

A Comparative Study of Obscure
Passages in the Vulgate Psalter
with the Septuagint, the Psalterium
Romanum, the Juxta Hebraeos, and
the Psalterium Pianum Versions

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Table of Contents

Introduction	i
I. A Sketch of the Five Versions	
A. The Septuagint	1
B. The Psalterium Romanum	3
C. The Vulgate	5
D. The Juxta Hebraeos	8
E. The Psalterium Pianum	10
II. A Comparison of Obscure Passages	13
Conclusion	35
Footnotes	38
Bibliography	44

Introduction

This thesis is a study in the Latinity of the Vulgate Psalter which has been the chief instrument in transmitting the message of the psalms to the religious mentality of the West.

"Homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto," as a famous line of Terence goes,¹ could very well be said of every psalm. For the psalms are entirely engulfed in the human aspects of man. He is a creature with failings who needs assistance from God and from his neighbor. A psalm may express homage or thanksgiving to God, or repentance and desire of pardon. It may be a prayer for relief from suffering, or for deliverance from attack. It may display the joy or the sorrow, the hopes or the fears of the individual or the nation.² In short the Book of Psalms is a picture of the complex relations between man and his Creator.

These were the prayers of the Jews. They played an important role in the Jewish liturgy. From the Jewish worship the use of the psalms passed easily into the Christian worship at the very beginning. Nothing was more natural since the apostles and the first Christians were Jewish and were accustomed to this kind of prayer. Even Christ had quoted them, used them in prayer, and explained them to his disciples.³ Both St. Paul and St. James encouraged the people to use the psalms in community worship.⁴ Although the psalms are typically Hebrew in expression and in ideas, their message is universal. In fact Fillion goes so far to say: "Besides, the Psalter contains nothing which is

specifically Jewish; its supplications and praises suited the new religion even better than it did the old."⁵

In the time of Jerome the psalms were recited publicly in every Church. It was probably unnatural for a Christian not to know the psalms by heart. For Jerome writes in a letter: "Quocumque te veteris, arator stivam tenens, alleluia decantat. Suadans messor Psalmis se avocat, et curva attendens vitem falce vinitor, aliquid Davidicum canit."⁶

Through the centuries the familiarity of the psalms and the customs of singing them has died among the laity. The psalms now are only recited or chanted by the religious and the secular clergy, who are commissioned by Holy Mother Church to praise God daily with this great treasury of prayer in the Divine Office.

Despite the development of the Romance languages the psalms continued to be recited in Latin, the official language of the Church. Under Pope Pius V in 1568 Jerome's Gallican Psalter, commonly called the Vulgate, became the official version of the Church.⁷ By this time Latin was not so universally known, particularly among the common people. And so this easily facilitated the death of the public recitation of the psalms by the laity.

The Vulgate Psalter remained the official text of the Roman Breviary until 1945, when Pius XII gave permission to all who recite the Divine Office to use the Psalterium Pianum (the New Psalter).⁸ A few years earlier he had commissioned the professors of the Biblical Institute to prepare this new psalter, for

a good many priests began to hope for a new Latin version of the psalms for their daily use. The hope was a very praiseworthy one, springing as it did from their endeavor to recite the canonical Hours not only with sincere devotion but with fuller understanding as well. What they desired was a Latin psalter that would bring out more clearly the meaning the Holy Spirit had inspired, that would give truer expression to the devout sentiments of the Psalmist's soul, that would reflect reflect his style and his very words more exactly.⁹

Even though one is skilled in Latin and has a good background in Hebrew thought, he is still baffled by many verses in the Vulgate Psalter. For as McClellan says, in the Vulgate there are some expressions which make no sense at all, clauses or phrases though clear enough in themselves, yet mean nothing in their context, and single words which seem meaningless in their setting.¹⁰

The purpose of this thesis is to probe into these obscurities, seeking their possible origins and truer or more meaningful renderings. This will be done by comparing ten verses of the Vulgate with four other versions: the Septuagint, the Psalterium Romanum, the Juxta Hebraeos, and the Pianum. Each obscure verse will be written out in all five versions in chronological order, for the reader to view the similarities of the versions and also the problems, which will be discussed. Before this a sketch of all these translations will be given in order, mainly, to show the relation between each text.

The object of this work is not to attempt an exegesis. However an exegetical nature has been unavoidable in order to check the literary research with the interpretations of Scriptural commentaries.

I. A Sketch of the Five Versions

A. The Septuagint

Of all the versions of the Hebrew Old Testament, the best known and most important is the Alexandrian Greek version, commonly known as the Septuagint, or in its abbreviated form, the LXX. This version dates from around the second century B.C. The most ancient source for its origin is found in the Letter of Aristeas.¹¹ But this is an apocryphal story, for as Roberts reports "though there may be in the narrative the essential facts about the beginnings of the Greek translation, it is presented against a background where the details are more imaginary, or semi-veracious, than factual."¹²

The Letter of Aristeas tells how the Alexandrian king Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246) in complying with the desire of his librarian, Demetrius Phalerus, to obtain for the royal library a copy in Greek of the Jewish Torah, asked the Jewish High-priest, Eleazar, at Jerusalem to send to him seventy-two Jewish scholars, who would prepare a translation. They completed their task in seventy-two days. Each one worked by himself on a portion during the day, and in the evening they compared their results and arrived at a rendering agreeable to all. This story was very attractive among the Jews and the Christians.¹³ Although the word septuagint meaning seventy does not exactly coincide with the seventy-two translators, nevertheless it can be conjectured that the name Septuagint has been derived from this letter.

The author of this letter has substituted a grandiose explanation for a more exact historical fact that the Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt needed a translation of their Scriptures in the vernacular. For as Swete says "a knowledge of Greek was not a mere luxury but a necessity of common life" for the Alexandrian Jew, and "every year of residence in Alexandria would increase their familiarity with Greek and weaken their hold upon the sacred tongue."¹⁴ And since the psalms played an important role in the Jewish worship, these Jews in Egypt greatly needed a translation of the psalms from the Hebrew into their everyday language.

