

# The Sources of the text of Calvin's New Testament

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To speak of Calvin's Latin New Testament when in fact he did not publish a separate edition, may seem unjustified. Nevertheless, he supplied for his New Testament Commentaries a fresh Latin translation which, although incomplete (for he wrote no commentaries on II and III John and Revelation) can fairly claim to be an individual version. In it we find, not the sort of elegant paraphrase or literal exercise that abounded in his day, but a carefully constructed work, made with the help of the best technical tools at his disposal, and growing out of the Biblical tradition of the Church. In this essay our sole purpose is to discover what other versions and helps he used. As this is an attempt which has not been made before, to the best of my knowledge, we may be content to draw bold and clear rather than detailed and delicate lines. Each of the separate subjects treated here could very easily be expanded into an essay on its own. They all call for further investigation.

These commentaries, and therefore the version itself, were written over a period of twenty years. 1540 Romans; 1546 I Corinthians; 1548 II Corinthians;<sup>1</sup> Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; I and II Timothy; 1549 Titus and Hebrews; 1550 I and II Thessalonians; 1551 Catholic Epistles; 1552 Acts 1-13; 1553 St. John's Gospel; 1554 Acts 14-28; 1555 the Synoptics. Having no more New Testament worlds that he wished to conquer, this Alexander then went back and in 1556 published a revised edition of the epistles (a less thorough revision of the Pauline epistles had already been made in 1551), and in 1560 a revised edition of Acts. It is these revised editions which are commonly known and quoted, since they form the text of Tholuck's edition and of the Calvin Translation Society. The *Corpus Reformatorum* supplies the first edition text in foot-notes, but gives only the revised versions of the Biblical text. It has therefore proved necessary to collate several chapters with the first and 1551 editions. In finding these, if not rare, at least distinctly uncommon, books, I am greatly indebted to Mr. H. M. Adams, the former Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, who allowed me to see his almost finished bibliography of pre-1550 foreign books in Cambridge libraries, and who, moreover, was always ready to answer queries. My thanks are also due to the Librarians of Corpus Christi, Pembroke and St. John's Colleges for allowing me to use these books. For 1540 Romans I have used a microfilm kindly supplied by the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

<sup>1</sup> II Cor. was apparently written in 1546 (see Colladon, C. R. xxi. p. 68). The French translation was published before the Latin, in 1547.



These twenty years of Calvin's New Testament work span the period from the close of Erasmus' labours to the early years of Beza's. When he embarked on his course, he had at his disposal the work of Valla and Faber Stapulensis, Erasmus and Budaeus. Robert Stephanus had published editions of the Vulgate and his famous dictionaries; he was to arrive in Geneva in time to publish the revised edition of the epistles for Calvin (making use in it of the admirable and ingenious system of versification that tradition tells us he devised on the journey). A year earlier he had published his Greek New Testament, using no fewer than fifteen manuscripts. Beza, that friend of Calvin from childhood, was living in Geneva as this twenty years drew to its close. It is hard to credit that they did not discuss the critical side of New Testament studies. These are the great names of the sixteenth century New Testament world. Contemporary with them, but on another level, we meet a Brixianus or a Benedictus, a Castellio or a Juda, preparing a translation to match Erasmus in elegance or accuracy, or supplying his marginal notes according (as Brixianus proudly claims) to 'the most ancient MSS in both languages'.

There is no difficulty in discovering the main texts which lie behind Calvin's version. Any reader of the commentaries is left in no doubt that Erasmus and the Vulgate are not far away. Such phrases as *Erasmus vertit*, *Erasmus reddidit*, *vetus interpres transtulerat* are sprinkled liberally throughout the pages. It is with these that we may start, therefore.

#### CALVIN AND ERASMUS

Erasmus, urged by Colet, set to work to provide a fresh Latin translation of the New Testament as early as 1505-6.<sup>2</sup> The result remained in manuscript, part of which, a very large and beautiful book containing Matthew and Mark with the Vulgate and Erasmus' version in parallel columns, is in the Cambridge University Library. Ten years later Erasmus prepared another translation, or perhaps modified his existing one, rather closer to the Vulgate, to accompany the Greek text which Froben, the Basel printer, was in a hurry to print. This edition received drastic revision to both Latin and Greek and re-appeared in 1519. The Latin was now a return to the early manuscript; according to P. S. Allen 'in 1519 he introduced it with the most minute care, even such trivial variations as *ac* or *-que* for *et* being restored'.<sup>3</sup> Three more editions were published in Erasmus' life-time, 1522, 1527 and 1535, as well as some separate impressions of the Latin. The later editions received only slight revision - at any rate in the passages I have collated.

That Erasmus entered on the dangerous course of publishing a new translation was due to the importunity of his friends. He himself had at first intended to give the Vulgate with the Greek. The Vulgate was hallowed by the pious usage of a thousand years in the Western Church. It had become a part of the Church, the Church almost a part of it. Moreover, in opposition

<sup>2</sup> P. S. Allen: *The Age of Erasmus*. Oxford, 1914, pp. 141-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 161.



to the Greek text, it was becoming a rallying point for forces of conservatism against the New Learning. The position was also ludicrously bedevilled by the hostility between East and West. The Western Church spoke Latin, the Eastern Greek. Ergo, the book of the West was the Vulgate, that of the East the Greek Bible. Nor did it avail that Erasmus had, in fact, translated into Latin; for he had translated from the Greek, accepting it and its supposedly corrupt readings as normative. All this and much else was urged against him by the Dutch humanist Dorpius.<sup>4</sup> Yet despite the opposition, Erasmus was able to publish the second edition with a commendatory epistle from the Pope himself. His undertaking proved as popular as it was dangerous and revolutionary. His New Testament became a best-seller. What is more, he came to occupy a position of immense authority as the foremost New Testament scholar of the day.

This authority is reflected in the first edition of Calvin's Romans. Although Calvin, in his dedicatory preface to Simon Grynaeus (a friend, we may note, of both Erasmus and Calvin) makes no mention of him as one of his precursors, it is to him that he most frequently refers among modern scholars in the commentary. He cites him six times. Once as accepting his rendering:

Rom. 2<sup>8-9</sup>. *excandescencia et ira: tribulatio et anxietas*. Calvin: Sic vertere cogit me verborum proprietas. Graecis enim id significat θυμός, quod Latinis excandescencia notare docet Cicero, Tusc. 4. nempe subitum irae inflammationem. In aliis sequor Erasmus.<sup>5</sup>

Erasmus: *indignatio et ira, afflictio et anxietas*.<sup>6</sup>

Four times he rejects, mildly, Erasmus readings as unsuitable:

Rom. 1<sup>14</sup>. *et sapientibus et stultis debitor sum*. Non male vertit Erasmus eruditos et rudes: sed ego ipsa Pauli verba retinere malui.<sup>7</sup>

Erasmus: *eruditus pariter ac radibus*.

Rom. 1<sup>23</sup>. *imagine corruptibilis hominis*. Sic enim vertere malui quam cum Erasmo mortalis.<sup>8</sup>

Erasmus: *ad mortalis hominis similitudinem*.

Rom. 15<sup>16</sup>. *consecrans euangelium Christi*. Sic malo quam quod Erasmus reddidit administrare. Nihil enim certius est quam Paulum hic ad sacra mysteria alludere, quae a sacerdote peraguntur.<sup>9</sup>

Erasmus: *administrans euangelium dei*.

Rom. 15<sup>30</sup>. *ut concertetis mihi*. Erasmus non male reddidit: ut laborantem adiuvetis: sed quia locutio graeca Pauli plus habet energiae, reddere ad verbum eam malui.<sup>10</sup>

The worst he can say is:

Rom. 12<sup>3</sup>. *ne supramodum sapiat*. Sic enim intelligere malo quam secundum quod Erasmus vertit: Ne quis superbe de se sentiat: quia et

<sup>4</sup> See A. Bludau: Die beiden ersten Erasmus-Ausgaben des Neuen Testaments und ihre Gegner. Biblische Studien, Bd. 7, Heft 5. Freiburg 1902.

<sup>5</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Unless an edition is named, the reference is to 1535.

<sup>7</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 276.

<sup>10</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 282.



hic sensus est aliquanto a verbis remotior, et ille melius quadrat orationis contextui.<sup>11</sup>

Erasmus: *Ne quis arroganter de se sentiat.*

This is Calvin's attitude to Erasmus in 1540. It is what we should expect of an admirer, whose one humanist book had been largely inspired by Erasmus' edition of Seneca.

