The Interrogative Pronouns

*What* and *Who*

in English Bibles

—Methods of Translating the Latin, Greek and Hebrew Counterparts—

Isao Hashimoto

0. Introduction

*OED* (*s.v.*, *what* A. 2) states that *what* in predicative use was used “formerly generally, in reference to name or identity,” and thus was “equivalent to *who*; in later use only in reference to nature, character, function or the like.” The former function was shared with *who*. Araki and Ukaji (1984: 336) suggests that the overlap of the function might have caused *who* to absorb *what’s* function of “identity” in the early eighteenth century. Karlberg (1954: 98), as well as Araki and Ukaji (*ibid.*), remarks that “it is not impossible that the Bible translators (of the Authorized Version) helped to establish the victory of *who,*” because *who* dominates *which* in this Bible.

Many grammarians have referred to frequencies and examples of *who* and *what* in English Bibles from the Old English to the Modern English period in order to explain the history of identifying *what* and *who*. Their data, however, are not complete but partial and the influence of the source languages has not always been taken into account.

The purpose of the present paper is to survey the frequencies of identifying *what* and *who* in fourteen English Bibles from the Old English to the Modern English period and investigate the influence of the interrogative pronouns of the source languages on them.

1. Scope of the Materials

Bibles dealt with here are as follows:

A. Bibles translated in the OE period and their abbreviations:

1. OEH = Ælfric’s Heptateuch.
2. WSG = The West Saxon Gospels.
3. VPS = The Vespasian Psalter.
4. PPS = The Paris Psalter.
5. LG = The Lindisfarne Gospels.
6. RG = The Rushworth Gospels.
B. Bibles translated in the Middle English period and their abbreviations:

7. EWB = The Early Wycliffite Bible.
8. LWB = The Late Wycliffite Bible.

C. Bibles translated in the Modern English period and their abbreviations:

9. TB = Tyndale’s Bible: The New Testament, the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Juda, 2 Juda.

The books, except the New Testament and the Pentateuch, belong to Matthew’s Bible, which is the collections of Tyndale’s and Coverdale’s translations.

10. CB = Coverdale’s Bible.
11. GT = The Great Bible.
12. GB = The Geneva Bible.
13. AV = The Authorized Version of the Bible.
14. PB = Purver’s Bible.

2. Hwa and Hwet in the Old English Bibles

Table 1 shows the methods of the translating of the predicatives quis and quid occurring with the subject with a feature of [+ HUMAN] or [+ DEITY] in the Old English biblical translations, among which Ælfric’s Heptateuch, The Paris Psalter and The West Saxon Gospels are free translations and The Vespasian Psalter, The Rushworth Gospels and The Lindisfarne Gospels are literal translations in the interlinear glosses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIALECTS</th>
<th>WEST SAXON</th>
<th>MERCIAN</th>
<th>NORTHUMBRIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OEH</td>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>WSG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VULGATE</strong></td>
<td><strong>TRANSLATIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quis</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hwa</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hwet</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hwelc</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hwelc &amp; hwet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the rest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A general view of the figures of the survey in Table 1 reveals that the predicative quis is translated by whelc with the highest frequency. It may be inferred from this fact
The Interrogative Pronouns *What* and *Who* in English Bibles

that *whelc* was used for "identity" more frequently than it is generally said. For example, *OED* states that *hwæt* was used "formerly generally, in reference to name or identity" and Mitchell (1985: 141) remarks that in the OE period *which* was "sometimes" almost *who*.

(1) a. OEH: *Hwæt eart þu, sunu min?*  
    b. VUL: *Quis es tu, fili mi?*  
    Cf. EWB: *who art thou sonn myn?* (Gen. 27:18)

(2) a. R G: *hwa is þe slog*  
    b. VUL: *quis est qui te percussit*  
    Cf. EWB: *who is he that smote thee?* (Matt. 26:68)

(3) a. L G: *huelc is ðes sune monnes*  
    b. VUL: *qui est iste filius hominis*  
    Cf. EWB: *Who is this mannis sone?* (John 12:34)

The materials in Table 1 are to be classified under the following three dialects:

---MATERIALS---
A. OEH, PPS and WSG  
B. VPS and *St Matthew* in RG  
C. *St Mark* 2:15 - the end, *St Luke*  
and *St John* except 18:1-3 in RG,  
and all books in LG.