As a translation the LXX is very poor. Even though the translators were Jews, they still didn't have a thorough knowledge of Hebrew. They were apparently more familiar with Aramaic than with Hebrew, and they have read many words as if they were Aramaic.¹⁵ Also the Hebrew text had no vowel-points like the Hebrew texts of today. This vowel system was developed between the sixth and ninth centuries A.D. by Jews known as Masoretes, from the fact that they studied the traditional pronunciation ("Massora"= tradition) of the Hebrew language.¹⁶ This purely consonantal text caused other difficulties in translating because depending upon what vowel sound was read between the consonants determined the meaning of the word. The Hebrew text which Jerome used to make his translation, the Juxta Hebraeos, was a consonantal text. And he points out the difficulty:

Verbum Hebraicum quod tribus litteris scribitur,
Daleth, Beth, Res (vocales enim in medio non habent)
pro consequentia et legentis arbitrio si legatur

DABAR "sermonem" significat; si DEBER, "mortem;"
si DABBER, "loquere."¹⁷

Thus a great deal of obscurity has arisen in the LXX. Different Greek tenses have been thrown together frequently in a confusing way in the same passage. Particularly in the psalms it is practically a verbal translation without much effort to penetrate to the precise thought of the Hebrew Psalter, for the translators aimed, as a rule, at extreme fidelity to the text. They did this on account of their great reverence for the sacred Hebrew. From this often slavish verbal accuracy the Hebrew text on which the translators worked can generally be reconstructed. So the LXX can serve to correct the Massoretic text, where the Hebrew is corrupt.¹⁸

B. The Psalterium Romanum

Greek was still the official liturgical language of the Church during a great portion of the second century. However with the spreading of the faith in the Roman districts, where Latin was predominantly spoken, there was a great need for a Latin Bible both for preaching and liturgy. Probably the first Latin translations were unofficially made by priest and preachers.

Carthage seems to be the home of the earliest Latin Bible. Tertullian in the second half of the second century seems to have known and used a Latin Bible.¹⁹ And Cyprian (210-258) also quoted a Latin Bible at Carthage. But Roberts says that "a comparison of the Latin version quoted by Cyprian, which was in existence at Carthage by A.D. 200, with that used by Tertullian"

(164-220) "shows numerous and far reaching differences between them."²⁰ The name, *Vetus Itala*, has been given to these versions, or really to one version from which the others come, from a reference of St. Augustine about a good version: "In ipsis autem interpretationibus, *Itala* caeteris praeferatur; nam est verborum lenacior cum perspicuitate sententiae."²¹

The *Vetus Itala* (or Old Latin) was marked by rudeness and simplicity, and by a close and even slavish adherence to the Greek original. Whole series of Greek words were simply adopted in transcribed form. But the *Vetus Itala* has a great importance in that it takes us back indirectly to a form of the LXX which was current before the Hexaplaric version. It represents some Greek readings which have disappeared in every known Greek manuscript, but which in light of the Hebrew are shown to preserve a genuine text of the LXX.²²

In the time of Jerome there were many variant Latin versions. St. Augustine, Jerome's contemporary, telling why it is necessary to know Greek and Hebrew says:

Qui enim Scripturas ex habraea lingua in graecam verterunt, numerari possunt; latini autem interpretes nullo modo. Ut enim cuique primis fidei in manus venit codex graecus, et aliquantulum facultatis sibi utriusque linguae habere videbatur, ausus est interpretari.²³

So many variant texts would be most unpleasantly felt in the liturgy. And so Pope Damasus, in order to establish some general uniformity, commissioned St. Jerome in 383 to revise the Old Latin Scriptures.²⁴

Jerome immediately undertook the task. His revision of the

psalter was introduced into the Roman liturgy by Pope Damasus as soon as it was completed. From this it has received its name, the Psalterium Romanum. It was used in the Roman liturgy until the time of Pius V (1566-72).²⁵

As a version the Psalterium Romanum is simply a cursory revision of the Old Latin Psalter according to the LXX. There were some corrections but not many, since the faithful were so familiar with the Psalter, Jerome didn't want to trouble their habits by too many changes. He says in a letter: "Veterum interpretum consuetudinem mutare nolimus, ne nimia novitate lectoris studium terreremus."²⁶ Thus the Roman Psalter has the same peculiarities that the *Vetus Itala* had.

C. The Vulgate

In 385, after the death of Pope Damasus (December, 384), Jerome moved from Rome to Palestine. He eventually settled down in Bethlehem, where in 387 he made a second revision of the Old Latin Psalter. He had been very dissatisfied with his Psalterium Romanum, saying in the preface of this new psalter:

"Psalterium Romae dudum positus emendam: et juxta Septuaginta interpretes, licet cursim, magna tamen ex parte correxeram."²⁷

But most likely his study of the LXX version in Origen's Hexapla at Caesarea greatly influenced his decision to make another Latin version. For he had found quite a difference between the two texts. In a letter he says:

Koivῆ autem ista, hoc est communis editio, ipsa est quae et Septuaginta. Sed hoc interest inter utraque, quod *Koivῆ* pro locis et temporibus, et pro voluntate

scriptorum, vetus corrupta editio est. Ea autem quae habetur in *Ἑξάπλῳ*, et quam nos vertemus, ipsa est in eruditorum libris incorrupta, et immaculata Septuaginta Interpretum translatio reservatur.²⁸

Thus Jerome thought the Hexaplaric LXX represented the original LXX version. The Latin translation of this LXX version is known as the Vulgate Psalter. It is also called the Psalterium Gallicanum, since it was first adopted by the Churches of Gaul.²⁹

Origen labored on his Hexapla between the years 240 A.D. to 245 A.D. He put the whole text of all the books of the Old Testament into six columns of different versions. The columns were arranged thus: (1) the Hebrew text; (2) the Hebrew text transcribed in Greek letters; (3) the version of Aquila; (4) the version of Symmachus; (5) the Septuagint; (6) the version of Theodotion. There also were three anonymous Greek versions lined up with the Book of Psalms, the Quinta, the Sexta, and the Septima.³⁰

The Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus were Greek versions of the Old Testament, which were made during the second century A.D. Aquila's version was a slavish literal translation of the Hebrew. Every detail of the text was rendered as precisely as possible, and so much so that it sacrificed all trace of Greek idiom and construction to reproduce the Hebrew. The version of Theodotion was more a revision of the LXX rather than a new translation, using the standard Hebrew text of the time as an aid. Symmachus aimed more at making the Greek Bible an authentic Greek book, so his version is a much freer translation than these other two.³¹

Little is known about the Quinta, Sexta, and Septima. The Quinta has a high literary style, whereas the Sexta occasionally paraphrases. The Sexta is believed to be of Christian origin. And there is practically nothing known of the Septima, except for the few phrases quoted in the psalter of the Hexapla.³²

Origen was perturbed by the variety of forms of the LXX text current in his day. He set out to draw these different versions together and to try to use them for the production of one version more perfect than all of them. Taking the Hebrew text of his day as the original true text, he wanted to bring the LXX into as complete harmony as was possible with the Hebrew text. The order of the Hexapla fits his plan perfectly. After the Hebrew column and the transliterated Hebrew comes the Aquila, for it followed closely the order and the text of the Hebrew. The Symmachus in the fourth column was similar to the Aquila, but yet a freer translation. In the fifth column was the LXX itself and following it the Theodotion, which was a mere revision of the LXX. Thus he presented a text of the LXX which was as near as possible to the Hebrew original.³³

In writing the Gallican Psalter Jerome once again proceeded with special caution lest he make too drastic a change. Thus it has somewhat the same literary style as that of the Vetus Itala, and also the same words of this previous text. It is based upon a Greek psalter which is itself an almost verbally literal version of the Hebrew psalms. It turns out to be a slavish translation of a translation.³⁴ And whereas the LXX is filled with obscurities so also the Vulgate has these same

obscurities.

