.htm>, accessed on August 28, 2006; henceforth called the Middle English text

deviation, if any exists. The underlined part of a heading refers to the English translation in which a deviation occurs.

2. Present Active Participle

The present active participle is formed from the stem of the verb + *ns* (gen. *-ntis*) and declined like third declension adjectives of one termination, except that it has *-e* in the ablative singular instead of *-i*. It is usually translated into Modern English by a verb ending in *-ing*.

2.1 Attributive Participle

As mentioned in the introduction, the present active participle can occur in the attributive function, modifying a noun or a pronoun in any case, number or gender. It acts just like a Modern English present participle when it indicates some sort of permanent characteristic, for example in *running water* or *the missing link*.

In the source text we found 15 attributive participles, but interestingly, only two of them are translated into OE and ME by means of present participles. These typically end in OE *-ende* or *-onde*, and in ME *-inge* or *-ynge*, as seen from the following:

OE present participle > ME present participle

4:14 fons aquae salientis
well waterGEN springGEN PRES ACT PPL

170 wyll forþ raesendes waeteres
well forth riseGEN PRES PPL waterGEN

4:14 a welle of watir, spryngynge vp
a well of water, springing up

“a well of water springing up”

The others are translated quite variously either into OE or ME or into both, as seen from the following instances:

OE present participle > ME relative clause

1:9 quae inluminat omnem hominem venientem in mundum
which enlightPRES 3 SG every manACC comeACC PRES ACT PPL in worldACC

8 þæt onlyht aelcne cumende man on þisne myddaneard
Which enlightPRES 3 SG each comingPRES PPL manACC in this worldACC

1:9 which lytneth ech man that cometh in to this world.
which enlights each man that comes into this world

“which lighteth every man that cometh into world”

OE relative clause > ME present participle

- 14:10 Pater autem in me manens ipse facit opera
Father but in meABL dwellPRES ACT PPL himself does worksACC PL
- 820 se faeder þe wunaþ on me. he wyrþ þa weorc
the father who dwellPRES 3 SG in meDAT. he does the worksACC PL
- 14:10 the fadir hym silf dwellynge in me, doith the werkis
the father himself dwelling in me, does the works
 “but the Father that dwell in me, he doeth the works”

OE relative clause > ME relative clause

- 15:2 omnem palmitem in me non ferentem fructum tollet eum
every branchACC in meABL not bearACC PRES ACT PPL fruitACC take away FUT 3SG itACC
- 850 he deþ aelc twig aweg on me. þe bleða ne byrþ
he takes each branchACC away in meDAT. that fruitACC PL not bearPRES 3 SG
- 15:2 Ech braunch in me that berith not fruyt, he schal take awei it
each branch in me that bearPRES 3 SG not fruit, he will take away it
 “every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away”

OE simple sentence > ME coordinate clause

- 5:2 est ... piscina ... quinque porticus habens
(There) is ... pool ... five porchesACC PL havePRES ACT PPL
- 223 ... ys an mere. se mere haefþ fif porticas
(There) is one sea. The sea havePRES 3 SG five porchesACC PL
- 5:2 ... is a waissyng place ... and hath fyue porchis.
(There) is a washing place ... and has five porche.
 “there is ... a pool, ..., having five porches”

OE present participle > ME prepositional phrase

- 1: 23 ego vox clamantis in deserto
I voice cryGEN PRES ACT PPL in desertABL
- 27 ic eom clypigendes stefn on westene

*I am cry*GEN PRES ACT PPL *voice in wilderness*DAT

1:23 Y am a vois of a crier in deseert

I am a voice of a crier in desert

“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness”

OE nominal phrase > ME nominal phrase

11:1 erat autem quidam languens Lazarus

*was but some be ill*PRES ACT PPL *Lazarus*

615 wytodlice sum seoc man waes genemned lazarus

*indeed some sick man be*PRET 3 SG *call*PAST PPL *Lazarus*

11:1 and ther was a sijk man, Lazarus

and there was a sick man, Lazarus

“now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus”

OE nominal phrase > ME prepositional phrase + relative clause

10:21 haec verba non sunt daemonium habentis

*these words not be*PRES 3 PL *devil*ACC *have*GEN PRES ACT PPL

588 ne synd na þys wodes mannes word

*nor be*PRES PL *these mad man*GEN *word*PL

10:21 these wordis ben not of a man that hath a feend

These words are not of a man that has a fiend

“these are not the words of him that hath a devil”

The table shown below summarizes the obtained data.

	PRES PPL	relative clause	noun phrase	preposition. phrase	noun phr.+ relat. clause	simple sentence	coordinate clause	total N. of evidences
OE	6	6	2	–	–	1	–	15
ME	6	5	1	1	1	–	1	15

Table 1. Translation of attributive PRES ACT PPSs.