By 1556 a change is apparent in the climate. The revision of Romans introduces 22 fresh citations,<sup>12</sup> the original 6 all being retained. Two accept Erasmus:

Rom. 7.24. *quis me eripiet a corpore mortis hoc?* Pronomen τούτου, quod ego cum Erasmo ad corpus retuli, morti quoque apte congruit: sed eodem fere sensu.<sup>13</sup>

Erasmus: *quis me eripiet ex hoc corpore morti obnoxio?*

Rom. 10.4. *finis enim legis Christus:* Mihi non male quadrare videtur hoc loco verbum complementi: [sicuti etiam Erasmus perfectionem vertit:] sed quia altera lectio omnium fere consensu recepta est, et ipsa quoque non male convenit, [liberum per me lectoribus eam retinere].<sup>14</sup>

Erasmus: *nam perfectio legis.*

Eleven references reject Erasmus' rendering as inadequate or unsuitable, while the other nine reject it outright. We may notice some of the severer judgments:

Rom. 4.21. *quod, ubi quid promisit:* Miror cur Erasmo relativum masculinum placuerit: nam etsi non variat propterea sensus, proprius tamen ad graeca Pauli verba accedere libuit.<sup>15</sup>

Erasmus: *quod is qui promiserat.*

Rom. 15.16. *consecrans evangelium Christi:* Quod postea correxit Erasmus, sacrificans evangelium, non modo improprium est, sed sensum quoque obscurat.<sup>16</sup>

Rom. 12.14. *Benedicite iis:* In verbo εὐλογεῖν deceptus fuit Erasmus: quia non animadvertit diris et maledictionibus opponi.<sup>17</sup>

Erasmus: *Bene loquamini de iis.*

Rom. 12.16. *Ne sitis apud vos ipsos prudentes.* Nam quod φρονίμους Erasmus vertit arrogantes, coactum est ac frigidum: quia bis idem sine ulla vehementia repeteret Paulus.<sup>18</sup>

Erasmus: *Ne sitis arrogantes apud vosmetipsos.*

In fact, however, this changed attitude towards Erasmus may be placed ten years earlier, for it is discernible in I Corinthians. In the first edition of this commentary in 1546 are 16 references to Erasmus' text. Every one of these renderings is rejected; some mildly, many harshly, but all rejected.

<sup>11</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 236.

<sup>12</sup> C. R. index is both unreliable and inadequate. The figures I give are my own reckoning.

<sup>13</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 134 f.

<sup>14</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 196. Passages in brackets added in 1556.

<sup>15</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 85.

<sup>16</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 276.

<sup>17</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 244.

<sup>18</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 244 f.



Although he still recognises Erasmus' authority and will feel the need to justify his disagreement, he is in general far more independent, so that he can go so far in one place as to speak of Erasmus as being moved "frivolis coniecturis, magis quam ullo firmo argumento".<sup>19</sup> We are justified in saying that by 1546 Calvin was emancipated from the sway of Erasmus. Might it not, however, be that he finds Erasmus' translation less convincing in some books than in others? No, for the tone of all the commentaries after the 1540 Romans shows the same tendency – including, of course, the revision of Romans itself. Not that henceforth Calvin is consistently opposed to him. Rather, he no longer treats him as a master but as a colleague. It is true that most references are unfavourable; but this arises more from his wish to justify himself than from rivalry or antagonism. It is an indirect tribute to Erasmus' eminence, indeed, preeminence, in the contemporary New Testament scholarship.

In all I have found about 150 citations of Erasmus in these commentaries. This, although not possibly the whole number, is quite sufficient for our present comparison. Of these, only 19 mention him favourably; 40 or so are neutral and the remainder, about 90, are contradictory in varying degrees. There must be a certain amount of indecision about these last two classes, for it is not always easy to decide where the neutral becomes the unfavourable. In the following table we see this both more precisely and also chronologically.

		Total.	Pro.	Neutral.	Contra.
Rom.	1540	7	1	5	1
	1556	+ 22	+ 2	+ 11	+ 9
I Cor.	1546	16	–	–	16
	1556	+ 4	–	–	+ 4
II Cor.	1548	12	1	6	5
	1556	+ 4	–	+ 2	+ 2
Gal.	1548	4	–	–	4
	1556	+ 2	–	+ 1	+ 1
Eph.	1548	3	1	1	1
	1556	+ 5	–	+ 1	+ 4
Phil.	1548	4	–	1	3
	1556	+ 1	–	–	+ 1
Col.	1548	6	–	3	3
	1556	1	–	1	–
I Tim.	1548	6	–	1	5
	1556	+ 1	–	+ 1	–
II Tim.	1548	3	–	2	1
	1556	+ 1	+ 1	–	–
Titus	1549	4	–	1	3
	1556	no change.			
Hebrews	1549	2	2	–	–
	1556	no change.			

<sup>19</sup> I Cor. 16. 8. C. R. xlix. p. 568.



I Thess.	1550	1	—	1	—
	1556	+ 1	—	—	+ 1
II Thess.	1550	1	—	1	—
	1556	no change.			
James	1551	2	1	—	1
	1556	no change.			
I Pet.	1551	5	1	1	3
	1556	no change.			
Acts (a)	1552	12	3	1	8
	1560	+ 1	—	—	+ 1
John	1553	2	1	—	1
Acts (b)	1554	10	3	2	5
	1560	- 1	- 1	—	—
Synoptics	1555	5	2	1	2

To turn to more general considerations. First, in these many references to Erasmus, which of the five editions is Calvin referring to? In all but two, the reading given appears in 1535. But since 1535 is virtually identical with 1519, 1522 and 1927 in our references, we cannot be certain which of these editions he had, although it is no very startling conjecture to suppose that he used 1535. On I Thess. 1. 3 he ascribes to Erasmus the reading "Indesinenter memores vestri propter opus fidei" which first appears in 1522, 1516 and 1519 both having "ind. recolentes v. p. o. f." But of the two exceptions mentioned above, the former provides us with a problem:

Rom. 15. 16. *consecrans euangelium Christi*. 1540: Sic malo quam quod Erasmus reddidit administrare. In 1556 Calvin added: Quod postea correxit Erasmus, *sacrificans euangelium*, non modo improprium est, sed sensum quoque obscurat.<sup>20</sup>

The difficulty is that Erasmus nowhere<sup>21</sup> has *sacrificans*. His rendering in every edition is *administrans euangelium dei*. The *Paraphrasis* gives no help, for there the verse becomes: *ut illustrando Dei Euangelio inter vos Gentes*.<sup>22</sup> It is Calvin's custom to quote these readings almost verbatim. But if, on this occasion he is supplying only a summary of the sense, we may refer it to the general tenor of the *Annotationes* on this verse. After quoting Augustine's reading of *consecrans*, Erasmus goes on: "Voluit enim Paulus praedicationem Evangelii rem videri cum primis sacram, ac veluti victimam Deo gratissimam, quod Gentes redderet Christi dignas. Atque huius sacri se veluti sacrificium facit".<sup>23</sup> But I find this solution unsatisfactory. On the other hand, Calvin may be confusing Erasmus' note with one of Origen's (which I quote from the Oxford Vulgate ad loc.) in which he says that "posset tamen dici *sacrificans euangelium dei*". But note that Beza in his *Annotationes* also ascribes *sacrificans* to Erasmus.

<sup>20</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 276.

<sup>21</sup> Nowhere? A bold remark when dealing with ten folio volumes un-indexed. But at any rate, it does not appear in any of the five New Testaments of Erasmus, or in the *Paraphrasis*.

<sup>22</sup> Op. om. 7. 828.

<sup>23</sup> Op. om. 6. 647.



The second exception is simpler:

I Thess. 2. 13. *quum sermonem Dei praedicatum a nobis percepistis*: Male Erasmus qui vertit *sermonem auditus Dei*: acsi Deum intelligeret Paulus patefactum. Postea mutavit, *Sermonem quo Deum discebatis*. Non enim ab eo animadversa fuit Hebraica phrasia.<sup>24</sup>

Erasmus 1516: *sermonem auditus a nobis, dei, accepistis*.

Erasmus 1523 ff.: *cum acciperetis sermonem a nobis, quo deum discebatis*.

Annotat.: id est, *sermonem de deo, aut sermonem quo deum discebatis*.<sup>25</sup>

Commonly therefore, Calvin quotes from the later editions, most probably 1935; but in composing his translation he also took into account the earlier editions.

Secondly, when Calvin dissents from Erasmus, what are his reasons? The answer to this question is illuminating for the understanding of Calvin in general and of his New Testament work in particular. Nor is it what a superficial view of Calvin as an expositor might lead us to suppose – Calvin is a Reformer, hating and attacking the humanism which Erasmus represented; therefore he will disapprove of his exegesis on doctrinal grounds. In fact this is true only very rarely – I can find but four examples of disagreement because of doctrine.

In the first, he mislikes Erasmus' reading on the ground that it is abused by the Papists:

II Cor. 7. 11. *imo defensionem*: Quia Erasmus *Satisfactionem* translulerat, imperiti decepti vocis ambiguitate, traxerunt ad satisfactiones Papisticas.<sup>26</sup>

The others sprang from his desire to uphold the dignity of the Eucharist and of the Church:

I Cor. 11. 25. *Similiter et calicem, postquam coenaverunt*: Nolui autem cum Erasmo vertere coena peracta: quia in re tanti ponderis vitanda fuit ambiguitas.<sup>27</sup>

Erasmus: *ad eundem modum et poculum, peracta coena*.