D. The Juxta Hebraeos

By the year 405 Jerome had translated all the books of the Old Testament direct from the Hebrew into Latin, which included a translation of the psalms, 393. Having made two Latin translations from two different LXX versions, Jerome had become greatly aware of the corrupt state of the LXX, so he wanted to go back to the original and true text, which was the Hebrew. He says in a letter previous to this translation: "...ita in veteri Testamento, si quando inter Graecos Latinosque diversitas est, ad Hebraicam confugimus veritatem; ut quidquid de fonte profiscitur, hoc quaeramus in rivulis."³⁵ And so the full name of this psalter is *Librum Psalmorum Juxta Hebraicam Veritatem*.

Jerome certainly must have used the Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion versions as guides to his interpretation of the Hebrew. He had formed a careful estimation of each of these versions. Of them he says:

Aquila et Symmachus et Theodotio incitati, diversum pene opus in eodem opere prodiderunt: alio nitente verbum de verbo exprimere, alio sensum potius sequi, tertium non multum a veteribus discrepare.³⁶

Aquila autem proselytus et contentiosus interpres, qui non solum verba, sed etymologias quoque verborum transferre conatus est, jure projicitur a nobis.³⁷

Jam pridem cum voluminibus Hebraeorum Editionem Aquilae confero, ne quid forsitan propter odium Christi Synagoga mutaverit....³⁸

He at no time accepted their help without much discrimination. For they were versions, and in no way could they replace the "veritas Hebraica." And yet they probably had a lot of influ-

ence on the shaping of the final reading of his version, and even more so than he himself expressly admits.³⁹

Jerome's ideal of translating was "non verba, sed sententias transtulisse."⁴⁰ In his first two versions, he was hampered in following his rule, so as not to greatly disturb the people. But in the Juxta Hebraeos he had free reins to do as he pleased, since he was making this translation mainly for the use of refuting the Jews, who did not accept the LXX. In the preface of this Psalter he says "...sed quod aliud sit in ecclesiis Christo credentium psalmos legere, aliud Judaeis singula verba calumniantibus respondere."⁴¹ It was so strikingly new in many places that it was never popularly received. And so it is that in the Vulgate Bible the text of the psalter, whereas it is the case with the other books of the Old Testament, is not Jerome's version made directly from the Hebrew, but his second translation, the Psalterium Gallicanum.

The Juxta Hebraeos reproduces the original sense much more faithfully than the Gallican Psalter. And its literary style is much better. Christine Mohrmann says:

And whereas the Early Christian Latin of the Psalterium Romanum and (in a less degree) of the Psalterium Gallicanum is relatively immature, this final Psalter displays that Latin in a state of full maturity and with a quite lovely mellow bloom. It exhibits, in fact, a very delicate sense of diction and style, and at the same time a great respect for the tradition of liturgical Latin.⁴²

E. The Psalterium Pianum

In his Motu Proprio "In Cotidianibus Precibus," which gave permission for the use of the Pianum Psalter in the Divine Office, Pope Pius XII says:

It should be remembered, however, that the Latin Church possesses these psalms as a heritage from a Church whose language was Greek. Originally translated almost word for word from Greek into Latin, they were in course of time given a number of careful corrections and revisions, most notably by the "Greatest Doctor" in the Sacred Scriptures, St. Jerome. But these corrections did not remove many of the obvious inaccuracies occurring already in the Greek version, inaccuracies which leave the force and meaning of the original text quite obscure. As a result the generality of Latin readers still could not grasp with ease the sense of the sacred psalms.⁴³

And so on January 19, 1941, Pius XII commissioned the Biblical Institute to prepare a new translation of the psalms. He describes it in his Motu Proprio:

We gave orders that a new translation of the psalms be provided. It was to follow the original texts, follow them exactly, faithfully. At the same time it was, as far as possible, to take into account the venerable Vulgate along with other ancient versions, and to apply sound critical norms where their readings differed.⁴⁴

The Very Rev. Augustine Bea, S.J., then rector of the Pontifical Institute and who is now a cardinal, was head of this commission. He was assisted by five other Jesuits on the staff of the Institute: the Rev. Francis Zorell, author of Psalterium ex Hebraeo Latinum; the Rev. A. Vaccari, author of an Italian version of the psalms from the Hebrew; the Rev. Augustine Merk, who edited a critical edition of the Greek New Testament; the Rev. L. Semkowski, professor of Hebrew; and the Rev. R. Koebert,

professor of Syriac and Arabic.⁴⁵ And so this commission seemed quite qualified for making the Latin translation of the Hebrew.

These six translators set out on their task of translating "whose one purpose," Bea says, "was that of faithfully rendering the sense of the original text."⁴⁶ The text from which they made their translation was the Massoretic Hebrew text, which dates back no earlier than the ninth century A.D. But this text differs little from the form of the Hebrew text that Jerome used in the making of his *Juxta Hebraeos*, and so it is probable that it has, in general, the textual tradition of the beginning of the second Christian century, when the genuine Massoretic activity began, namely their attempt to crystallize the best tradition of the Hebrew text.⁴⁷ For Jerome definitely consulted the Hebrew of Origen's Hexapla, which dates back to 245 A.D.⁴⁸

Nevertheless this text is in need of critical revision. Therefore the translators carefully compared the Hebrew with the ancient versions in order to find the most exact and correct reading. There are many cases where preference is given to the LXX, especially in the case of a doctrinal importance where, Bea says, they "preferred the safer way, that is of preserving substantially that meaning which had been accepted in the Church for so many centuries and which is supported, besides, by solid critical reasons."⁴⁹

In complying with the Holy Father's wishes, the translators strove to follow Jerome's rule of translating "non verba, sed sententias." They had to make a Latin translation of the psalms for the priest of today, in which the understanding of the mean-

ing would not be difficult and which would serve for devout prayer. It seems that the priests of today are much more competent in Classical Latin than in Christian Latin, especially in vocabulary, since in their years of study they learned the Latin of the authors who were prevalent a century before Christ and a couple of centuries after his birth. Thus the translators have clothed the psalms in a Classical garb. For Bea says:

A Latin translation of the Psalms which, barring certain strictly ecclesiastical expressions, would keep to the vocabulary, the grammar and the style of the better period of the Latin language would surely be better understood and valued than another which has many elements of vulgar and later Latin.⁵⁰

The Vulgate has a complete lack of understanding of the sense of the Hebrew tenses, for they differ completely from the those of the Greek and Latin verb. The Greek translators mechanically used the Greek aorist or perfect to represent the Hebrew perfect, and the Greek imperfect or future to represent the Hebrew imperfect or future. And the Vulgate slavishly followed the Greek.⁵¹ The Pianum has greatly cleared up these tenses. Meagher says they have changed the tenses in order to make logical sequences.⁵²