It is evident from the above that the attributive present participle is rare in both translations, totalling only about 30 % of all cases. Though in most English patterns the present active participle is transformed into a finite verb in the relative clause, there are also other solutions. In situations where a Latin sentence appears particularly long, it can be broken into two simple sentences or transformed into a coordinate sentence. Nominal and prepositional phrases are also noticed, and that is a clear indicator that the OE and ME present participles can function as a noun phrase.

2.2 Predicative Participle

While Latin attributive participles modify nouns, predicative ones complement verbal predicates. As we learn from Latin grammar, the present active participles performing this function are either those that follow verbs denoting immediate observation – like *video* (*see*), *audio* (*hear*), *aspicio* (*notice*), *cognosco* (*find out, learn*) etc. – or those that follow verbs that enable immediate perception – such as *facio* (*make, create, do*), *finco* (*imagine, shape, compose*), *pingo* (*depict*), *induco* (*bring in, introduce*) etc. Sometimes the present active participle can replace the perfect passive one after the verbs *habeo* (*have*) and *teneo* (*hold*) to indicate the durative aspect of an action.

All the predicative present active participles that we find in the source text appear after the verbs of immediate perception. In present-day English the present participle can likewise follow an object + verb of the senses, e.g. *I heard someone calling my name* (*Cambridge International Dictionary of English* 1995, 655); however, such a construction in grammatical description is usually called a participial clause.

The predicative present active participles are transferred into OE and ME in the following ways:

OE present participle > ME present participle

1:29	videt	Iohannes	Iesum	venientem	
	<i>seePRES 3 SG</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Jesus.ACC</i>	<i>comeACC PRES ACT PPL</i>	
35	iohannes	geseah	ƀone	haelend ...	cumende
	<i>John</i>	<i>seePRET 3 SG</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>HealerACC ...</i>	<i>comePRES ACT PPL</i>
1:29	Joon	say	Jhesu	comynge	
	<i>John</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>Jesus</i>	<i>coming</i>	
	“John seeth Jesus coming”				

OE objective clause > ME present participle

11:33	Iesus	ergo	ut	vidit	eam	plorantem	
	<i>Jesus</i>	<i>therefore</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>seePERF 3 SG</i>	<i>sheACC</i>	<i>weepACC PRES ACT PPL</i>	
653	ƀa	se	haelend	geseah	ƀaet	heo	weop
	<i>when</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>Healer</i>	<i>seePRET 3 SG</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>wept</i>
11:33	therfor	whanne	Jhesu	saiy	hir	wepyng	
	<i>therefore</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>Jesus</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>weeping</i>	
	“when Jesus therefore saw her weeping”						

OE infinitive > ME present participle

5:6	hunc	cum	vidisset	Iesus	iacentem
	<i>thisACC</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>see PLUPERF SUB 3 SG</i>	<i>Jesus</i>	<i>lieACC PRES ACT PPL</i>

228 se haelend geseah Pysne licgan

*the Healer see*PRET 3 SG *this*ACC *lie*

5:6 whanne Jhesus hadde seyn hym liggyng

when Jesus had seen him lying

“when Jesus saw him lie”

The results are summed up in the following table:

	PRES PPL	objective clause	infinitive	total N. of evidences
OE	7	4	3	14
ME	14	—	—	14

Table 2. Translation of predicative PRES ACT PPLs.

As shown, all the predicative present active participles are translated as present participles into ME, versus only a half into OE. The other half is either transformed into finite verbs in objective clauses or, interestingly, into another non-finite form: the infinitive. As known, the accusative case with an infinitive and the predicative present active participle in Latin can be used alternatively after verbs of senses. It seems that under the influence of Latin grammar this is also the case in OE, since the infinitive forms appear in all the OE evidence found after *see* as the main verb. Similarly, in present-day English both forms can be used, e.g. *You were seen to enter the building at 8.30, She didn't want to be seen visiting the doctor* (*Cambridge International Dictionary of English* 1995, 1283).

2.3 Adverbial Participle

The adverbial participle can appear within a sentence either as a “connected” participle (in Latin *participium coniunctum*) or as an ablative absolute. The “connected” participle complements the subject or object of the sentence, being closely connected with the rest of the sentence, as in: *Spartacus fortiter pugnans cecidit, Spartacus fell bravely fighting* (Gortan, Gorski, and Pauš 1954, 246). The ablative absolute, meanwhile, functions independently from the rest of the sentence, making for a separate whole. The nominal phrase of that whole in the ablative case acquires the function of subject, whereas its attribute, a participle, takes up the function of predicate, as in: *Nave vastata, bellum finitum est, The ship having been destroyed, the war was finished* (Goldman and Nyenhuis 1982, 350).