Rom. 16. 4. *et domesticam eorum ecclesia*: Nam congregationis nomen, quod Erasmus reddidit, mihi non placet: plane enim liquet Paulum honorifice sacro ecclesiae nomine fuisse usum.<sup>28</sup>

Erasmus: *quae in domo illorum est congregationem*.

And the similar passage:

I Cor. 16. 19. *cum domestica eorum ecclesia*: Quod autem Erasmo congregationis nomen magis placuit, alienum est a mente Pauli.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> C. R. lii. p. 152.

<sup>25</sup> Op. om. 6. 905.

<sup>26</sup> C. R. i. 90.

<sup>27</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 489.

<sup>28</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 285.

<sup>29</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 571. This, of course, was one of the three words to which More took exception in Tyndale's translation. Tyndale was able, with perfect justice, to ask in retort why More had not attacked his "darling Erasmus" for using the word. (See Tyndale: Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue. Parker Society, pp. 13–16. 1850).



In fact, more than half of the differences simply concern the meaning of the Greek word, in itself or as part of the context. Erasmus came to his Greek late. He worked long and hard at it, but in the result became a good rather than an excellent Grecian. Calvin was clearly not satisfied with him and thought himself equal to the task of improvement. Whether he was a better Greek scholar than Erasmus we need not try to decide. But he had far better technical aids in the works of Budaeus and Robert Stephanus than had Erasmus who, when he wanted to learn Greek at the start of the century, had to compile his own lexicon.

Often Calvin will dispose of the linguistic point in a line or two:

I Tim. 3.2. *sobrium, temperantem: Sobrium Erasmus reddidit Vigilantem. Quando νηφάλιος Graecis utrumque significat, eligant utrum volent lectores.*<sup>30</sup>

Erasmus: *Vigilantem, sobrium.*

But now and then he launches out into a more detailed explanation:

Eph. 3.4. *ad quod potestatis attendentes intelligere cognitionem meam in mysterio Christi.* Plus est difficultatis in proximo membro quod sequitur: *πρὸς δὲ δύνασθε ἀναγινώσκοντες νοῆσαι*, etc. Vertit Erasmus: ex quibus potestis legentes intelligere. Sed non patitur syntaxis graeca, meo iudicio, ut *ἀναγινώσκειν τι* pro legere sumatur. Proinde lectoribus considerandum relinquo an non aptior sit sensus: ad quod potestis attendentes (vel, agnoscentes) intelligere. Atque ita participium cum praepositione *πρὸς* contextetur. Si tamen seorsum et absolute accipias *ἀναγινώσκοντες*, sensus utcunque constabit sic: Legendo potestis secundum id, quod scripsi, intelligere: ut ita *πρὸς δὲ tantumdem valeat atque καθ' ὅ.*<sup>31</sup>

Probably his greatest technical advantage over Erasmus is that he knows far more Hebrew. Many of his rejections of Erasmus' Greek are, indeed, based on this consideration. They show that Calvin always has in mind the Chaldaean (as he calls it; i. e. Aramaic) background to the New Testament Greek, as also the Hebrew tradition in the habit of thought of the writers. Although Erasmus sometimes discusses a Hebrew word, it is either in the obvious places (e. g. a Hebrew name, or a word like *Abba*) or as an isolated instance of the derivation of a word.

John 3.3. *nisi qui iterum natus sit:* Erasmus, Cyrilli opinionem sequutus, adverbium *ἀνωθεν* male transtulit, *E supernis*. Ambigua est, fateor, illius significatio apud Graecos: sed Christum Hebraice cum Nicodemo loquutum esse scimus. Porro illic amphibologiae locus non fuisset, qua deceptus Nicodemus.<sup>32</sup>

Erasmus: *nisi quis natus fuerit e supernis.*

II Thess. 3.6. *Praecipimus autem vobis, fratres, in nomine:* Erasmus vertit, *Per nomen:* acsi esset obtestatio. Quod ego tametsi non omnino

<sup>30</sup> C. R. lii. p. 382.

<sup>31</sup> C. R. li. p. 178.

<sup>32</sup> C. R. xlvii. p. 54.



reiicio, tamen potius existimo particulam *In* esse supervacuum, ut pluriis aliis locis: idque ex usu linguae Hebraicae.<sup>33</sup>

Erasmus: *Praecipimus autem vobis fratres, per nomen.*

Moreover, with his over-riding interest in the author's total intention, Calvin is scrupulous to avoid isolating a word or phrase from its context:

I Cor. 13. 4. *caritas non agit insolenter*: Ubi reddidi non agit insolenter, graece est *ὃ πεμπερεται*: pro quo Erasmus transtulit *non est procax*. Constat diversas verbi significationes: sed quum aliquando sumatur pro ferocire, vel inolescere prae confidentia, hic sensus videbatur praesenti loco aptior.<sup>34</sup>

Eph. 4. 32. *condonantes vobis inter vos*: Alii de beneficia interpretantur: ideoque Erasmus vertit *Largientes* nec repugnat verbi significatio: sed loci circumstantia in aliam magis partem nos ducit.<sup>35</sup>

And close to this are his rejections purely on the grounds of misinterpretation:

Col. 3. 7. *In quibus vos quoque ambulabatis*: Male Erasmus qui ad homines revertit, vertens, *Inter quos*. Nam de vitiiis proculdubio Paulus intellexit.<sup>36</sup>

Erasmus: *Inter quos ambulabatis.*

Titus 1. 7. *tanquam Dei oeconomum*: Nomen *Dispensatoris*, quod Erasmus ab antiquo interprete positum retinuit, minime exprimit Pauli mentem.<sup>37</sup>

Erasmus: *tanquam Dei dispensatorem.*

Col. 1. 21. *et inimici cogitatione in operibus malis*: *Sensum* vertit vetus interpres, Erasmus *mentem*: ego *cogitationis* nomine usus sum, pro eo quod Galli *intentionem* vocant. Nam et ea vis est Graecae vocis, et Pauli sensus ita postulat.<sup>38</sup>

Erasmus: *Et in mente in op. mal.*

Allied to his intentness on the author's meaning, he gives indications that, other things being equal, he prefers a literal translation. He will, in any case, keep as close to the original as he can.

Gal. 6. 17. *in reliquis*: Ad verbum est *reliqui* vel *residui*: quod Erasmus, meo iudicio, perperam ad tempus transtulit.<sup>39</sup>

Erasmus: *De caetero.*

Or, on Rom. 15. 30, already quoted,<sup>40</sup> he says: "reddere ad verbum eam malui".

To pass to the Latin itself. Calvin, unlike Castellio, say, is not concerned primarily with the beauty of his rendering. On the other hand, he wishes to put the Greek into good and elegant Latin as his generation understood it – a prose that the Augustans would not have been ashamed of. Where he takes over Erasmus' version without large revision, he will frequently alter details – *ille* for *is*, or *quum* for *cum*, and the like – in a way that shows his constant

<sup>33</sup> C. R. lii. pp. 211–212.

<sup>35</sup> C. R. li. p. 213.

<sup>37</sup> C. R. lii. pp. 410–411.

<sup>39</sup> C. R. l. p. 267.

<sup>34</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 510.

<sup>36</sup> C. R. lii. p. 120.

<sup>38</sup> C. R. lii. p. 90.

<sup>40</sup> See p. 274.



search after correctness and purity. His aim is quite simple: he wishes to express in Latin what the New Testament had said in Greek. And in all this he was proving himself a good disciple of Erasmus, who declared that he wanted his version to be "non tam elegantius, quam dilucidius ac fidelius". Both for him and for Calvin, it was not "non elegantius", but "non tam elegantius". But Erasmus was a master of Latin. Calvin never faults him openly but only, as I say, tacitly introduces minor stylistic changes.

Finally, in one interesting piece of sixteenth century science, we find Calvin bringing a knowledge of medicine to his aid in correcting Erasmus. Calvin's frequent and manifold illnesses brought him close friendship with his doctor, Benedict Textor of Geneva. For the following comment we can imagine Calvin applying to his doctor for the information, or perhaps Textor saying, "You know Erasmus on II Timothy 2, . . ."