As a Latin version of the psalms the Pianum Psalter is a great improvement over the Vulgate. For in Bird's view it is much closer to the Hebrew than the Vulgate Psalter and it has given us a translation which is highly readable and easy to understand.⁵³ Bea himself thinks that through all the sifting of the other versions they have come up with a text that is "superior both to the Massoretic and to the Septuagint," a text which is closer to the original Hebrew meaning.⁵⁴

II. A Comparison of Obscure Passages

1. Psalm 15:3-4a

- LXX *Τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς ἐν τῇ γῇ αὐτοῦ, ἐθαυμάστωσε
πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτοῖς.
Ἐπληθύνθησαν αἱ ἀσθενεῖαι αὐτῶν, μετὰ
ταῦτα ἐτάχυναν. 55*
- PR Sanctis qui in terra sunt ejus, mirificavit omnes
voluntates meas inter illos.
Multiplicatae sunt enim infirmitates eorum: postea
acceleraverunt.
- V Sanctis, qui sunt in terra ejus, mirificavit omnes
voluntates meas in eis.
Multiplicatae sunt infirmitates eorum, postea
acceleraverunt. 56
- JH Sanctis qui in terra sunt, et magnificis, omnis
voluntas mea in in eis.
Multiplicabuntur idola eorum, post tergum sequentium. 57
- PP In sanctos, qui sunt in terra ejus, quam mirabilem
fecit omnem affectum meum.
Multiplicant dolores suos qui sequuntur deos alienos. 58

In verse 3 all these versions agree in the same general sense, except for the LXX. It has "τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ" whereas the Latin versions have "voluntates meas" or as the Pianum has "affectum meum." This difference of the personal pronoun between the LXX and the rest of the Latin versions is interesting. It seems that this text of the LXX has undergone a corruption, for all the Latin versions agree on "my." There is a possibility that the Old Latin had undergone a change, and by the time

Jerome made the Romanum and the Vulgate translations, the people had grown so accustomed to it, that he didn't change it back to "his." But this view falls short in looking at the Juxta Hebraeos where Jerome didn't have to be afraid of disturbing the people.

The next verse is a real difficulty in the Vulgate, also in the Romanum and the LXX. Who does the "eorum" refer to? It can't refer back to "sanctis." So it must be the antecedent of a suppressed relative of the following clause.⁵⁹

Then "postea" is a another bling guide. McClellan says the Hebrew word does mean "after," but not "afterwards." It is often an adjective meaning "a second" or "another" of its kind or series. From the context following "another god" is evident.⁶⁰ Boylan believes "postea" should be "post ea," with "ea" meaning "idola."⁶¹ "Postea" could have originated in two ways. One, the "μετὰ ταῦτα" could have been interpreted wrong in the first early Latin translations. For "μετὰ ταῦτα" can mean "afterwards."⁶² But I would interpret it as "after these things (gods)" or "in pursuit of these things." In another way the people, when reciting this psalm, could have grasped "post ea" as "postea." And hence it became written down as this. So Jerome didn't change it in his translations.

Jerome's translation from the Hebrew clears it up somewhat but he changes the sense. He has translated the "infirmetas" as "idola" following the Theodotion and the Quinta versions.⁶³ But idols can be taken in the sense that they bring sorrows. He has cleared up "eorum" by throwing in "sequentium." And "post ter-

gum" gives the idea that they have turned their backs on God.

The Pianum interprets the Hebrew to agree in a general sense with the LXX. And it has cleared up the difficulty by supplying the relative "qui" and also "alienos." The translators have made the antecedent of "qui" the subject of the sentence: "They that follow strange gods multiply their sorrows."

2. Psalm 28:6

- LXX *καὶ λεπτυνέτ αὐτὰς ὡς τὸν μόσχον τὸν
λίβανον, καὶ ὁ ἡγαπημένος ὡς υἱὸς μονοκερῶτων*
- PR Et comminuet eas, tanquam vitulum Libani: et dilectus, sicut filius unicornuorum.
- V Et comminuet eas, tanquam vitulum Libani: et dilectus, quemadmodum filius unicornium.
- JH Et disperget eas quasi vitulum: Libanum et Sarion quasi filium rhinocerotum.
- PP Facit subsilire, ut vitulum, Libanum, et Sarion ut pullum bubalorum.

This verse is really a tangled construction. It is easily seen how the Vulgate got in this mess by strictly following the LXX. The Romanum and the Vulgate agree with the LXX in everything except for the case ending of "Lebanon." The Greek has the accusative whereas the Latin versions have the genitive. This change in case has probably occurred from some early Latin translator, who considered "λίβανον" as an adjective instead of as a noun. It is seen from the Juxta Hebraeos that "Lebanon"

should be in the accusative.

The real confusion comes from the next phrase "δῆχατῆ μένος" and thus the Latin's "dilectus." The way this stands in the nominative it seems to be an independent clause. And this just adds to the difficulty. The source of this whole confusion stems from the Septuagint translators' failure to read "Sirion" as a proper name, instead of as meaning "beloved."⁶⁴ Sirion is the Sidonian name for Mount Hermon (see Deut. iii, 9).

The present Hebrew is very clear: "He makes Lebanon skip like a calf; and Sirion like a young wild ox."⁶⁵ And Jerome in his Juxta Hebraeos comes close to this, but he still has "eas" referring to "cedars" of the previous line: "He will scatter them (cause them to roam) like a calf, and Lebanon and Sarion like the sons of rhinoceri."

With Lebanon and Sirion referring to mountains in different regions, the Pianum has preferred to follow the Massoretic text and compare Lebanon to a calf and Sarion to a young wild ox. Thus it reads: "He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sarion like a young wild ox."

3. Psalm 34:20

LXX ὅτι ἐμοὶ μὲν εἰρηνικὰ ἐλάλουν, καὶ
 ἐπ' ὀργῇ δόλους διελογίζοντο.

PR Quoniam mihi quidem pacifice loquebantur: et super
 iram dolose cogitabant.

V Quoniam mihi quidem pacifice loquebantur: et in iracundia terrae loquentes, dolos cogitabant.

JH Non enim pacem loquuntur, sed in rapina terrae verba fraudulenta concinnant.

PP Neque enim quae pacis sunt loquuntur, et contra quietos terrae fraudes meditantur.

All five texts differ in some way or other. But the main obscurity lies in the Vulgate's phrase "in iracundia terrae loquentes." Neither the LXX nor the Romanum has "land" or "earth" in it. But it is found in the Juxta Hebraeos and Bird says it is also present in the Symmachus, Aquila and Quinta versions.⁶⁶ The LXX seems to have been corrected and the Vulgate is following an older LXX reading found in Origen's Hexapla. This is one of the places where Jerome was bold enough to change the text in view of the complaints that might result.