The frequencies of *hwa* and *hwæt* by dialects are revealed in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSLATIONS</th>
<th>West Saxon</th>
<th>Mercian</th>
<th>Northumbrian</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>hwa</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>hwæt</em></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>huelc</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>huelc &amp; hwæt</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the rest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ono and Nakao (1980: 316) suggests that the West Saxon dialect preferred *hwæt* to *hwa*, on the other hand the Northumbrian dialect preferred *hwa* to *hwæt*, taking the
following cases from The West Saxon Gospels in (4b) and The Lindisfarne Gospels in (4c). The former belongs to the West Saxon dialect and the latter to the Northumbrian dialect.

(4)  
\begin{enumerate} 
  \item VUL: \textit{quis est hic qui loquitur blasphemia} 
  \item WSG: \textit{hwæt ys þes. þe her spreċo woffunga.} 
  \item L G: \textit{hua is þes seðe spreces ebolsongas} 
  \item R G: \textit{hwæt is þis} 
\end{enumerate} 
Cf. EWB: who is this, that spekith blasphemyes? \textit{(Luke 5:21)}

There does not seem, however, to have existed such a clear difference between the two dialects in regard to the use of \textit{hwa} and \textit{hwæt}, because \textit{hwa} appears two times in The West Saxon Gospels (\textit{Matt. 24:45} and \textit{Luke 12:42}) and four times in The Lindisfarne Gospels (\textit{Matt. 21:10}, 24:45, 26:68 and \textit{Luke 5:21}). In addition, \textit{quis} in \textit{Matthew 21:10} is translated by \textit{hwæt} in The West Saxon Gospels and by \textit{hua (= hwa)} in The Lindisfarne Gospels, as shown in (5) below.

(5)  
\begin{enumerate} 
  \item VUL: \textit{Quis est hic?} 
  \item WSG: \textit{hwæt ys þes.} 
  \item L G: \textit{hua is þis} 
  \item R G: \textit{hwæt is þis} 
\end{enumerate} 
Cf. EWB: Who is this? \textit{(Matt. 21:10)}

From the figures in Table 2 emerge also the following facts:

1) In the West Saxon dialect \textit{hwæt} is used for \textit{quis} in 61.5\%, which is the highest percentage in the dialect, while in the Mercian and the Northumbrian dialects \textit{hwelc} is used with the highest frequency. The figures for the Mercian dialect show a 78.5\% of \textit{hwelc} against a 14.2\% of \textit{hwæt}.

2) The percentage of \textit{hwelc} in the Northumbrian dialect is lower than that in the Mercian dialect. This was probably given rise to by translators' ideolect in the Northumbrian dialect, judging from the fact that the preference of \textit{hwæt} in The Lindisfarne Gospels is slightly stronger than that in the Northumbrian part of The Rushworth Gospels, as shown in Table 1.

The interlinear gloss in (6) below cited from The Lindisfarne Gospels gives us very interesting and meaningful information on \textit{hwelc} and \textit{hwæt} with the function of "identity", because both \textit{hwelc (=hwelc)} and \textit{hwæd (=hwæt)} are written as an English equivalent for \textit{quis}. It may be inferred from this fact that there was a fluctuation in selecting an interrogative pronoun to translate \textit{quis} in the dialect.
3. Translation Methods of *Quis* in the Middle English Bibles

Table 3 shows the methods of the translating of *quis* in The Early and The Late Wycliffite Bibles. It is pointed out by some grammarians, such as Karlberg (op. cit., 98), that *who* is used much more frequently in these two Bibles than in those in the early Modern English period, because the former are translated faithfully from the Latin of the Vulgate, where *quis* is generally used, when the subject has a feature of [+HUMAN] or [+DEITY] and *quid* is generally used, when the subject has a feature of [−HUMAN] or [−DEITY]. It is possible to reconfirm this by comparison of the figures in Table 3 with those in Table 4, where translation methods in the Modern English Bibles are disclosed statistically.