II Timothy 2.17. *Et sermo eorum, ut gangraena, passionem habebit:* Admonuit me Benedict Textor medicus hunc locum male ab Erasmo versum fuisse, qui ex duobus morbis plane diversis unum fecit. *Cancrum* enim posuit loco *gangraenae*. [Erasmus: *Et sermo illorum, ut cancer morbus passionem habebit.*] Atqui Galenus cum in aliis locis passim, tum vero ubi definitiones ponit in libello *De tumoribus* . . . Et Paulus Aegineta, illius auctoritate, libro 6. *cancrum* ita definit . . . De *gangraena* autem Galenus tam in libello iam citato, quam libro secundo ad *Glauconem*, Aëtius item libro decimo quarto, et idem Aegineta libro quarto sic loquuntur . . . Quod si emortua penitus fuerit, tunc morbum Graeci *sphacelon* vocant, Latini *siderationem*, vulgus *ignem sancti Antonii*. Reperio quidem *Cornelium Celsum* ita distinguere, ut *cancer* sit *genus*, *gangraena* species. verum eius error ex compluribus probatae fidei medicorum locis palam refellitur. Potuit autem eum fallere vocum *affinitas* *Cancer* et *Gangraena*. Sed in Graecis vocibus potest similis esse *hallucinatio* . . .<sup>41</sup>

And so on. An extraordinary passage! Two hundred and fifty words of Latin to explain *γάγγραινα*! Calvin was certainly showing himself a child of his age rather than a universal expositor in this passage. Nevertheless, notice that he turns in the end to an examination of the Greek.

So far our task has consisted in following Calvin's references to Erasmus by comparing their respective versions. We must now look more closely at another work which so far we have only glanced at – Erasmus' *Annotationes*. This work appeared in 1519 as an aid to the New Testament scholar. Less concerned with exposition than with textual criticism and patristic and mediaeval exegesis, it was by far the best technical help then available. Calvin knew it and used it extensively, although he only once refers to it by name:

II Cor. 1.24. *non quod dominemur fidei vestrae:* Annotavit Erasmus subaudiendo Graeca particulam *ἐνεκα*, sic possit intelligi, non quod vobis fidei causa dominemur. qui sensus eodem fere redit.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> C. R. lii. pp. 368–369.

<sup>42</sup> C. R. i. p. 26.



Annot.: Vide num hic sensus accipi possit, dominamur vobis propter fidem, vel fidei gratia, ut more Graecorum subaudias *ἐνεκα*.<sup>43</sup>

The similarity of language here, as in other places, suggests that Calvin had the book open before him as he worked – or that he knew it so well as to have some parts of it by heart.

Some passages show Calvin rejecting an Erasmus rendering on the basis of another rendering in the *Annotationes*, which he will adopt without acknowledgement. He corrects Erasmus by Erasmus.

Rom. 4.20. *Nec vero in Dei promissionem per incredulitatem disquisivit*.<sup>44</sup>

Erasmus: . . . *non haesitabat*.

Annot.: id est, *non diiudicavit aut disquisivit*.<sup>45</sup>

Rom. 8.3. *eo quod infirmabatur*.<sup>46</sup>

Erasmus: *ex parte ea imbecillis erat*.

Annot.: Potest et sic accipi, *in eo quod infirmabatur*.<sup>47</sup>

Rom. 8.6. *Cogitatio certe carnis, mors est*.<sup>48</sup>

Erasmus: *Nam affectus carnis, mors est*.

Annot.: Ita hoc loco *φρόνημα*, non tam significat sapientiam, aut prudentiam, quam affectum, et curam, seu cogitationem.<sup>49</sup>

I Cor. 16.2. *thesaurizans quod successerit*.<sup>50</sup>

Erasmus: *recondens quicquid commodum fuerit*.

Annot.: id est, *thesaurizans*.<sup>51</sup>

Phil. 1.27. *concertantes fide euangelii*.<sup>52</sup>

Erasmus: *adiuvantes decertantem fidem euangelii*.

Annot.: id est, *concertantes*, hoc est, in hoc certamine adiuvantes nos.<sup>53</sup>

Col. 2.1. *quantum certamen habeam*.<sup>54</sup>

Erasmus: *quantam sollicitudinem habeam*.

Annot.: i.e. *quantum certamen sive periculum*.<sup>55</sup>

Numerous other instances of this tacit borrowing can be found.

It must not be supposed, however, that Calvin always shows this deference. More often than not, he dissents from both the text and the *Annotationes* of Erasmus. He is certainly not indebted to him for all his Greek lexicography, nor for all his textual criticism. It is nevertheless clear that he used the *Annotationes* extensively and carefully in preparing his own version.

We may, in conclusion, take two passages of Calvin's text to show the extent of his indebtedness to Erasmus. The first is the more independent. Differences from Erasmus are underlined and the variation placed in the margin.

<sup>43</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 755.

<sup>45</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 581.

<sup>47</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 600.

<sup>49</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 601.

<sup>51</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 744.

<sup>52</sup> C. R. lii. p. 20.

<sup>53</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 866.

<sup>54</sup> C. R. lii. p. 98.

<sup>55</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 887.

<sup>44</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 83.

<sup>46</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 138.

<sup>48</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 142.

<sup>50</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 567.



Rom. 1. 1-7. 1540, 1551 and 1556.

Paulus, servus Jesu Christi,<sup>55a</sup>  
 vocatus *Apostolus, selectus*  
 in euangelium Dei, quod ante  
 promiserat per prophetas suos  
 in scripturis sanctis, de  
 filio suo, qui *factus est*  
 e [1540: *de*] semine David secundum  
 carnem, *declaratus* filius  
 Dei in potentia, *per*  
 Spiritum sanctificationis,  
*ex resurrectione mortuorum,*  
*Iesu Christo Domino nostro:*  
 per quem accepimus gratiam  
 et *apostolatam in obedientiam*  
*fidei* inter omnes

Gentes, *pro nomine ipsius: inter quas*  
*estis etiam* vos,

vocati Iesu Christi:  
 omnibus qui Romae estis,  
 dilectis *Deo*, vocatis  
 sanctis: gratia vobis et  
 pax a Deo Patre nostro, et  
 Domino Iesu Christo.

Mark 9. 33-37.

Et venit Capernaum, et quum  
 venisset in domum, interrogavit  
 illos, Quid in itinere inter  
 vos disputabatis? At illi  
 siluerunt: nam inter se  
 disputaverant *in via*,  
 quis esset maior. Et  
 postquam *consedit*, accersivit  
 duodecim, et dicit *eis*,  
 Si quis vult primus esse,  
 is erit omnium postremus,  
 et omnium minister.

Atque *acceptum* puerum  
 statuit in medio illorum:  
 et *quum cepisset* illum in ulnas  
 suas, dixit illis, Quisquis unum  
 ex talibus pueris receperit

Erasmus.

ad munus apostolicum, segregatus

suos,  
 sanctis de  
 genitus fuit  
 ex  
 qui declaratus fuit  
 cum secundum (*Annot.:* per)

ex eo quod resurrexit e mortuis  
 Iesus Christus dominus noster

ac muneris apostolici functionem,  
 ut obediatur fidem (*Annot.:* ad  
 obedientiam fidei)

super ipsius nomine,  
 quorum de numero estis et (*Annot.:*  
 inter quas)

Rhomae (1519 only)  
 dei

cum (1516 ff.) quum (1535)

inter viam

cum (1516 ff.) quum (1535) consedisset,  
 illis

arreptum

cum (1519, 1522) coepisset

<sup>55a</sup> 1540: Paulus, minister Christi.



nomine meo, me recipit:  
 et quicumque me recipit,  
 non me recipit, sed eum qui  
 misit me.

#### CALVIN AND THE VULGATE

Earlier we noticed the daring implicit in Erasmus' substitution of his own translation for the Vulgate, his reward in its success and its reception of the approbation of the Pope. By the time Calvin was launched on his New Testament studies the situation had radically changed. No longer did it require courage to side with Erasmus – at least in the Renaissance wing of the Reformation to which Calvin belonged. Calvin's boldness lay rather in his independence towards Erasmus. Moreover, ecclesiastical conflict still distorted and exacerbated the discussion between the Vulgate and the Greek, although the enemy was now less the Eastern Church than the Reformed. Leo X may have approved of Erasmus. He was by no means followed by all the faithful. The Vulgate became a banner of the extreme anti-Reformation party and was at last given conciliar approval at Trent in 1546: "Statuit et declarat, ut haec ipsa vetus et vulgata editio, quae longo tot saeculorum usu in ipsa Ecclesia probata est, in publicis lectionibus, disputationibus, praedicationibus pro authentica habeatur; et ut nemo illam rejicere quovis praetextu audeat vel praesumat."<sup>56</sup>

"The Vulgate alone to be held authentic?" cried Calvin, in the tones of a Faber or an Erasmus, "Farewell, then, to those who have spent so much time and labour in the study of languages that they might seek the genuine meaning of the Scriptures at the fountain-head! . . . Is not this to subdue Greece and all the East?" He goes on to bewail "the gross error and barbarous edict" that tied the Church to a version "teeming with innumerable errors", especially in the Old Testament. "Anyone of even moderate intelligence will see that many things which were translated badly in the Vulgate have been well restored in some modern versions." "What! are they not ashamed to make the Vulgate of the New Testament authoritative, when the writings of Valla, Faber and Erasmus, which are in everyone's hands, show, even to children, that it is faulty in numberless places. In Rom. I the translation calls Christ "Praedestinatus filius Dei". Those who do not know Greek are unable to explain the expression, because strictly speaking only things not yet in existence are predestined, whereas Christ is the eternal Son of God. There is no difficulty in the Greek word. It simply means "declaratus".<sup>57</sup>

Farewell, then, we might in our turn expect, to the Vulgate when Calvin comes to make his translation. But not at all; we find him considerably indebted to the older version. It is not only that this is the Bible he was brought up on and which came as natural to him as the Authorized Version to an Englishman. Far more, he deliberately made use of it as an alternative

<sup>56</sup> Denzinger: *Enchiridion*, 179.