The same difference is apparent between participial clauses in present-day English. For example, in *While running for the train, he lost his wallet*, the participle *running* complements the subject of the sentence *he*, whereas in the sentence *Weather permitting, we'll go sailing this weekend* (*Concise Companion to the English Language* 1998, 431–2) the absolute clause *Weather permitting* contains its own subject.

2.3.1 “Connected” Participle

The “connected” present active participles found in the source text express temporal, causative, modal, final, conditional and concessive meanings.

a) temporal:

OE present participle > ME coordinate clause

- 1:15 et clamat dicens
and cryPRES 3 SG sayPRES ACT PPL
- 16 7 clypað þus cweþende
and cryPRES 3 SG thus sayPRES ACT PPL
- 1:15 and crieth, and seith
and cries, and says
 “and cried, saying”

OE coordinate clause > ME present participle

- 7:28 clamabat ergo docens in templo Iesus et dicens ...
cryIMPF 3 SG then teachPRES ACT PPL in templeABL Jesus and sayPRES ACT PPL
- 401 se haelend clypode 7 laerde on þam temple 7 cwaeþ
the Healer callPRET 3 SG and teachPRET 3 SG in the templeDAT and said
- 7:28 Jhesus criede in the temple techyng, and seide ...
Jesus cried in the temple teaching, and said
 “Then cried Jesus in the temple he taught, saying”

OE temporal clause > ME present participle

- 2:23 multi crediderunt in nomine eius videntes signa eius
many believePERF 3 PL in nameABL heGEN seePRES ACT PPL signACC PL heGEN
- 98 manega gelyfdon on hys naman þa hig gesawon þa tacna
many believePRET 3 PL in hisGEN nameACC when they seePRET 3 PL the miraclesACC
 PL
- 2:23 many bileueden in his name, seynge his signes
many believed in his name, seeing his signs
 “many believed in his name, when they saw miracles”

OE simple sentence > ME present participle

- 11:32 videns eum cecidit
seePRES ACT PPL heACC fallPRET 3 SG

652 7 heo hyne geseah. heo feoll
she heACC seePRET 3 SG. she fallPRET 3 SG

11:32 sche seyng e hym felde down

She seeing him fell down

“and saw him, she fell down”

OE coordinate clause > ME coordinate clause

8:8 et iterum se inclinans scribebat in terra
and again himselfACC inclinePRES ACT PPL writeIMPF 3 SG on groundABL

442 7 he abeah eft 7 wrat on ðære eorþan
and he bowPRET 3 SG again and writePRET 3 SG on the earthACC

8:8 and eft he bowide hym silf, and wroot in the erthe

and again he bowed himself, and wrote in the earth

“and again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground”

OE temporal clause > ME coordinate clause

11:4 audiens autem Iesus dixit
hearPRES ACT PPL but Jesus sayPERF 3 SG

618 ða se hælend ðæt gehyrde. ða cweaþ he
when the Healer that hearPRET 3 SG then sayPRET 3 SG he

11:4 and Jhesus herde, and seide

and Jesus heard, and said

	PRES PPL	coordinate clause	temporal clause	simple sentence	total N. of evidences
OE	3	19	7	1	30
ME	8	22	—	—	30

Table 3. Translation of “connected” PRES ACT PPLs with temporal meaning.

As shown, in both translations coordinate clauses are mostly used instead of “connected” present active participles with temporal meaning. The present participles are rare, although their usage increases in the ME translation.

b) causative:

20:15 existimans quia hortulanus esset dicit

SupposePRES ACT PPL that gardener beIMPF SUB 3 SG sayPRES 3 SG

1118 heo wende þaet hyt se wyrtweard waere 7 cwaeþ to hym
she thinkPRES 3 SG that it the gardener bePRES SUB 3 SG and sayPRES 3 SG to heDAT

20:15 she gessynge that he was a gardynere, seith to him,
she guessing that he was a gardener, says to him
 “She supposing him to be the gardener, saith”

OE coordinate clause > ME coordinate clause

12:6 et loculos habens ea quae mittebantur portabat
and purseACC PL havePRES ACT PPL thoseACC PL what sendIMPF PASS 3 PL carryIMPF 3 SG

694 7 haefde scryn. 7 baer þa þyng þe man sende
and havePRES 3 SG chest and bearPRES 3 SG the thingsACC PL that one sendPRES 3 SG

12:6 and he hadde the pursis, and bar tho thingis that weren sent
and he had the purses, and bore those things that were sent
 “and had the bag, and bare what was put therein”

	PRES PPL	coordinate clause	total N. of evidences
OE	/	6	6
ME	5	1	6

Table 4. Translation of “connected” PRES ACT PPLs with causative meaning.