*Who* began to slowly absorb what’s function of “identity” in the Middle English period according to Kisbye (1972 Part II: 123). This drift might stimulate the translators to apply the Latin distinction between *quis* and *quid* to *who* and *what.*

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORIGINAL</th>
<th>TRANSLATIONS</th>
<th>EWB</th>
<th>LWB</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>quis</em></td>
<td><em>who</em></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>what</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>which</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the rest</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modern English period, because the former are translated faithfully from the Latin of the Vulgate, where *quis* is generally used, when the subject has a feature of [+HUMAN] or [+DEITY] and *quid* is generally used, when the subject has a feature of [−HUMAN] or [−DEITY]. It is possible to reconfirm this by comparison of the figures in Table 3 with those in Table 4, where translation methods in the Modern English Bibles are disclosed statistically.

(7) a. *VUL:* .../qui sunt isti ...
   b. *EWB:* *who* ben þes? he answerde/ My sonnes þei ben ·
   c. *LWB:* *Who* ben these? He answeride, Thei ben m y sones,
   d. *T B:* *what* are these? And Ioseph sayde vnto his father: they are my sonnes,
   (Gen. 48:8)

(8) a. *VUL:* .../quisnam es tu ...
   b. *EWB:* *he* seyde to me/ *who* forso¢ art þou? & I seie to hym/ Amalechite I am/
   c. *LWB:* *he* seyde to me, *Who* art thou? And *Y* seide to hym, *Y* am a man of Amalech.

(2 Kings (2 Sam.) 1 : 8)

(9)  
a. VUL: _quis_ est hic qui eiiam peccata dimittit  
b. EWB: _Who_ is this that also for3yueth synnes?  
c. LWB: _Who_ is this that for3yueth synnes.  
d. C E: _What_ is this, that forgeueth synnes also?  

(Luke 7 : 49)

It is difficult to find cases in The Wycliffite Bibles where _quis_ is translated by _what_, on the other hand _quid_ occurring with the subject of [+HUMAN] is translated by _who_ only once (Zech 1 : 19). This tells us that the usages of _who_ in The wycliffite Bibles are not reflections of the current ones in the Middle English period but a mirror of the usages of _quis_ and _quid_ in the Vulgate. In reality, the ratio of _who_ to _what_ is, for example, 1 to 13 in Chaucer, 1 : 6 in Gower, 1 : 6 in Malory and 1 : 2 in Caxton according to Ono and Nakao (1972: 190).

3. 1. Predicative _Who_ and _What_ Which Are Not Followed by the _Be_ Verb

In the Old Testament of The Early Wycliffite Bible appear sentences without a linking verb, which is inserted in The Late Wycliffite Bible as shown in (10a.b)-(12a.b). They do not occur in the New Testament of The Wycliffite Bible according to the present investigation.

(10)  
a. EWB: who I & who my puple  
b. LWB: Who _am_ Y, and who _is_ my puple,  
c. VUL: _quis_ ego et _quis_ populus meus  
d. H B: who I and who people-of-me  

(1 Para. (I Chr.) 29 : 14)

(11)  
a. EWB: who god but _he_ lord or who god but oure God  
b. LWB: who _is_ God out takun the LORD? ethir who _is_ God outakun oure God?  
c. VUL: _quis_ deus praeter Dominum et _quis_ deus praeter Deum nostrum Deus  
d. H B: who god besides Yahweh and-who-(a)-rock except god-of-us  

(Ps. 18(17) : 31(32))

(12)  
a. EWB: who _þou_ pat _þou_ drede of a deadli man ...?  
b. LWB: what _art_ thou, that thou drede of a deedli man ...?  
c. VUL: _quis_ tu _ut_ timeres _ab_ homine mortali ...  
d. H B: who-you and-you-fear from-man he-shall-die  

(Isa. 51 : 12)

It is easy to give an adequate explanation to these phenomena, if they are compared with Hebrew and Latin sentences corresponding to them in (10c.d)-(12c.d); that is, in Hebrew
unmarked are sentences without a linking verb. These Hebrew verbless sentences appear in The Early Wycliffite Bible, because the Vulgate sometimes preserves the Hebrew verbless sentences. The linking verb is inserted into the verbless sentences in the revised version of The Wycliffite Bible.