<sup>57</sup> *Antidotum in Actas Synodi Tridentinae* – in quartam sessionem. C.R. vii. pp. 411 ff.



version to Erasmus. This will appear in his habit of coupling the two when he discusses a rendering – as he does in about a third of the references to Erasmus. In about another thirty, where he rejects Erasmus, he tacitly adopts the Vulgate. For example:

Rom. 1. 23. *imaginis corruptibilis hominis*: Sic enim vertere malui quam cum Erasmo mortalis.<sup>58</sup>

Erasmus: *ad mortalis hominis similitudinem*.

Vulgate: as Calvin.

I Cor. 7. 31. *Praeterit enim figura mundi huius*: Cur nomen habitus Erasmo placuerit, non video.<sup>59</sup>

Erasmus: *Praet. enim habitus huius mundi*.

Vulgate: as Calvin, but transposing *mundi huius*.

Often he refers to the Vulgate, but anonymously:

I Pet. 1. 13. *in revelatione Iesu Christi*. This, he says, is capable of two meanings: Prior sensus magis Erasmo placuit, neque illum improbo: secundus tamen videtur melius quadrare.<sup>60</sup>

Erasmus: *dum vobis patefit Iesus Christus*.

Vulgate: as Calvin.

Or again, he may openly declare his preference for a Vulgate rendering as against Erasmus:

II Cor. 11. 3. *a simplicitate quae est in Christo*. Graece quidem dicit Paulus *εἰς Χριστόν*, pro quo Erasmus vertit, *Erga Christum*: sed propius ad Pauli mentem (meo iudicio) accessit vetus interpret.<sup>61</sup>

Erasmus: *a simplicitate, quae erat erga Christum*.

Vulgate: as Calvin.

I Cor. 5. 8. *Proinde epulemur non in fermento veteri*: *Ἐορτάζωμεν*, pro quo Erasmus reddidit *festum celebremus*, significat etiam post immolatum sacrificium solenni epulo communicare: quae significatio praesenti loco magis quadrare visa est. Itaque sequutus sum veterem interpretem potius quam Erasmum, quia hic sensus mysterio, quod Paulus tractat, longe est aptior.<sup>62</sup>

Erasmus: *Itaque festum celebremus*.

Vulgate: *Itaque epulemur non in fermento veteri*.

On the other hand, of course, he is sometimes for Erasmus against the Vulgate; sometimes against them both. Where he leaves the Vulgate rendering, it is for the same reasons as we have seen in regard to Erasmus.

If we take the two passages from Romans and Mark again, we can see more easily in what relationship he stands to the Vulgate, variants from which are given in the margin.

Rom. 1. 1–7

Paulus, servus *Iesu Christi*,  
vocatus Apostolus, *selectus*  
in euangelium Dei, quod ante

*Vulgate*

Christi Iesu  
segregatus

<sup>58</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 26.

<sup>59</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 421.

<sup>60</sup> C. R. lv. p. 221.

<sup>61</sup> C. R. l. p. 124.

<sup>62</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 382.



promiserat per prophetas suos  
 in scripturis sanctis, de  
 filio suo, qui factus est  
 e semine David secundum  
 carnem, *declaratus* filius  
 Dei in *potentia*, per  
 Spiritum sanctificationis,  
 ex resurrectione mortuorum,  
 Iesu *Christo Domino nostro*:  
 per quem accepimus gratiam  
 et apostolatum in *obedientiam*  
 fidei *inter omnes*  
*Gentes*, pro nomine *ipsius*:  
*inter quas estis etiam* vos,  
 vocati Iesu Christi:  
 omnibus *qui Romae estis*,  
 dilectis *Deo*, vocatis  
 sanctis: gratia vobis et  
 pax a Deo Patre nostro, et  
 Domino Iesu Christo.  
 Mark 9. 33–37.

Et *venit Capernaum, et quum*  
*venisset in domum, interrogavit*  
*illos, Quid in itinere inter*  
*vos disputabatis? At illi*  
*siluerunt: nam inter se*  
*disputaverant in via,*  
 quis esset maior. Et  
*postquam consedit, accersivit*  
 duodecim, et *dicit eis*,  
 Si quis vult primus esse,  
*is erit omnium postremus,*  
 et omnium minister.  
*Atque acceptum* puerum,  
 statuit in medio *illorum*:  
*et quum cepisset illum in ulnas*  
*suas dixit illis, Quisquis unum*  
 ex *talibus* pueris receperit  
 nomine meo, me recipit:  
 et *quicumque* me *recipit*,  
 non me *recipit*, sed eum qui  
*misit me*.

Before we leave the Vulgate, it should be pointed out that Calvin (who usually quoted verbatim) on a few occasions gives an uncommon version of the Vulgate. We have to explain the origin of the following readings:

sanctis de

ei ex  
 qui praedestinatus est  
 virtute secundum

omit comma  
 Christi domini nostri:  
 after gratiam, comma.  
 ad oboediendum  
 in omnibus

gentibus eius  
 in quibus et omit comma

qui sunt Romae,  
 Dei

Et venerunt Capharnaum. Qui cum  
 domi esset, interrogabat  
 eos: via tractabatis?

tacebant. Siquidem  
 in via disput.  
 q. e. illorum m.  
 residens vocavit  
 ait illis:

omit is novissimus

Et accipiens  
 st. eum eorum  
 quem ut complexus esset,  
 ait  
 huiusmodi  
 in nomine m.  
 quicumque susceperit  
 suscipit  
 me misit.



Rom. 12.9. Calvin ascribes to both Erasmus and the Vulgate *odio habentes*.<sup>63</sup> The Vulgate has *odientes malum*. *Odio hab.* is not given as a variant reading, though it occurs in Tertullian and Augustine.

I Thess. 2.7. *facti tamen sumus mites*: Ubi nos vertimus, *Mites*, vetus interpres reddidit, *Fuimus parvuli*.<sup>64</sup>

Vulgate: *sed facti sumus parvuli*. But *fuimus* in Codex Armachanus, Ambst., Pel.<sup>b</sup>, and Sedul.

Acts 8.21. *in ratione hac*: Ubi vetus interpres posuerat, *in sermone hoc . . .*<sup>65</sup>

Vulgate: *in sermone isto*. But *in serm. hoc*: Amiatinus, Irenaeus; *in verbo hoc*: Laudianus.

As I shall explain later more fully, this problem of textual criticism in Calvin is one to which I do not pretend to have found an answer.

### CALVIN AND BUDAEUS

Next to Erasmus and the Vulgate, though a long way behind them, Calvin mentions Budaeus most frequently of the "moderns". In all, he appears ten times, though three of these do not refer to the text. Two works will occupy our attention, the *Commentarii in linguae graecae* and the *Annotationes in Pandectas*. The *Commentarii* is a magnificent and learned Greek lexicon, of inestimable value to sixteenth century scholars. When Erasmus wanted to learn Greek, he had to compile his own lexicon. A mere twenty-five years later and Greek studies had been set on a new footing by the *Commentarii*. Calvin was not slow to take advantage of this technical help, which was published at the close of his undergraduate days.

I Cor. 2.13. *spiritualibus spiritualia coaptantes*: *Συγκρίνεσθαι* hic pro aptare posito non dubito. Quum enim haec interdum sit verbi significatio, sicut Budaeus ex Aristotele citat.<sup>66</sup>

Comm.: *Συγκρίνεσθαι*, coagmentari, concrecere. Aristotel. in primo τῶν μετα τα φύσις . . .<sup>67</sup>

II Cor. 1.13. *quae recognoscitis, vel etiam agnoscitis*: *ἐπιγνώσκειν*, nunc cognoscere, nunc Latini proprie dicunt, agnoscere: sicuti apud iuriconsultos, agnoscere partum. quod etiam Budaeus annotavit.<sup>68</sup>

Comm.: *Ἐπιγνώσκειν* pro agnoscere.<sup>69</sup>

(But the scantiness of this reference, together with Calvin's word "annotavit", suggests that we should look to the *Annotationes* for this. I have been unable to find it there, however.)

II Cor. 9.4. *in hac fiducia*: Quum Graece sit *ὑπόστασις* vetus interpres *Substantiam* transtulerat: Erasmus *Argumentum*. sed neutrum convenit. Admonet autem Budaeus, hoc vocabulum aliquando pro audacia vel confidentia sumi. quemadmodum apud Polybium, quum dicit, *οὐχ οὕτω*

<sup>63</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 241.