But what does this phrase mean "speaking in the anger of the earth?" Boylan conjectures that "iracundia" translates "δρην," which may mean "impulse," "inclination," "character," and that "terra" may be metonymous for "men of earth." Thus the phrase may mean "after the fashion of earthly men."⁶⁷

The equivalent phrase in the Juxta Hebraeos and in the Pianum differ. The Hebraeos has "in the plundering of the land" and the Pianum says "against the peaceful of the land." According to McClellan the Hebrew preposition is hard to render as "in" and it usually means "against" wherever hostile attitude or action is present. The word which it governs is an adjective

in the construct plural. Its radicals belong to a verb meaning "disturb." Hence Jerome's "rapina." But these same radicals also belong to another verb meaning "to be at rest."⁶⁸ And so the Pianum's version. And Boylan says: "The contrast between 'iracundia' and 'the quiet' is due to a difference of one consonant between the Massoretic text and the Hebrew text read by the Septuagint translators."⁶⁹ And so the Septuagint translators may have misread the Hebrew, or their Hebrew text was corrupt. But the former seems more probable in view of the contrast between the Juxta Hebraeos and the Pianum.

In backtracking a little, why do both the Juxta Hebraeos and the Pianum have the first phrase negative while the other three texts don't have? The answer is found in the LXX. It seems "ἐμοί" should be "μή." McClellan says "reading 'not' for the LXX's 'to me' is probably correct."⁷⁰ For the Quinta and the Symmachus both have the "not."⁷¹ But this incorrectness is probably due to the Septuagint translators' Hebrew text being corrupt. For the Hebrew for "ἐμοί" and "μή" is similar, and it could have been easily written wrong by a scribe who was quickly copying the text. Consult Bird's Commentary on the Psalms to see the similarity of these two Hebrew words.⁷²

4. Psalm 57:10

- LXX *πρὸ τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς ἀκάνθας ὑμῶν τὴν
ῥάμνον, ὥσπερ ξύντας ὥσπερ ἐν ὄρχῳ
καταπίεταί ὑμᾶς.*
- PR Priusquam producat spinas vestras rhamnus: sicut
viventes, sic in ira absorbet eos.
- V Priusquam intelligerent spinae vestrae rhamnum:
sicut viventes, sic in ira absorbet eos.
- JH Antequam crescant spinae vestrae in rhamnum: quasi
viventes, quasi in ira tempestas rapiet eos.
- PP Priusquam ollae vestrae senserint veprem, dum
est viridis, aestus turbinis abripiat eum.

This is a very obscure disputed passage. Especially the second part is corrupt. The LXX has "*καταπίεταί ὑμᾶς*" whereas the Vulgate and the Romanum both have "absorbet eos." It is quite certain that "*ὑμᾶς*" should be "*αὐτούς*," especially in view of the Juxta Hebraeos and the Pianum. "Eos" is masculine and so it doesn't refer back to "spinae" but to the wicked (enemy). But it seems that it should refer to "spinae," since the whole verse is a picture of what will happen to the wicked.

The Hebrew nouns for "pot" and "thorn" have the same forms in both the plural and the singular.⁷³ It seems the LXX translators read "sirim," "thorns," for the Massoretic "siroth," "pots." So the Hebrew reads: "Before your pots can feel the (heat of the) thorn-bush...."⁷⁴ Bird gives the Hebrew for the two words and they look exactly the same.⁷⁵ Even though

Jerome's Juxta Hebraeos reads "thorns," "pots" is more probable. For Boylan says: "The Psalmist is in need of a figure of the rapidity with which calamity will descend from above upon the evildoer. 'Before your prickles grow into a thorn' a good deal of time must pass, but not between the kindling of a fire and the first stage of cooking."⁷⁶

The Vulgate has misinterpreted the Greek "συνιέναι," which is the infinitive form of "σύνεμαι" "to be with," "to come to"⁷⁷ and hence "to form" or "grow," for a form of the Greek word "συνίημι," "to perceive," "to observe," "to understand," "to bear."⁷⁸ With the Greek containing "thorns," "συνιέναι" should be understood as "to form" or "grow." Hence it is difficult to figure out why Jerome used "intelligere," for in the Romanum he uses "preducere" which was also translated from the Greek. The Hebrew original of "intelligere" is also the same for "sentire" (as the Pianum has), since its radical notion is that of "perception."⁷⁹ But in the Juxta Hebraeos Jerome has translated it as "crescant."

The next part is quite difficult. "Viventes" is modifying "eos" and if "eos" refers to thorns, then it can mean "green," "unburnt." The Juxta Hebraeos and the Pianum have changed the subject of the clause. The other versions imply God in his wrath as the subject. The Massoretic text also seems to imply God as the subject, but the text is corrupt and uncertain.⁸⁰ So the Pianum has tended to follow the Juxta Hebraeos in this second part: "Before your pots feel the thorn-bush, may the blast of the whirlwind carry it away while it is still green." This

is an obvious picture in the experience of travelers in the desert. Just before the fresh fire is strong enough to heat the pot, a whirlwind comes suddenly and sweeps away the thorns.⁸¹ The fire of the thorns represents the malicious will of the evildoers, the pots with the meat the plans which they are devising. But let them not work so fast, the whirlwind of divine judgment will annihilate their schemes.⁸²

5. Psalm 67:13

LXX ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν συνάμεων τοῦ ἀγαπῆτου,
τοῦ ἀγαπῆτου, καὶ ὡραιότητι τοῦ οἴκου
διελέσθαι σκόλα.

PR Rex virtutum dilecti dilecti, et speciei domus
dividere spolia.

V Rex virtutum dilecti dilecti: et speciei domus
dividere spolia.

JH Reges exercituum foederabuntur, foederabuntur;
et pulchritudo domus dividet spolia.

PP Reges exercituum fugiunt, fugiunt; et incolae
domus dividunt praedam.

This is purely a non-sense verse: "The king of powers of the beloved, of the beloved; and to divide the spoils among the beauty of the house." The Vulgate and the Romanum are both a slavish translation of the Greek. Even "speciei" is dative after the Greek "ὡραιότητι." In the way the Greek stands, there

seems to be a verb of the head missing. The verb could be "command" or "granted." So "the king commanded or granted the beauty of the house to divide the spoils." But the conjunction, "καί," throws out this theory, because it makes the second member an independent clause.

The Juxta Hebraeos has something quite different from the Septuagint's "ἀγαπᾷ τοῦ." Jerome has translated the Hebrew with a verb and also he has "the beautiful" in the nominative case and he has changed the infinitive to the future tense. And so it reads: "The kings of the powers shall be allied, allied; and the beauty of the house shall divide the spoils." But the ~~Latin~~ Pianum reads: "The kings of the hosts flee, they flee, and they that dwell in the house divide the spoils." By "foederabuntur" Jerome may merely have meant "will be friends," and so he may have read his Hebrew text as the Septuagint translators did theirs. Besides no Hebrew expression for forming an alliance is near enough to the text to justify Jerome's interpretation.⁸³ The Pianum seems to have the correct reading, since the evident sense of the next member supports "flee."