The “connected” present active participles with causative meaning, just like those with temporal, are mainly transferred into OE as coordinate clauses. In contrast, almost all of them are translated as present participles into ME.

c) modal:

OE present participle > ME present participle

12:15 rex tuus venit sedens super pullum asinae
king your comePRES 3 SG sitPRES ACT PPL on coltACC assGEN

705 þyn cyning cymþ uppan assan folan syttende
your king comePRES 3 SG on assGEN colt INS sitPRES ACT PPL

12:15 thi kyng cometh, sittynge on an asse fole
your king comes, sitting on an ass colt
 “thy King cometh, sitting on ass’s colt”

OE coordinate clause > ME present participle

11:38 Iesus ergo rursum fremens in semet ipso venit
Jesus therefore again groanPRES ACT PPL in himself comePERF 3 SG

658 se haelend geomrode on hym sylfum. 7 com
the Healer groanPRET in himself and comePRET 3 SG

11: 38 Jhesus eft makyngge noise in hym silf, cam
Jesus again making noise in himself, came
 “Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh”

	PRES PPL	coordinate clause	total N. of evidences
OE	2	1	3
ME	3	–	3

Table 5. Translation of “connected” PRES ACT PPLs with modal meaning.

As seen, the present active participles with modal meaning are usually translated into both OE and ME as present participles in this corpus.

d) final:

OE present participle > ME present participle

6:6 Hoc autem dicebat temptans eum
This but speakIMPF 3 SG temptPRES ACT PPL heACC

284 Ðaet he cwaeÐ hys fandiende
that he sayPRET 3 SG heGEN temptPRES ACT PPL

6:6 but he seide this thing, temptyngge hym
but he said this thing, tempting him
 “and this he said to prove him”

OE simple sentence > ME present participle

6:24 venerunt Capharnaum quaerentes Iesum
comePERF 3 PL CapernaumACC seek PRES ACT PPL JesusACC

313 comon to capharnaum. Sohton Þone haelend
comePRET PL to CapernaumACC seekPRET PL the HealerACC

6:24 camen to Cafarnaum, sekyngge Jhesu
came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus
 “came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus”

OE coordinate clause > ME present participle

12:33 hoc autem dicebat significans qua morte...
this but sayIMPF 3 SG indicatePRES ACT PPL what deathABL...

729 Ðaet he saede 7 tacnode hwylcum deaÐe ...
that he sayPRET and indicatePRET which deathINS ...

12: 33 and he seide this thing, signifiyng bi what deth...
and he said this thing, signifying by what death
 “this he said, signifying what death...”

OE temporal clause > ME present participle

20:31 ut credentes vitam habeatis
when believePRES ACT PPL lifeACC havePRES SUB 2 PL

1147 Ðaet ge habbon ece lyf Ðonne ge gelyfaÐ
that you havePRES SUB PL eternal life when you believePRES PL

20:31 that ye bileuyng e haue lijf
that you believing have life
 “that believing ye might have life”

OE coordinate clause > ME coordinate clause

11:3 miserunt ergo sorores ... dicentes
sendPERF 3 PL therefore sisterACC PL ... sayPRES ACT PPL

618 hys swustra sendon to hym 7 cwaedon
he GEN sisterACC PL sendPRET PL to heDAT and sayPRET PL

11:3 hise sistris senten to hym, and seide,
his sisters sent to hym, and said
 “therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying”

	PRES PPL	coordinate clause	simple sentence	temporal	total N. of evidences
OE	2	3	1	1	7
ME	6	1	–	–	7

Table 6. Translation of “connected” PRES ACT PPLs with final meaning.

Among the relatively small number of “connected” present active participles with final meaning in the source text, we find a great variety in the OE translation, while in the ME there are mainly past participles.

e) concessive:

OE superordinate clause > ME present participle

18:4 Iesus itaque sciens omnia quae ventura erant super

Jesus therefore knowPRES ACT PPL allACC PL that comePERIPH ACT CONJ upon

eum processit

heACC go forthPERF 3 SG

974 wytodlice se haelend wiste ealle þa þyng þe hym towearde

indeed the Healer knowPRET 3 SG all those thingsACC that heDAT toward

waeron. he eode þa forþ

were. he goPRET 3 SG then forth

18:4 and so Jhesus wytinge alle thingis that weren to come on hym, wente forth

and so Jesus knowing all things that were to come on him, went forth

“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth...”

	PRES PPL	superordinate clause	total N. of evidences
OE	–	1	1
ME	1	–	1

Table 7. Translation of “connected” PRES ACT PPLs with concessive meaning.

To summarize the above, we could say that the “connected” present active participles, regardless of their meanings, are rarely translated into OE by means of present participles, though the number of present participles significantly increases in the ME translation. Instead of participles the coordinate clauses are most frequently used in both translations (see table).