<sup>64</sup> C. R. lii. p. 148.

<sup>65</sup> C. R. xlvi. p. 185.

<sup>66</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 343.

<sup>67</sup> Comm. p. 656.

<sup>68</sup> C. R. l. p. 18.

<sup>69</sup> Comm. 231-232.



τὴν δύναμιν ὡς τὴν ὑπόστασιν καὶ τόλμαν αὐτοῦ καταπεπληγμένον τῶν ἐναντίων, unde ὑποστατικὸς interdum audacem et praesidentem significat.<sup>70</sup>

Comm.: Ὑπόστασις etiam est audacia et fortitudo animique praesentia. Polyb. de Coelitate, οὐχ οὕτω . . .<sup>71</sup>

Col. 2. 18. *in ea quae non vidit se ingerens*: Quare Budaeus hunc locum ita vertit, *In eorum quae non vidit possessionem pedem ponens*, vel *ingrediens*: cuius auctoritatem ego sequutus sum, sed verbum magis proprium elegi.<sup>72</sup>

Comm.: Paul. ad Coloss. ii ἃ μὴ . . . Intelligi sic potest, *In eorum quae non vidit possessionem pedem ponens*, vel, *in eorum quae non vidit possessionem ingrediens*.<sup>73</sup>

Acts 1. 1. *priorem sermonem*: Ita vertere placuit: quia λόγον ποιῆσθαι Graecis idem valet, quod Latinis verba facere, vel habere sermonem: sicuti Budaeus annotavit.<sup>74</sup>

Comm.: verba facere, orationem habere. Isocr. Areopag . . .<sup>75</sup>

Phil. 3. 9. *Et inveniam in ipso*: Sed quia verbum ἐνρίσκομαι, in passiva terminatione significationem habet activam, tuncque Recuperare significat quod sponte cesseris, quemadmodum pluribus exemplis Budaeus demonstrat: non dubitavi ab aliorum opinione discedere.<sup>76</sup>

Comm. p. 261 has a long passage on this.

Elsewhere Calvin refers to the *Annotationes in Pandectas*, that amazing assemblage of learning—legal, theological, ecclesiastical, historical, lexicographical and I do not know what else. This appeared in 1541, when Calvin was standing at the commencement of his New Testament labours.

I Cor. 4. 13. *quasi execrationes mundi facti sumus, omnium reiectamentum usque ad hunc diem*: De utroque lege annotationes Budaei.<sup>77</sup>

This refers to a very long passage on the meaning and significance of περικαθάρματα and περίφημα, beginning: Divus Paulus cap. quarto primae ad Corinthios . . .<sup>78</sup>

There are two remaining references that I have been unable to trace:

I Cor. 9. 27. *Verum subigo corpus meum*. Budaeus legit *Observeo*. meo tamen iudicio, verbum ὑποπιάζειν hic posuit apostolus pro serviliter exercere.<sup>79</sup>

The most striking thing about these references is Calvin's deference to Budaeus. Only in the last does he venture to disagree, and then without acerbity, without even saying that Budaeus is wrong. The comment on Col. 2. 18 sets the tone for them all: "cuius auctoritatem ego sequutus sum". Yet note that he is also independent enough to improve on Budaeus: "sed verbum magis proprium elegi". He gives Budaeus a place to himself, above Erasmus and all others. What higher praise could he bestow than to say that when Budaeus has spoken, "non dubitavi ab aliorum opinione discedere"?

<sup>70</sup> C. R. I. p. 107.

<sup>71</sup> Comm. 421.

<sup>72</sup> C. R. Iii. p. 112–113.

<sup>73</sup> Comm. 86–87.

<sup>74</sup> C. R. xlvi. p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Comm. 153.

<sup>76</sup> C. R. Iii. p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 371.

<sup>78</sup> Annot. ii. 115 ff.

<sup>79</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 450. Cf. also on Rom. 9<sup>8</sup>. C. R. xlix. p. 171.



## CALVIN AND VALLA

It was Erasmus who came upon the manuscript of Laurentius Valla's *De Collatione Novi Testamenti* in a monastery, borrowed it in the free and easy way of the sixteenth century and published it. He was chiefly impressed by Valla's independence and by his way of "going to the fountain-head", the Greek text. Erasmus was not often at fault in such matters, and he was not on this occasion. Valla may not be exciting reading today, but the way that the New Testament scholars of that time look back to him as the forerunner of their "modern" studies speaks for itself. The *De Collatione* is a little book and supplies, not a connected commentary, but notes on isolated texts. During the sixteenth century the book was apparently known as the *Annotationes*. But Revius, who edited the second edition, claimed that in calling it *De Collatione* he was restoring Valla's own title.<sup>80</sup>

In his commentaries, Calvin refers only once to Valla:

Acts 26. 28. *Brevi persuades mihi: Particulam ἐν ὀλίγῳ varie exponunt interpretes. Valla putavit sic vertendum: Parum abest quin me Christianum facias. Erasmus reddidit: Modica ex parte. Simplicius vetus interpres: In modico.*<sup>81</sup> Valla: Quem locum, quia parum eleganter transfertur [i. e. by the Vulgate], sic ego transtulisses: *Parum abest, quin persuadeas me fieri Christianum.*<sup>82</sup>

Unfortunately, the reference is no proof that Calvin used the *De Collatione*, for the passage is quoted in Erasmus' *Annotationes*: Valla putat ita redde potuisse: *Parum abest . . .*<sup>83</sup> This is so in all the dozen or more places where Calvin seems to be following Valla when he rejects Erasmus or the Vulgate. The one exception is quite inconclusive:

Gal. 6. 8. *Nam qui seminat carni suae: Quod aliter transtuli quam vetus interpres atque Erasmus, non feci temere. Verba Pauli graeca sic habent: seminare in carnem.*<sup>84</sup>

Valla: *Graece est, Quod enim seminaverit homo, hoc et metet. Nec est in carne, sed in carnem.*<sup>85</sup>

This passage does not appear in Erasmus.

Whether, however, Calvin used Valla must for the time be left undecided. That he knew his work need not be doubted. He may nevertheless have found it somewhat elementary after Erasmus and Stephanus.

## CALVIN AND FABER STAPULENSIS

To deny that Calvin knew at first hand and worked with the commentaries of his illustrious countryman on the grounds that he does not refer to him by name would be a hasty judgment indeed. Yet the fact remains. He does not cite him by name in any of the New Testament commentaries, so far as I can discover, nor have I found evidence of textual reliance on him. It is true that on I Cor. 1. 9, where Calvin dissents from Erasmus and the

<sup>80</sup> De Coll. p. 212.

<sup>82</sup> De Coll. p. 112.

<sup>84</sup> C. R. I. p. 262.

<sup>81</sup> C. R. xlvi. p. 548.

<sup>83</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 534.

<sup>85</sup> De Coll. p. 162.



Vulgate, he uses the same word as Faber – *communione*. But Erasmus offers it as an alternative in the *Annotationes*. Similarly, in I Cor. 16. 2, *thesaurizans* is in both Faber and in Erasmus' *Annotationes*.

#### OTHER COMMENTATORS AND TRANSLATORS

As we said at the beginning of this essay, we cannot undertake to compare Calvin's text with each one of the numberless commentaries which were written in the first fifteen and a half centuries of the Church nor with the many translations which, once Erasmus had been bold enough to show the way, poured from the presses of the sixteenth century. Among the commentators whom I consulted (Lyra and his accompanying material, Luther on Galatians, Melancthon, Peter Martyr, Musculus, Conrad Pellican, Bullinger and Bucer) only the last named proved fruitful. Luther used the Vulgate for his text; Bucer, in Ephesians, used Erasmus; Melancthon, in the four commentaries on Romans published under his name, and in his other commentaries – on John, Corinthians, Colossians, Philippians and Timothy – gives only snippets of the text to serve as headings; Peter Martyr on I Corinthians has his own text, based on Erasmus and the Vulgate; Musculus similarly, in Romans and Corinthians, but very much closer to Erasmus.

It will be remembered that in his dedicatory preface to Romans, Calvin singled out Melancthon, Bullinger and Bucer as being of most assistance to him. But this refers to exegesis rather than to Biblical text, except in the case of Bucer. His commentary on Romans consists of a paraphrase and comments. Calvin was right when he said of it that "prolixior est quam ut ab hominibus occupationibus districtis raptim legi".<sup>86</sup> There is, indeed, but a ha' porth of sack to an intolerable deal of bread – over 200 folio size pages of comment on the first three chapters! That Calvin made use of his text appears from the rendering of *selectus* for ἀφωρισμένος (Rom. 1. 1) as opposed to *segregatus* in Erasmus and the Vulgate. This he has taken from the Metaphrasis: *selectus ad praedicandum Evangelii Dei*. He also refers to Bucer at least once by name:

Rom. 1. 12. *ad cohortationem*: Ego cum Bucero *cohortationem* potius lego quam *consolationem*: quia melius cum superioribus cohaeret.<sup>87</sup>

Bucer: as Calvin.