4. **Who and What in the Early Modern English Bibles**

Each Bible has its own background of the translation. One of them is a difference of source languages. Five of the six Modern English Bibles dealt with here were translated, in principle, directly from the Hebrew and the Greek original or revised with consulting the originals: they are Tyndale's Bible, The Great Bible, The Geneva Bible, The Authorized Version and Purver's Bible. Only one Bible, Coverdale's Bible, was translated indirectly from the Vulgate. These differences of the translational backgrounds together with other factors sometimes cause the distortion of a chronology of linguistic data. Table 4 exhibits the numbers of the cases of the predicatives *who* and *what* whose subject consists of a noun or a noun phrase with a feature of [+HUMAN] or [+DEITY] in the Modern English Bibles. In the table appears a chronological distortion that the number of *whos* in Coverdale's Bible (60.7%) is larger than that in The Great Bible (46.5%), which was published after the Coverdale's Bible.

| TABLE 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BIBLES** | **PB** (1526–30) | **AV** (1611) | **GB** (1560) | **GTB** (1535) | **CB** (1535) | **TB** (1535) |
| **(YEAR)** | **(YEAR)** | | | | | |
| *who* | 79 | 92 | 87 | 41 | 51 | 27 |
| | 84.9% | 85.1% | 85.2% | 46.5% | 60.7% | 45.0% |
| *what* | 14 | 16 | 15 | 47 | 33 | 33 |
| | 15.0% | 14.8% | 14.7% | 53.4% | 39.2% | 55.0% |
| TOTAL | 93 | 108 | 102 | 88 | 84 | 60 |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

The figures in Table 4 include *who* whose function may not be “identity”. However, they can tell us of a general tendency of the frequencies of *who* and *what*, because the cases are collected, in principle, from the same verses in the six Bibles, and the cases from the same verse have the same or similar function. The table reveals that the number of *whos* exceeds that of *whats* in The Geneva Bible. This means that the victory of *who* came around the time when The Geneva Bible was translated, that is, in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Karlberg states that “in the AV *who* is practically exclusively used. It is not impossible that the Bible translators helped to establish the victory of *who*.” But this had already occurred in The Geneva Bible, which was printed fifty one years before the Authorized Version was. As The Geneva Bible “obtained speedy and permanent popularity” (Herbert, 1968: 61), it is sure that the Bible had had
TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OT &amp; NT</th>
<th>English Trans.</th>
<th>PB</th>
<th>AV</th>
<th>GB</th>
<th>GTB</th>
<th>TB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HB</td>
<td>$mf$</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$what$</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNT</td>
<td>$tis$</td>
<td>the rest</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>101%</td>
<td>101%</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HB/GNT</th>
<th>VUL</th>
<th>English Trans.</th>
<th>CB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$mf$</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$quis$</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$tis$</td>
<td>the rest</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$mf$</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$quid$</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$tis$</td>
<td>the rest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$mf$</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$mf$</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$tis$</td>
<td>the rest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$mf$</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$mf$</td>
<td>the rest* the rest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = The relative pronoun in HB
The rest in VUL = Translations except $quis$ and $quid$
The rest in English Trans. = Translations except $who$ and $what$

a strong influence upon the victory of $what$ before the Authorized Version circulated among the English people. The latter seems to have had a role of stabilizing $who$’s function of “identity”. This opinion is reinforced by the figures in Tables 5 and 6. Table
5 discloses the translation methods of the Hebrew and the Greek interrogative pronouns 
*mt* and *tis*, both of which correspond to *who*, in the English Bibles which were translated 
or revised directly from the original texts. Table 6 discloses those of the Latin interroga-
tive pronoun *quis* in Coverdale's Bible, which is translated indirectly from the Latin of 
the Vulgate. These figures also indicate that it is in The Geneva Bible and the Bibles 
following it that *who* surpassed *what* in the number of the translations of *mt*, *tis* or *quis*. 
This verifies that the victory of *what* was absolute by the late sixteenth century.