Once again the Greek translators have misread the Hebrew. It seems they have wrongly vocalized a couple of the Hebrew words. These words have the same consonants, but different vowels. They read "y^edidun, y^edidun," "beloved, beloved," instead of "yiddodun, yiddodun," "they flee, they flee." And "ἐρα, ὁτιτι" is due to a reading of the Hebrew as "na'wath," "the beautiful one," instead of "n^ewath" "the dweller."⁸⁴ And so the Pianum has "incolae."

6. Psalm 76:11

LXX Καὶ εἶπα νῦν ἡρεξάμην, αὕτη ἡ ἀλλοίωσις
τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ ὁψίστου.

PR Et dixi: Nunc coepi, haec est mutatio dexterarum
Excelsi.

V Et dixi: Nunc coepi: haec mutatio dexterarum
Excelsi.

JH Et dixi, imbecillitas mea est haec: commutatio
dexterarum Excelsi.

PP Et dico: "Hic est dolor meus, quod mutata est
dextera Altissimi."

This verse is indeed obscure, and has been very variously explained. The Vulgate and Romanum have stuck close to the LXX, word for word, except in one place where the Romanum has added "est." This just doesn't make a whole lot of sense even though some of the commentaries have tried to explain its meaning by supplying "to understand" with "coepi."⁸⁵ The Juxta Hebraeos says: "And I said, my infirmity (pain or sorrow) is this: the change of the right hand of the Most High." This means the psalmist is convinced, at the end of his inquiry, that God's attitude toward Israel has changed and herein lies his grief. But he goes on in verse 12 to remind the Lord of His gracious deeds in the past, hoping thus to regain His strong right hand.⁸⁶

The whole problem stems from the Hebrew. McClellan says

the Hebrew for "coepi," as it stands, "can be translated 'I have begun,' or 'my misery,' or 'my entreating' (the last two as infinitives of other verbs with a pronominal suffix)."⁸⁷ Also in the second line the Hebrew "sh'nōth" may mean "years" or "changing."⁸⁸ And so McClellan believes this verse should be translated thus: "And I said, My entreaty shall be this, the years of the right hand of the Highest." The former ages of the Lord's manifest providence is the firmest ground of confidence for the future.⁸⁹

The LXX read the Hebrew as "hahilloti," "I have begun,"⁹⁰ whereas the Massoretic text has "halloti," "my piercing wound." But Jerome in his Juxta Hebraeos has followed the Aquila version and read the Hebrew as "haloti," "my weakness" or "my infirmity."⁹¹ And the Pianum has followed Jerome's reading, but it has stretched the meaning of "imbecillitas" to "dolor," "grief" or "sorrow."

The Pianum has also changed the tense of "dixi" to the present, thus making the psalm an actual prayer of the present. And so it reads: "And I say: This is my sorrow, that the right hand of the Most high is changed."

7. Psalm 87:11

LXX Μὴ τοῖς νεκροῖς ποιήσεις θαυμάσια, ἢ
ἰατροὶ ἀναστήσουσι καὶ ἐξομολογήσονται σοί;

PR Numquid mortuis facies mirabilia? aut medici
resuscitabunt, et confitebuntur tibi?

V Numquid mortuis facies mirabilia? aut medici
suscitabunt, et confitebuntur tibi?

JH Numquid mortuis facies mirabilia, aut gigantes
surgent, et laudabunt te?

PP Num pro mortuis facis mirabilia? an defuncti
surgent, et laudabunt te?

The Romanum and the Vulgate are exactly alike, except where the Romanum has "resuscitabunt" instead of the Vulgate's "suscitabunt." And they are in strict agreement with the Greek.

"Will you do wonders for the dead? or shall the physicians raise (them) to life and give praise to you?" Since "ἀναστήσουσι"

seems apparently to have no object, it is intransitive and should be translated "they shall rise from the dead" or "stand up."⁹² McClellan thinks the LXX has translated the Hebrew cor-

rectly by "ἀναστήσουσι," meaning "or will the healers rise."⁹³

But the first meaning of "ἀναστήσουσι" which comes from "ἀνίστημι," is "to raise up." And in this context it seems certain that it means "raise up" understanding "αὐτούς" as the object which refers to "νεκροῖς" in the first member of this verse. From the Romanum and the Vulgate it is quite probable

to say that the older Latin versions also interpreted the Greek as "to raise up." For these reasons then it seems that McClellan is mistaken in believing the Greek here means "to rise."

The Hebrew consonants for "to rise up" and "to raise up" are the same. So it seems the Septuagint translators have wrongly vocalized this Hebrew word. For they read "yakimu," "raise up," instead of "yakumu," "rise up." But in view of the context they made the correct reading.⁹⁴

But they caused the context to be wrong by reading one Hebrew word incorrectly, thus changing the subject. For they read "roph^e'im," "healers" or "physicians," which was indeed a much commoner word⁹⁵ than "re^epha'im," "shades" or "the dead."⁹⁶ Thus this made the whole passage obscure. For what is the subject of "and they shall praise you?" It has to be the subject of "ἐλεησέσθαι," which is "physicians." And this doesn't make sense, for the psalmist is talking about being on the verge of death. And he is asking for a little longer life, since once he is dead, how can he give praise to God?

Jerome translated this Hebrew word by "gigantes." This seems to be more an interpretation than a translation. For "gigantes" means "the fabled sons of Earth and Tartarus, who stormed the heavens, but were struck by Jupiter with lightning and buried under Aetna."⁹⁷ Jerome seems to have read the Hebrew correctly, but he has interpreted the Hebrew "shades" as something mythical. Or he may have use "gigantes" as a metaphor. Just as the "gigantes" could not rise up so neither can the dead.

The Pianum here has the preferred reading, which it has

taken from the Massoretic text. It says: "Do you work wonders for the dead? or shall the departed rise up and praise you?"

8. Psalm 89:12

LXX Τὴν δεξιάν σου οὕτως γνώρισον, καὶ
τοὺς πεπαιδευμένους τῇ καρδίᾳ ἐν σοφίᾳ

PR Dexteram tuam, Domine, notam fac nobis: et
eruditos corde in sapientia.

V Dexteram tuam sic notam fac: et eruditos
corde in sapientia.

JH Ut numerentur dies nostri sic ostende, et
veniemus corde sapientia.

PP Dinumerare nos doce dies nostros, ut
perveniamus ad sapientiam cordis.

This unintelligible phrase comes straight from the Greek. The Vulgate is exactly the same as the LXX. The Romanum is slightly different. It has "Domine" and "nobis" in the first part of the verse, whereas the LXX and the Vulgate don't have. The Romanum was translated from a LXX version also. And from inspecting the Juxta Hebraeos the Romanum seems to be correct in having a form of "us." Or maybe just the Old Latin versions had it. For Jerome was a little more bold about changing things in translating the Vulgate than he was in his first Latin translation, as can be gathered from his Epistola 106 "Ad Sunniam et

Fretelam," in which he answers a number of questions of Sunnias and Fretelam in regard to the differences between his Vulgate Psalter and the LXX.