It may be presumed that he used other commentators in the same eclectic manner.

#### LATIN AND GREEK MANUSCRIPTS

We here enter upon the most difficult and complex part of our investigation – the attempt to identify the sources of Calvin's references to variant readings. These references are quite common, the majority relating to Greek MSS, but a few to the Latin. I have collected some thirty representative

<sup>86</sup> Not printed in C. R.: Amsterdam Ed. VII [p. ii].

<sup>87</sup> C. R. lix. p. 17.



examples to work on. In theory nothing could be simpler than this task. We merely have to look in enough likely books and the matter is finished. In practice, it is, in the first place, not at all easy to discover all the likely books in this bibliographical jungle. Nor when we have found them are they always straightforward and conclusive. Many editions of the New Testament (e.g. Brixianus, Benedictus, etc.) contain rudimentary textual material, but it is either borrowed from one of the big books, or it is so elementary as to be useless. We can, in fact, disregard everything except Erasmus' *Annotationes* and one or two Latin editions of Robert Stephanus. There is the clearest evidence that Calvin used both for this purpose, and some of our thirty can be straightway assigned to the one or the other. What is inconvenient is that a residue is left unassigned. We are therefore faced either with discovering another printed source or with accepting the *prima facie* improbable hypothesis that Calvin himself engaged in textual studies at first hand. If we are driven to this – and we cannot say that it is impossible – then I would suggest that this activity took place before his return to Geneva in 1541, since he would have had insufficient leisure for it afterwards; that it took place perhaps at Paris or Angoulême, less probably at Basel or Strassburg; and that the most likely occasion for it was his work on Olivetan's French Bible.

In the following examples, a word of explanation on the technical terms may be useful. *Codex* generally refers to a manuscript. *Lectio* may mean a reading in either a manuscript or a printed book. *Exemplar* also can refer to either. For example, in such an expression as "vetusta et probatae fidei exemplaria", *vetusta* would hardly be a commendation if it signified a printed book.

First, an instance where he is using Erasmus:

I Cor. 15. 51. *non omnes quidem dormiemus, omnes tamen immutabimur*: [Hic graeci codices non variant, sed latinis<sup>88</sup>] tres sunt diversae lectiones. Una: *Omnes quidem moriemur, sed non omnes immutabimur*. Secunda, *omnes quidem resurgemus, sed non omnes immutabimur*. Tertia: *Non omnes quidem dormiemus, sed omnes immutabimur*. Quam varietatem inde provenisse conicio, quod vera lectione offensi quidam parum acuti lectores supponere ausi sunt quod magis probabant. Absurdum enim prima facie videbatur, non omnes morituros: quum alibi (Heb. 9. 27) legatur, statutum esse universis hominibus semel mori . . . Verum germana lectio ex contextu iudicari potest.<sup>89</sup>

Erasmus Annot.: Quin et is, qui commentariolos collegit in omnes Paulinas Epistolas . . . indicat triplicem huius loci lectionem: *Omnes quidem resurgemus, sed non omnes immutabimur*. Alteram, *Omnes quidem dormiemus, sed non omnes immutabimur*. Tertiam, *Omnes quidem non dormiemus, sed omnes immutabimur* . . . Porro, quod

<sup>88</sup> Hic . . . latinis added 1556.

<sup>89</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 561.



quosdam offendit, parum videri verum quod scriptum est, Statutum est omnibus semel mori.<sup>90</sup>

Yet why does Calvin state with such assurance in 1556: "Hic graeci codices non variant", when Erasmus begins his long note by saying: "divus Hieronymus ad Minervum & Alexandrum ostendit hunc locum bifariam legi apud Graecos"?<sup>91</sup>

II Cor. 1. 6. *Sive autem affligimur pro vestra consolatione et salute:* Adde quod vetustissimi quidam Graecorum codices priori statim membro subiiciant hanc sententiam, *Et spes nostra firma est pro vobis:* qua lectione tollitur ambiguitas.<sup>92</sup>

Erasmus Annot.: Quum sint autem duae partes orationis, *sive et sive;* quarum utraque respondit uni clausulae, nempe huic, *et spes nostra firma est pro vobis:* quae apud nos adiicitur posteriori, Graecis in medio ponitur.<sup>93</sup>

I Cor. 9. 22. *ut omnino aliquos servem:* Quamquam hic demum generalem sententiam temperat, nisi forte magis placeat lectio veteris interpretis, quae adhuc hodie in quibusdam graecis codicibus reperitur.<sup>94</sup>

Erasmus Annot.: Graece secus est: *ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω* id est, *ut omnino aliquos salvos facerem.* Quamquam hic apparet Graecorum exemplaria variasse.<sup>95</sup>

Phil. 3. 15. *etiam hoc vobis Deus revelabit:* Quod Latini codices habent Revelavit in praeterito: tanquam inepto et minime consentaneum, sine difficultate reiicio.<sup>96</sup>

Erasmus Annot.: Ac *revelabit,* futuri temporis esse debet: sed reclamantibus vetustis exemplaribus Latinis, atque ipso Ambrosio . . .<sup>97</sup>

Col. 1. 12. *Gratias agentes Deo et Patri:* Itaque haec duo non frustra coniunxit Paulus: si tamen placet lectio quam sequutus est vetus interpres, cui suffragantur vetustissimi quidam Graeci codices.<sup>98</sup>

Erasmus Annot.: Graece tantum est *Patri,* quemadmodum legit Ambrosius. In Editione Veronensi erat *Θεῷ.*<sup>99</sup>

II Thess. 2. 4. *adversus omne quod dicitur Deus:* Ubi transtuli, *Omne q. d. D.:* magis recepta est apud Graecos lectio, *Omnem qui dicitur.* Coniicio tamen potest tam ex veteri translatione, quam ex nonnulli Graecorum commentariis, corrupta fuisse Pauli verba.<sup>100</sup>

Erasmus Annot.: Interpres legisse videtur *ἐπὶ πᾶν τὸ λεγόμενον.* Verum Graeci codices sic habent, *ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον Θεὸν.*<sup>101</sup>

We have now seen enough references to the *Annotationes* to be able to say that Calvin could have taken many of his textual judgments from it, and that, in fact, he apparently did so. We turn therefore to Robert Stephanus. In some of his small Latin New Testaments he supplies a rudimentary textual apparatus, but it is to the big works that we must look, to the enormous *Biblia* of 1532 and to the less bulky *Biblia* of 1546. This latter contains by

<sup>90</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 741–742.

<sup>91</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 740.

<sup>92</sup> C. R. I. p. 11.

<sup>93</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 751.

<sup>94</sup> C. R. xlix. p. 448.

<sup>95</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 708.

<sup>96</sup> C. R. lii. p. 53.

<sup>97</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 874.

<sup>98</sup> C. R. lii. p. 83.

<sup>99</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 884.

<sup>100</sup> C. R. lii. p. 198.

<sup>101</sup> Op. om. 6. p. 917.



far the better textual apparatus, with the MSS sensibly identified and named and with an excellent introduction explaining his methods and describing the MSS. It was (at any rate from our present point of view) easily the best edition of the Latin Bible in existence.

Calvin mentions Stephanus only once by name in the commentaries, and, on this occasion he is referring to the 1532 *Biblia*.

Matt. 1. 11. Et citatur a Roberto Stephano Graecus codex ubi interponitur nomen Ioacim.<sup>102</sup>

This is a marginal reading ad loc.: *genuit Ioacim. – Ioacim autem.*

But our earlier reference to Col. 1. 12 (*Gratias agentes Deo et Patri*) might relate to Stephanus 1546 rather than Erasmus. He gives the marginal reading: omit *Deo et* – Vet. Ge. 1. Vet. is the Vulgate and Ge. 1. is Stephanus' title for a broad manuscript (*exemplum latum*) in the library of St. Germain. I have found no other textual references common to both Calvin and Stephanus – although, of course, I have not examined every instance in all the commentaries.

The outcome of it is that we are left with a number of textual comments by Calvin which we are not able to assign to a printed source. As I am reluctant, in the absence of positive evidence, to concede that Calvin undertook the examination and collation of manuscripts at first hand, I can only assume that he had access to a printed source unknown to me. If this is so, further investigation will no doubt bring it to light.