	PRES PPL	coordinate clause	temporal clause	simple sentence	superordinate clause	total N. of evidences
OE	7	29	8	2	1	47
ME	23	24	–	–	–	47

Table 8. Translation of “connected” PRES ACT PPLs – a summary.

2.3.2 Ablative Absolute

The ablative absolute in Latin can express the same meanings as “connected” participles, but in the source text we find only those with temporal and causative meaning.

a) temporal:

OE temporal clause > ME temporal clause

2:3 et deficiente vino dicit mater Iesu

and failABL PRES ACT PPL wineABL sayPRES 3 SG mother JesusGEN

71 þa þaet wyn geteorode þa cwæþ þæs haelendes moder

*when the wine fail*PRET *then say*PRET 3 SG *the Healer*GEN *mother*

2:3 and whanne wijn failide, the modir of Jhesu seide
and when wine failed, the mother of Jesus said
 “and when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith”

	temporal clause	total N. of evidences
OE	3	3
ME	3	3

Table 9. Translation of PRES ACT PPLs in the ablative absolute with temporal meaning.

As shown, the ablatives absolute with temporal meaning are never transferred as English present participles.

b) causative:

OE coordinate clause > ME causative clause

6:18 mare autem vento magno flante exsurgebat
*sea but wind great*ABL *blow*ABL PRES ACT PPL *rise*IMPF 3 SG

303 mycel wynd blew. 7 hyt waes hreoh sae
*great wind blow*PRET 3 SG *and it be*PRET 3 SG *rough sea*

6:18 and for a greet wynde blew, the see roos vp
and for a great wind blew, the sea rose up
 “and the sea arose by reason of great wind that blew”

	coordinate clause	causative clause	total N. of evidences
OE	1	–	1
ME	–	1	1

Table 10. Translation of PRES ACT PPLs in the ablative absolute with causative meaning.

We can show now the general data on the ablative absolute.

	temporal clause	coordinate clause	causative clause	total N. of evidences
OE	3	1	–	4
ME	3	–	1	4

Table 11. Translation of PRES ACT PPLs in the ablative absolute – a summary.

Interestingly, in the OE translation we do not find any expressions in the dative case, although, according to Quirk and Wrenn, such expressions often appeared during the period as an imitation of the Latin ablative absolute (Quirk and Wrenn 1977, 98).

3. Perfect Passive Participle

The perfect passive participle ends either in *-tus, -ta, -tum* or in *-sus, -sa, -sum* and is inflected like an adjective of the first and second declension – for example *vocatus, vocata, vocatum*, which means literally *having been called*, but can be translated simply *called*, depending on the context. Although the functions of the perfect passive participle can be the same as those of the present active one, in the source text we do not find predicative ones – that is, those that are placed after the verbs *habeo* (*have*) and *teneo* (*hold, understand*) to denote a durative state as a result of a verbal action.

3.1 Attributive Participle

OE past participle > ME superordinate clause

12:13 benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini
blessPERF PASS PPL who comePRES 3 SG in nameABL LordGEN

703 gebletsod þe com on dryhtnes naman
blessPAST PPL that comePRET 3 SG in LordGEN nameACC

12:13 blessid is the kyng of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord
blessed is the king of Israel, that comes in the name of the Lord
 “blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord”

OE relative clause > ME past participle

2:9 ut autem gustavit architriclinus aquam vinum factam
when but tastePERF 3 SG master of the feast waterACC wineACC makeACC PERF PASS PPL

78 Ða se dryhte ealdor Ðaes wynes onbyrgde þe of Ðam waetere
then the companyGEN master the wineGEN tastePRET that of the waterDAT
 geworden waes
makePAST PPL bePRET 3 SG

2:9 and whanne the architriclyn hadde tastid the watir maad wiyn
and when the ruler of the feast had tasted the water made wine
 “when the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine”

As a summary of the data provided, see the following table.

	PAST PPL	relative clause	superordinate clause	total N. of evidences
OE	1	2	–	3
ME	2	–	1	3

Table 12. Translation of attributive PERF PASS PPLs.

3.2 Adverbial Participle

3.2.1 “Connected” Participle

a) temporal meaning:

OE coordinate clause > ME coordinate clause

- 1:38 conversus autem Iesus et videns eos dicit
turnPERF PASS PPL but Jesus and seePRES ACT PPL theyAAC PL sayPRES 3 SG
- 46 Ða beseah se haelend 7 geseah hig 7 cwæþ
then lookPRET 3 SG around the Healer and seePRET 3 SG theyACC PL & sayPRET 3 SG
- 1:38 and Jhesu turnede, and say hem..., and seith...
and Jesus turned, and saw them..., and says ...
 “then Jesus turned, and saw..., and saith...”