Just read the Vulgate or the LXX: "So make your right hand known; and (men) learned in heart, in wisdom." First of all in looking at the Juxta Hebraeos and the Pianum, it seems that the infinitive, "dinumerare," ending the previous verse should be the first word of verse 12, and complementary of the imperative, "notam fac." But this doesn't make sense with "your right hand." And from these two Latin versions of the Hebrew it is seen that "dextera" is also wrong. The Massoretic text says "Teach us to reckon our days, that so in our heart we may bring wisdom." The Septuagint translators falsely divided the unpointed Hebrew text. And "yamenu," "our days," was read with the first letter of the next word, "ken," as "y^eminka," "your right hand."⁹⁸

In the second part of the verse, the Septuagint translators again misread a Hebrew word. "Nabhi," "that we may bring," was read as "n^ebhone," "instructed" or "learned."⁹⁹ Jerome following the Aquila, the Symmachus, and the Quinta translates the Hebrew with "veniemus."¹⁰⁰ He says: "Thus show that our days are numbered, and we will come to a heart of wisdom." He uses the future tense whereas the Pianum uses "ut" with the subjunctive. But both texts are saying the same thing: "Do this and this will happen."

The Pianum changes the wording a little. It has "wisdom of heart" instead of "heart of wisdom." But the Pianum has a better style in regard to this phrase. It has "ad sapientiam"

cordis." This is much better than Jerome's "corde sapientis," which is a bad use of the ablative. The Pianum reads: "Teach us to number our days, that we may arrive at wisdom of heart."

9. Psalm 118:120

LXX *καθήλωσον ἐκ τοῦ φόβου σου τὰς σάρκας μου,
ἀπὸ γὰρ τῶν κριμάτων σου ἐφοβήθη.*

PR Infige timore tuo carnes meas, a*judiciis*
enim tuis timui.

V Confige timore tuo carnes meas:
a*judiciis* enim tuis timui.

JH Horripilavit a timore tui caro mea,
et judicia tua timeo.

PP Horrescit timore tui caro mea,
et decreta tua timeo.

This verse is somewhat contradictory. It says: "Pierce (nail) my flesh with your fear, for I am afraid of your judgments." If the psalmist is already afraid of God's judgment, why does he ask God to pierce him with fear? The problem comes from the Septuagint translators understanding the Hebrew "samar," "shudder" as an Aramaic verb meaning "to nail."¹⁰¹

In the second part of the verse the LXX has "γάρ," but the Juxta Hebraeos and the Pianum don't have any equivalent form of this. So the Massoretic text and the Hebrew text of Jerome must

Not have had it in either. But did the Hebrew of the Septuagint translators have it? Possibly it could have, since it fits the context if the Hebrew "samar" is read correctly. Nevertheless it is more probable to believe that it was not present in it, for when the translators read the Hebrew as "nail!" or "pierce!," they also read "γάρ" into the text. Since without it the verse was even more senseless. It would have read: "Pierce my flesh with your fear, and I was frightened by your judgments!"

The Romanum and the Vulgate differ only in the first word. The Romanum has "infige" whereas the Vulgate has "confige." "Confige" has more the idea of being pierced through and thus nailed.¹⁰² And so they both agree almost word for word with the Greek. So much so that these Latin versions have "a judiciis tuis" for "τῶν κρίματων." Instead they should have "judicia tua," the accusative without a preposition. This structure in the Greek might be correct since "ἐφοβήθη" is aorist passive. But "timui" in the Latin is active and doesn't need the preposition. The Latin wasn't altogether slavish of the Greek, for the Latin didn't translate "ἐκ." "ἐκ" is probably the correct translation of the Hebrew preposition here, but with the misreading of the Hebrew verb, it doesn't fit the context. The early Latin translators apparently recognized this, for Jerome doesn't have it in either the Vulgate or the Romanum. Jerome would have especially translated it in the Romanum if the early Latin versions had had it.

"Flesh" must have been singular in the Hebrew, for the Juxta Hebraeos and Pianum have translated it as singular. The

Romanum and the Vulgate have "carnas" in following the Greek. And the LXX has the plural, because this is the form in which the word "σάρξ" is generally used.¹⁰³

The Juxta Hebraeos and the Pianum agree in the sense of the verse and they differ only in vocabulary and the tenses of the verbs. "Horripilare" and "horrescere" mean about the same thing: "hair to bristle up, to stand on end," hence "to have goose bumps," and so "my flesh shudders." The Pianum uses "decreta" instead of "judicia." "Decreta" seems to have a stronger force behind it than just "judgments," more the idea of authority. But for myself I would prefer "judicia," since I am more familiar with it. The present sense of the Pianum is much better than Jerome's perfects. It makes the verse an actual present: "My flesh shudders with fear of you, and I am afraid of your ordinances."

10. Psalm 130:2

LXX Εἰ μὴ ἐταπεινοφρόνους, ἀλλὰ ὕψωσα τὴν ψυχὴν μου, ὥς τὸ ἀπογεγαλακτισμένον ἐπὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ, ὥς ἀνταποδώσεις ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν μου.

PR Si non humiliter sentiebam: sed exaltavi animam meam. Sicut ablactatus super matrem suam: ita retribues in animam meam.

V Si non humiliter sentiebam: sed exaltavi animam meam: sicut ablactatus est super matre sua: ita retributio in anima mea.

JH Si non proposui, et silere feci animam meam:
Sicut ablactatus super matrem suam, ita
ablactetur super me anima mea.

PP Immo composui et pacavi animam meam,
Sicut parvulus in gremio matris suae:
ita in me est anima mea.

This verse is quite a tangled construction. Literally translated the LXX and the Romanum read: "If I was not humbly minded, but exalted my soul: as a weaned child is upon its mother, so shall you give recompense on my soul." The Vulgate says the same thing. The only difference is that it has changed "~~re-~~tribues" to "retributio." Jerome probably changed this because grammatically a noun fitted in the structure better than a verb.