But however he came by his textual material, it is clear that his first task in preparing his translation was to satisfy himself, so far as the inadequate means at his disposal allowed, that he had a reliable text. What were his criteria for judging a reading? Partly a combination of the supposed age and the number of the MSS supporting it and partly also its appropriateness in the context. Thus, he is not only glad to be able to point to "vetustissimi quidam codices Graeci", or to say (as he does of *Deus manifestatus est in carne* – I Tim. 3. 16) "Graeci certe omnes in hanc lectionem consentiunt",<sup>103</sup> but to find that they make better sense of a passage – i. e. that an ambiguity is avoided or a roughness smoothed out or that the meaning just becomes clearer. But where the sense is unaffected, his selection of a reading is determined by its age and/or the numerical support of the MSS. For example, in II Thess. 2. 13, he had the choice of two readings, ἀπαρχή and ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, between reading *primitias* with the Vulgate or *ab initio* with Erasmus. He chooses *ab initio*, "quia omnes fere Graeci codices habent ἀπ' ἀρχῆς."<sup>104</sup>

#### THE GROWTH OF CALVIN'S LATIN TEXT

When Calvin revised his commentaries, particularly in 1556, he revised also the Biblical text. Nowhere are these Biblical revisions noticed. *Corpus Reformatorum* gives the earlier versions of the commentaries in foot-notes,

<sup>102</sup> C. R. xliv. p. 61.

<sup>103</sup> C. R. lii. p. 289.

<sup>104</sup> C. R. lii. p. 205.



but not of the Biblical text. I have compared the first, second and third editions of the following chapters, chosen at random, and give below the variations: Romans I, I Cor. I and 15, II Cor. I and 6, Eph. 4 and I Tim. 3. 1551 differs from the first editions only very slightly – the removal of misprints and an occasional variation of spelling. But 1556 differs from 1551 not infrequently – most drastically in the earlier commentaries and growing less as the date of the commentary approached the date of revision. In general, these second thoughts seem to show a trend towards Erasmus. It is true that he sometimes leaves Erasmus for the Vulgate, that he sometimes leaves or ignores both. But in general, he seems, to be moving towards Erasmus. If this is so, we have the interesting situation that he began with Erasmus, reacted against him in the fifteen-forties and then to some extent recovered from his reaction.

## Romans I.

1540	1551	1556	Eras.	Vg.
1. Paulus minister Christi	P. servus Iesu Christi	as 1551	as 1551	P. s. X. I.
3. qui factus est de	q. f. est e	as 1551	q. genitus fuit ex	g. f. est ei ex
9. Testis enim mihi est Deus	T. e. m. D.	as 1551	as 1540	as 1540
9-10. memoriam vestri faciam semper	m. v. f.; s.	as 1551	v. f. S.	m. v. facio s.
10. prosperum iter mihi	as 1540	p. iter aliquando mihi	al. p. i. contingat	al. p. i. habeam
11. desidero impartiar	desydero as 1540	as 1540 impertiar	– –	– –
21. Quoniam cum sed exinaniti sunt	Q. quum omit sed	as 1551 as 1551	– sed frustrati	– sed evanuerunt
22. Cum se	quum se	as 1551	–	–
24. immunditiem	immundiciem	as 1540	–	–
26. Etenim	as 1540	Ac enim	–	–
26.-7. foeminae (bis)	as 1540	feminae	–	–
27. omisso	as 1540	amisso	–	–
32. cum	quum	as 1551	–	–

## I Cor. 1.

1546 & 1551	1556	Erasmus	Vulgate
2. per Iesum Christum	in Xo Iesum	per Xum Iesum	as 1556
6. inter vos	in vobis	as 1556	as 1556
9. Dominus Domini nostri Iesu Christi	Deus I. X. D. n.	as 1556 as 1556	as 1556 as 1556
13. nunquid	numquid	–	–
14 f. 1546 baptiz . . . 1551 baptiz . . .	as 1551	–	–
15. in meo nomine	in meum nomen	in meo nomine	in nomine m.
17. 1546 evangelis . . . 1551 evangeliz . . .	as 1551	–	–



19. obliterabo	auferam e medio	reicam	reprobabo
22. signa	signum	signum	signa
26. videte	videte (vel, videtis)	videtis	videte

## I Cor. 15.

	1551	Erasmus	Vulgate
1. praedicavi	evangelizavi	as 1556	as 1546
9. indignus qui dicar Apostolus	qui non sum idoneus ut dicar Apostolus	as 1556	qui non sum dignus vocari Ap.
14. vana (bis)	inanis (bis)	as 1556	as 1556
20. —	add fuit at end	as 1556	as 1546
25. inimicos suos sub	omit suos	as 1556	as 1556
27. cum omnia sint subiecta	quum o. sunt subi.	— o. subi. sint	— o. subi. sunt
28. cum	quum	—	—
39. alia pecudum	al. vero caro p.	al. v. c. pecorum	al. pecorum
40. sunt corpora	s. et corpora	Et s. c.	Et c.
41. in claritate	in gloria	in gloria	in claritate
42. sic erit	sic et	as 1556	as 1556
43. f. resurget (ter) omit seminatur in . . . potentia	resurgit (ter) include clause	as 1556 as 1556	surgit as 1556
44. omit corpus (final)	include	as 1556	as 1546
50. omit haereditate (bis)	include	as 1556	as 1546
53. incorruptibilem insert et mortale hoc induere immortalitatem	immortalitatem omit	as 1546 as 1546	incorruptelam as 1546
54. cum	quum	—	—
58. inutilis	inanis	as 1556	as 1556

## II Cor. 1.

	1556	Erasmus	Vulgate
12. integritate	puritate	sinceritate	sinc.
14. omit et Domini	et Domini Iesu	as 1556 as 1556	as 1556 D. nostri I. Xi.
16. deduci usque in	omit usque	as 1556	as 1556
17. aut num quae	omit num	as 1548	as 1556
20. quemobrem	quare	—	—
21. Christum	Christo	as 1548	as 1548
22. Et qui	qui et	—	—
22. arrabonem	arrhabonem	—	—
23. invoquo	invoco	—	—

## II Cor. 6.

16. vivi	viventis	as 1556	as 1548
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## Eph. 4.

4. quemadmodum etiam vocati	omit etiam	q. et v.	—
9. 1548 quid est? nisi 1551 quid est nisi descenderat in	as 1551 d. prius in	— as 1556	—



14. per versutiam, qua insidiantur ad fallendum	p. v. ad circum- ventionem imposturae	-	-
17. gentes ambulant	g. reliquae a.	rel. g. a.	as 1548
28. necessitatem patienti	opus habenti	op. habuerit	as 1548
I Tim. 2.			
2. positum	positum (vel, honestum)	-	-
3. vinolentum	vin. (vel, ferozem)	as 1548	as 1548
11. mulieres	uxores	as 1556	as 1548
12. filiis	liberis	as 1556	as 1548
13. bonum	bon. (vel, honestum)	as 1548	as 1548

## CONCLUSION

If this little essay has any significance, it lies, not so much in the conclusions reached, as in the fact that it opens up a hitherto completely untouched area of Calvin-study. It is almost unbelievable that no modern study of the Bible in the sixteenth century exists – the century which claimed to have rediscovered the Bible and from which certainly modern scholarship stems. How many people even know what commentaries were written, and that by the better known theologians, let alone such lesser lights as Forerius or Pellicanus or Juda? To come to Calvin in particular, where can we find an account of his New Testament commentaries? Nay, what is more, where can we even find a list of them outside *Corpus Reformatorum*, which in any case is incomplete?

But if this essay is a new departure, the questions it raises are more important than its conclusions. And questions abound. If we examine Calvin's translation of a set of Greek words throughout the New Testament – say, *ekklelesia*, *charis*, *nomos*, *pistis*, *pro-orizo*, as obvious examples – what will emerge of theological importance? If the section on Budaeus here were followed up might it not provide a fresh understanding of the relationship between the two which may or may not corroborate Bohatec's work on *Budé und Calvin*? Bohatec does not approach the subject as we have done, but is concerned with ideas and doctrines. Again, where would a thorough examination of Calvin's use of textual criticism lead us? Or will any good scholar ever give us an *Erasmus and Calvin*, following in the steps rather of Smits on Augustine and Calvin than Bohatec? We are certainly not claiming too much to say that a new field in Calvin studies is opened up. Is it too much to suggest that such a study might introduce a new dimension into work on Calvin?

Yet such conclusions as we have reached, even though they demand further work, may be briefly noted:

1. Calvin prepared his own Latin New Testament text.
2. He prepared it with great care, revising it in the course of years.



3. He based it primarily on Erasmus' later text and secondarily on the Vulgate.

4. He also made use of renderings by other theologians past and present.

5. For Greek lexicography he used chiefly Erasmus' *Annotationes* and Budaeus' *Commentarii* and *Annotationes in Pandectas*.

6. For textual criticism he seems to have leaned on Erasmus' *Annotationes* and Stephanus' *Bibliae*. Possibly he may have undertaken textual criticism at first hand.

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#### Postscript

I have since investigated the Greek text behind Calvin's Latin. It is clear that he did not confine himself to any one printed edition of the Greek N. T. I am also more ready to believe that he made use of Greek MSS at first hand. I have, moreover, collated the whole of 1540 Romans with C. R. text. C. R. editors gave only differences between 1551 and 1556-7 and ignored 1540. I hope to publish this collation fairly soon.