OE temporal clause > ME coordinate clause

- 21:20 conversus Petrus vidit illum discipulum
turnPERF PASS PPL Peter seePERF 3 SG that discipleACC
- 1183 Ða petrus hyne bewende Ða geseh he Ðæt se leorningnyht
when Peter heACC turnPRET then seePRET 3 SG he that the disciple
- 21:20 Petre turnede and say thilke disciple...
Peter turned and saw that disciple
 “Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple ...”

	coordinate clause	temporal clause	total N. of evidences
OE	2	1	3
ME	3	—	3

Table 13. Translation of “connected” PERF PASS PPLs with temporal meaning.

b) modal:

OE past participle > ME past participle

- 11:44 et statim prodiit ... ligatus pedes et manus
and immediately comePRES 3SG forth ... bindPERF PASS PPL hand and foot
- 666 7 sona stop forþ ... gebunden handum 7 fotum
and immediately stepPRET 3 SG forth ... bindPAST PPL hand and footINS PL
- 11:44 cam out, boundun the hondis and feet
came out, bound the hands and feet
 “and he ... came forth bound hand and foot”

	PAST PPL	total N. of evidences
OE	1	1
ME	1	1

Table 14. Translation of “connected” PERF PASS PPLs with modal meaning.

	PAST PPL	coordinate clause	temporal clause	total N. of evidences
OE	1	2	1	4
ME	1	3	–	4

Table 15. Translation of “connected” PERF PASS PPLs – a summary.

3.2.2 Ablative Absolute

a) temporal:

OE coordinate clause > ME coordinate clause

11:41 Iesus autem elevatis sursum oculis dixit
Jesus but liftABL PL PERF PASS PPL up eyeABL PL sayPERF 3 SG

663 se haelend ahof his eagan up 7 cwaeþ
the Healer liftPRET 3 SG heGEN eyeACC PL up and sayPRET 3 SG

11:41 and Jhesus lifte vp hise iyen, and seide
and Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said
 “and Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said”

OE coordinate clause > ME temporal clause

17:1 et sublevatis oculis in caelum dixit
and liftABL PL PERF PASS PPL up eyeABL PL in heavenACC sayPERF 3 SG

931 se haelend ahof up hys eagan 7 cwaeþ
the Healer liftPRET up hisGEN eyeACC PL and sayPRET 3 SG

17:1 and whanne he hadde cast vp hise iyen into heuene, he seide
and when he had cast up his eyes into heaven, he said
 “and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said”

OE temporal clause > ME temporal clause

13:2 et cena facta surgit a cena
and supperABL makeABL PERF PASS PPL risePRES 3 SG from supperABL

757 Þa dryhtnes þenung waes gemacod he aras ...
when LordGEN supper bePRET 3 SG makePAST PPL he arisePRET 3 SG

13:2 whanne the souper was maad, ... he risith fro the souper

when the supper was made, ... he rises from the supper

“and supper being ended... he riseth from supper “

OE temporal clause > ME causative clause

20:20 gavisunt ergo discipuli viso Domino
rejoicePERF 3 PL therefore disciples seeABL PERF PASS PPL LordABL

1129 Ða leorningcnyhtas waeron blyþe. Ða hig haefdon dryhten gesawen
then disciples bePRET PL glad, when they havePRET LordACC seePAST PPL

20:20 therfor the discipulis ioieden, for the Lord was seyn
therefore the disciples rejoiced, for the Lord was seen
 “then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord”

OE dative > ME temporal clause

20:26 venit Iesus ianuis clausis
comePERF 3 SG Jesus doorABL PL closeABL PERF PASS PPL PL

1139 se haelend com belocenum durum
the Healer comePRET 3 SG locked doorINS PL

20:26 Jhesus cam, while the yatis weren schit
Jesus came, while the doors were shut
 “then came Jesus, the doors being shut”

OE prepositional phrase > ME temporal clause

21:4 mane autem iam facto stetit Iesus
morningABL but now createABL PERF PASS PPL standPERF 3 SG Jesus

1154 wytodlice on aerne mergen se haelend stod
indeed in early morning the Healer standPRET 3 SG

21:4 but whanne the morewe was comun, Jhesus stood
but when the morning was come, Jhesus stod
 “but when the morning was now come Jesus stood...”

The ablative absolute can be also translated into OE and ME in other ways, as seen from the following:

OE verbal noun > ME relative clause

5:13 Iesus enim declinavit turba constituta in loco
Jesus namely swervePERF 3 SG crowdABL formABL PERF PASS PPL in placeABL

238 se haelend beah fram Paere gegaderunge
*The Healer turn*PRET 3 SG *from the gathering*GEN

5:13 and Jhesus bowide awei fro the puple, that was set in the place
and Jesus turned away from the people, that were set in the place
 “for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place”

The last example is the only one where we find in the translation a verbal noun used instead of the perfect passive participle. Admittedly, the temporal meaning of the ablative absolute is quite doubtful in this instance.

	coordinate clause	temporal clause	causat. clause	relative clause	dative	prepositional phrase	verbal noun	total N. of evidences
OE	3	2	–	–	1	1	1	8
ME	1	5	1	1	–	–	–	8

Table 16. Translation of PERF PASS PPLs in the ablative absolute – a summary.