Again the difficulty has arisen from the Septuagint translators misreading the Hebrew. The sense of the Massoretic text is "Surely I have composed and quieted my soul. As a weaned child upon its mother, so a weaned child upon me is my soul."¹⁰⁴ The first main thing is they misread the second verb by mistaking the letter "daleth" for "resh."¹⁰⁵ Thus they read "romanti," "I have lifted up" or "exalted," instead of "domanti," "I have hushed" or "reduced to silence."¹⁰⁶

The Hebrew was correctly translated by "εἰ μὴ" and "si non," and is equivalent to "surely" or "indeed." For "si non" in emphatic speech and especially in adjurations means the affirmative.¹⁰⁷ But with the reading "I have exalted my soul" in contrast to the first member "I was humbly minded," "εἰ μὴ" can be only taken in its literal sense. Also such an antithesis led

the Septuagint translators to read the Hebrew conjunction as "but" instead of as "and."¹⁰⁸

Taking "εἰ μὴ" as conditional, the translators expected the last clause of the verse to be an apodosis. This is probably the reason why they, although they read "gamul," "weaned," correct the first time, nevertheless in the second part read it as "gemul," "retribution." Also they read "alai," "with me," as "ale," "with," and made it govern "naphshi," "my soul." However "naphshi" is a nominative.¹⁰⁹ So the LXX's sense is "if I have exalted my soul you will repay me." But in so doing this, it has dissembled a simile and has left "as a weaned child is upon its mother" standing in mid air. The Latin versions in following the Greek had no other choice but to come up with the same thing.

Jerome in his Juxta Hebraeos has cleared up this nonsense. And he agrees exactly with the sense of the Massoretic text. It is interesting to note that he also uses "si non" here, and it is quite evident that it means "surely." He has translated "animam meam" as the common object of both the preceeding verbs, "proposui" and "silere feci." The LXX here seems to have interpreted the "leveling of the soul" as humility.¹¹⁰ Jerome also has correctly translated "anima mea" as the subject of the last clause.

Since the Juxta Hebraeos agrees with the Massoretic text, so the Pianum should agree with the Juxta Hebraeos. And it does, but it has interpreted the words a little. Instead of "si non"

it has employed "immo." And ~~this~~ appears to be much better, for the use of "si non" as "surely" is not very common and seems rather strange. The Pianum's version is very clear and it means "Indeed I have composed and calmed my soul, as a little child on the lap of its mother, so is my soul within me."

Conclusion

The Vulgate is a slavish translation of another slavish translation. In the foregoing comparisons, it was seen that all the Vulgate's obscurities were due to the Septuagint version. The translators of the Septuagint were not at all completely familiar with the Greek language; this is especially seen in their slavish renderings of the Hebrew tenses into the Greek tenses. And also they had an inadequate knowledge of the Hebrew. In the purely consonantal Hebrew text, which they had, they frequently misread the words, particularly in that they treated them as Aramaic words. Besides this they aimed at extreme fidelity and even at slavish verbal accuracy, which is indeed against the principle of translating. St. Jerome eventually recognizing this was driven to the "veritas Hebraica."

According to Ronald Knox a translator "must find out what the original means;" he "must try to express in" his "own language what the other man was trying to express in his." Also he "must find out why he said it;" and he "must reproduce, not only the sense, but the emphasis of his words."¹¹¹ With this ideal in mind the six translators of the Pianum have executed their task. Sifting through the ancient versions of the psalms and also with the aid of many commentaries they have tried to find out the sense of the original Hebrew. And for their media of expression they have chosen Classical Latin, for they believed this Latin style was more intelligible to the priests of

today.

In 1945 when the Pianum replaced the Vulgate Psalter it was met with many pros and cons. At the head of the pros was Cardinal Bea, which was natural, since he was the head of the group of translators. Christine Mohrmann was the outstanding leader of the cons. She even had an audience with Pius XII in regard to this matter. Mohrmann says:

The Gallicanum has great beauty, a beauty consecrated by its age-long use in the Church's liturgy and one which as some inalienable possession is embedded in the religious thought and sentiment of the West. From the fourth century down to our day this version of the psalms has left its impress on the language and literature of our Western world. These are traditional values that should not be despised....

The Gallicanum has its difficulties, but these lie in quite other things than its linguistic structures and they can be removed without impairing the traditional Christian language. The fundamental question is, and remains this: Is it right, or rather, is it justifiable to mutilate a liturgical book such as the Book of Psalms, a mass of poetry which since the earliest centuries has been part and parcel of Christian worship has--so to say--grown up with the Christian idiom--to mutilate such a book by dressing it up in a pre-Christian language?¹¹²

But Bea says:

That the language of the Psalms of the Vulgate differs so much from this model is by no means a thing to be praised; St. Jerome did not look upon it as such. It is rather a defect kept in the Gallican Psalter for practical reasons, flowing partly from an excessively slavish translation of the Greek and partly from the ecclesiastical conditions of the first centuries, which were anything but literary. There is no apparent reason, therefore, when conditions have completely changed, for preserving such an idiom at the price of clarity and intelligibility.¹¹³

Both of these have a good point, especially Mohrmann in regard to the traditional Christian language, but this controver-

sy is no longer a problem. For now priests everywhere will be reciting the psalms in their own vernacular tongues. And thus the Psalterium Pianum should be considered as a great monumental step forward in the psalm translations. For it has cleared up the obscure passages and enigmatic expressions of the Vulgate. It gives a text from which these vernacular translations can be made--a text which is superior both to the Septuagint and the Massoretic texts in that it is closer to the original Hebrew meaning.

Footnotes

1. P. Terentius Afer, The Self-Tormentor (Heautontimorumenos), The Loeb Classical Library, Terence, translated by John Sargeaunt (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), p.124.
2. Monsignor Edward J. Kissane, The Book of Psalms (Dublin: Brown & Nolan LTD., 1953), p. xi.
3. Matthew 7:23 (Ps. 6:9; 118:115); 21:16 (Ps. 8:3); 26:24 (Ps. 40:10); 27:46 (Ps. 21:2); Luke 23:46 (Ps. 30:6); 24:44 (Ps. 18:6).
4. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13.
5. Rev. L.C. Fillion, The Psalter of the Roman Breviary (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder Book Co., 1946). p. 1.
6. St. Jerome, "Paulae et Eustochii ad Marcellam" (Epistola 46), Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1841-60), vol. 22, col. 491.
7. Dom Matthew Britt, A Dictionary of the Psalter (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1928). p. xviii.
8. Pope Pius XII, Motu Proprio "In Cotidianis Precibus," The Psalms, ed. By Rev. W.H. McClellan, fourth edition (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1960), p. ix.
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52. Meagher, op. cit., p. 221.
53. T.E. Bird, "Some Queries on the New Psalter," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, vol. 11 (January, 1949), p. 76. Christine Mohrmann objects seriously to the vocabulary and style of the Pianum, op. cit., pp. 7-33. Her view is stated later on p. 36.
54. Bea, op. cit., p. 13.
55. The LXX text is taken from The Septuagint Version, Greek and English (New York: James Pott and Co., 1900), pp. 699-787.
56. PR signifies the Psalterium Romanum and V stands for

the Vulgate. Both texts are taken from Migne, Pat. Lat., vol. 29, col. 123-420.

57. JH represents the Librum Psalmorum Juxta Hebraicam Veritatem (Juxta Hebraeos). The text is taken from Migne, Pat. Lat., vol. 28, col. 1183-1308.

58. PP stands for the Psalterium Pianum. The text for this is taken from Rev. W.H. McClellan, ed., The Psalms, fourth edition (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1960).

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