5. **Who in the Old Testament of the Authorized Version**

The current definition of “identity” as a function of *what* is based on *OED*’s remark, 
which was introduced in the beginning. This is rather a vague definition to avoid rigidity 
(cf., Mitchell 1985, vol. I : 139). In the present paper the following two are classified under 
the function of “identity”. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish GROUP A from 
GROUP B.

GROUP A: Identification of name or relationship, e.g., (10a-b).
GROUP B: Classification of tribe, race, etc. e.g., (11a-b).

(10) a. And hee said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: 
(*Ruth 3 : 9*)

b. Who art thou? and he said, I am thy sonne, thy first borne Esau. (*Gen. 27 : 37*)

(11) a. Who are those with thee? and he said, The children which God hath graciously 
giuen thy servuant. 
(*Gen. 3 : 9*)

b. Who art thou? and I answered him, I am an Amalekite. 
(*2 Sam. 1 : 8*)

In the New Testament are to be found many examples of identifying *who*, most of 
which belong to GROUP A, while in the Old Testament are to be found many examples 
of various functions which might be derived from GROUP A or B, in addition to those 
of GROUPs A and B themselves. Most of them originate in the functions of the Hebrew 
interrogative pronoun *mt*. This means that the Hebrew interrogative pronoun served to 
enrich functions of *what* in the Authorized Version. The following classification of the 
functions of the Hebrew interrogative pronoun are based on mainly B.D.B. (1979 : 566), 
Gesenius (1990 : 443), and Waltke and O'Connor (1990 : 318-19).

A. Expressing contempt or insult, often followed by a *that*-clause

(12) AV: Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voyce to let Israel goe? 
HB: who (is) Yahweh that-I-should-heed voice-of-him to-let-go Israel(?)

[where *that* is a relative pronoun. Cf., B.D.B., and Gesenius] 
(*Ex. 5 : 2*)
(13) AV: who is this vncircumcised Philistine, that he should defie the armies of the liuing God?
   HB: who (is) Philistine uncircumcised this that he-should-reproach (the) armies-of Elohim (?) [B.D.B. and Gesenius]  
   (1 Sam. 17:26)

(14) AV: Who is Dauid? and who is the sonne of Iesse
   HB: who (is) David and-who (is) (the) son-of Jesse (?) [B.D.B.]  
   (1 Sam. 25:10)

B. Expressing modesty real or assumed, or self-abasement, often followed by a that-clause

(15) AV: Who am I, that I should go vnto Pharaoh, ...?
   HB: who (am) I that I-should-go to-Pharaoh (?) [B.D.B. and Gesenius]  
   (Ex. 3:11)

(16) AV: who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?
   HB: who (am) I and-who (are) people-of-me that-we-should-retain power to-offer-willingly in-this [B.D.B.]  
   (1 Chr. 29:14)
   [It is noteworthy that the Hebrew interrogative pronoun corresponding to who is translated by what in the Authorized Version.]

C. Affirming a fact or introducing a new description

(17) AV: Who is this king of glory? the LORD of hostes, he is the king of glory. [B.D. B.]  
   (Ps. 24:8 & 10)

(18) AV: WHo is this that commeth from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparell, trauelling in the greatnesse of his strength? I that speake in righteousnesse, mightie to saue.  
   (Isa. 63:1)

(19) AV: Who is this that cômeth vp as a flood, whose water are moued as ã riuers?
   Egypt riseth vp like a flood, and his waters are moued like the riuers,  
   (Jer. 46:6-7)

D. Who = Whosoever, which is repeated by a pronoun

(20) AV: who is mine aduersarie? let him come neere me.  
   (Isa. 50:8)
(21) AV: Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. (1 Sam. 11:12)

6. Conclusion

The statistical approach to the investigation of identifying who and what in the biblical translations reveals that who superseded what in The Geneva Bible, that is, in the latter sixteenth century. This is earlier than it is generally accepted.

The comparison with the expressions of the source languages, mainly with the Hebrew language, makes it possible to give adequate explanation of the existence of verbless sentences in The Early Wycliffite Bible and discloses that the functions of who in the Authorized Version were enriched by those of the Hebrew interrogative pronoun.

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