To conclude, the “connected” and the absolute perfect passive participles usually express temporal meaning in the source text and are transferred as finite verbs mostly in the coordinate and temporal clauses. Other choices are rare.

Having presented all the data, we shall show the final statistical results on the usage of participles in the English translations with reference to the source text, as well as on their function and alternatives.

	PRESENT & PAST PARTICIPLES	coordinate clauses	subordinate clauses (temporal, relative, objective)	other solutions (infinitive, prep. and noun phrases, dative, simple sent., superordinate clause)
OE	23 %	37 %	27 %	13 %
ME	48 %	31 %	18 %	3 %

Table 17. Percentage of the participles vs. other forms used in the OE and ME translations for PRES ACT and PERF PASS PPLs.

It emerges that the Latin present active and perfect passive participles are most frequently translated into OE as finite verbs in the coordinate and subordinate clauses, while participles are poorly represented with only 23 %. In contrast to this, in the ME translation the usage of participles significantly increases to 48 %, despite a still considerable implementation of coordinate and subordinate clauses. Other solutions, no matter how diverse, are negligible.

The percentage of participles, which in the Gospel translations ranges from small to medium, leads us to the conclusion that the participles might have been even rarer in spoken, everyday OE and ME. As is known, during the Middle Ages literal translation of the Gospel was near dogma in the Western church, and therefore every sentence and every word of the Gospel had to be as faithfully rendered as possible, including the form. If authors did not often adhere to this, in spite

of being aware of the assumed task and in spite of existing equivalents in the language, we can suppose that in informal speech participial frequency was even lower.

Considering participial function, the evidence presented throughout Chapter 1 and 2 indicate that the OE participles are used for the most part in the translation of the Latin predicative participles, while less frequently in the translation of attributive ones. On the other hand, almost all ME participles are used for Latin predicative and adverbial participles. This suggests that in the period between two translations the participles increasingly performed the verbal function at the expense of the attributive.

From the instances where subordinate clauses appear instead of participles we may conclude the following: by means of relative clauses only Latin attributive participles are rendered, by objective clauses only predicative ones and by coordinate clauses only adverbial, eventually attributive participles. It emerges, as well, that temporal clauses are just as frequent as coordinate ones in the translation of adverbial participles.

4. Discussion

In our opinion the reasons present active and perfect passive participles were rendered as exemplified above lie primarily in the specific social and cultural circumstances in which the OE and ME translations were written. The OE translation belonged to those written texts that were aimed to be read aloud in front of listeners, since most of the author's contemporaries were illiterate and could not read the text themselves. It is composed as a dense whole, without modern division into lines, which makes it rather difficult to read. Moreover, there are no punctuation marks, except for full stops, which primarily denote the phraseological division of sentences in the function of intonation to help the reader. As such, its language, including lexical and grammatical forms, had to be simple, clear and intelligible in order to allow all people, regardless of education, social status and age, to understand and remember it; only then could they perhaps relate its content to others. In these circumstances the choice of coordinate and subordinate clauses instead of participial ones seems understandable. In coordinate and subordinate clauses the subject and the predicate are clearly expressed, as well as the time, cause, purpose and manner of the action or state of being. The participial clauses, in contrast, are too condensed and are sometimes difficult to remember, especially when included within long and complex sentences. They are therefore favoured primarily in written texts aimed at careful and silent reading. Therefore, we can say that the choice of finite and non-finite forms was also cognitively conditioned.

This also accounts for the increase of participial clauses in the ME translation. In the period between the OE and ME translations more than three hundred years had passed and when the latter appeared, the social and cultural circumstances had changed insofar that the number of literate people had significantly increased; there were many more people who could not only read the translation themselves but also study it in private. Judging from the over 140 surviving manuscript copies of different sizes and illuminations, these were people of varying social status.

Certainly there were also other causes that favoured the usage of participles during the ME period, like the growing interest and admiration toward the Latin language and its grammar. We assume that the usage of the participle in that time began to be the question of style. As F. Th. Visser says, “Its employment was a means to render the utterance more compact and to relieve the often monotonous recurrence of coordinate and subordinate patterns. In translations from Latin there was naturally a great temptation to imitate the original in this respect.” (1966, 1264) Yet the spread of participles, at least of absolute construction was slow and obstructed, as we learn from Visser, “That there existed at the time a certain antipathy against the absolute construction – perhaps because it was felt as too bookish – may be inferred from the fact that the revisor of Wyclife’s Bible translation did away with it in almost every instance.” (Ibid.)

We believe that a no less important reason why Latin participial clauses were so frequently rendered by finite ones was their occasional ambiguity; by “ambiguity” we understand vagueness or uncertainty of meaning. The ambiguity of participles is evident from the following instances:⁴

20:31 ut **credentes** vitam habeatis > 1147 7 Paet ge habbon ece lyf. Ponne ge **gelyfaþ** > 20:31 that ye **bileuynge** haue lijf in his name

20:20 gavisunt ergo discipuli **viso** Domino > 1129 Pa leorningcnyhtas waeron blyþe. Ða hig **haefdon** dryhten **gesawen** < 20:20 therfor the disciplis ioieden, for the Lord **was seyn**

2: 23 multi crediderunt in nomine eius **videntes** signa eius quae faciebat > 98 manega gelyfdon Ða hig **gesawon** > 2:23 many bileueden in his name, **seynge** his signes

20:26 venit Iesus ianuis **clausis** > 1139 se haelend com **belocenum durum** > 20:26 Jhesus cam, while the yatis **weren schit**

In 20:31 *credentes* can be understood as expressing temporal meaning, (namely *when you believe*, as in the OE translation), causative (*because you believe*), modal (by way of belief), and even conditional (*if you believe*).

In 20:20 the possible meanings are temporal (*when they saw*) and causative (*because they saw*). As shown above, the OE and ME translators differently understood the participial clause.

In 2: 23, again, the participle can express both temporal and causative meaning.

In 20:26 the ablative absolute can be rendered as concessive (*although the doors were shut*), eventually temporal (*when the doors were shut*).

In these instances uncertainty arises about the meaning of an adverbial participle, but sometimes there is vagueness as to whether the participle is attributive or adverbial, such as in the following example:

14:10 Pater autem in me **manens** ipse facit opera > 820 se faeder Ðe **wunaþ** on me. he wyrçÐ Ða weorc > 14:10 the fadir hym silf **dwellynge** in me, doith the werkis

Here the participial meaning can be attributive (*which dwells in me*), but also adverbial, namely causative (*because he dwells in me*) and modal (*by means of dwelling in me*).

⁴ They have been already glossed earlier in the article.

15:2 omnem palmitem in me **non ferentem** fructum tollet eum >850 he deþ aelc twig aweg on me. Ðe bleða **ne byrþ** > 15:2 Ech braunch in me that **berith not** fruyt, he schal take awei it

Non ferentem can be understood attributively (as *which does not bring...*), but also adverbially, namely causally (*because it does not bring...*) or even conditionally (*if it does not bring...*).

One may find these ambiguities irrelevant for the meaning of the sentence, but the Gospel translations had to avoid anything that could confuse listeners or readers, or give rise to a misinterpretation of the meaning of the evangelistic text. The primary concern of the authors was undoubtedly how people might understand the text. Therefore, given the possibility of two or among more meanings, they decided on one of the possible meanings; they did so according to their own interpretation and accepted it as the meaning most likely to have been intended by the author of the source text. In such situations they behaved not only as translators, but interpreters and resolved the problem of ambiguity on behalf of their listeners or readers.

5. Conclusion

The research showed that the Latin present active and perfect passive participles were rarely translated into OE by means of their nearest equivalents – the present and past participles – despite the common nominal categories of case, gender and number. However, a tendency toward the increased usage of participles was perceived in the ME translation, although the nominal categories of the participles gradually disappeared in this period.

In most of the evidence, in both English translations we found finite verbs in the subordinate or coordinate clauses instead of participles. As both authors, according to medieval ecclesiastical customs, endeavoured to translate faithfully not only the content, but also the form of the evangelistic text, we assume that the frequency of participles in the spoken OE and ME languages was even lower than that found in the translations.

The participles in the OE translation typically performed the function of the Latin predicative, less frequently attributive participles, whereas those in the ME translation for the most part fulfilled the function of the Latin predicative and adverbial ones. This is a clear indication that in the period between the two translations the verbal function of the participles became more prominent in relation to attributive.

We believe that the main reason for the usage of finite clauses lies in the character of the source text itself and the social and cultural circumstances in which both translations were created. The Gospel, as the Word of God, had to be rendered in a highly intelligible and explicit way, and in that sense the finite clauses were definitely more convenient than participles, given that the OE translation was intended exclusively for listeners, while the ME one was for both listeners and readers.

Furthermore, the use of finite clauses resolved ambiguities sometimes hidden in participial clauses, since the translators chose one of the possible participial meanings on behalf of their contemporaries, and in that way avoided any eventual dilemma in advance.

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