

ON THE PROCESS OF THE TRANSLATION INTO THE *SEPTEMBERBIBEL*: GALATIANS AS A TEST CASE*

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I. Introduction

It is a common knowledge that Martin Luther's German New Testament, which is called *Septemberbibel* (Septembertestament) because it was published in Wittenberg in September of 1522, has a great significance in the history of Bible translation and in the history of the development of German language. This translation has been customarily thought to be a translation from the Greek text of the second edition of Erasmus' critical edition of the New Testament (1519).¹ Indeed, there is no reason to doubt the use of Erasmus' second edition in the *Septemberbibel* (see 2.2 below). However, it is not so self-evident whether the translation is based on the Greek or not.² In continuation of foregoing research, which we shall briefly review in the following section, we shall reexamine the actualities of the translation process chiefly by comparing the Greek text of Erasmus' second edition, and his Latin translation printed in parallel columns, with Luther's German translation.

II. A Brief Review of the Research

1. Hermann Dibbelt

The "accepted theory" is clearly stated in some of the commentaries and essays included in WADB. For example, A. Freitag states, "Luther's Bible is a translation from the original text; it is clear throughout the difficult texts of the New Testament Epistles" (WADB 7, 1931: p.545), and O. Albrecht writes, "Erasmus' Latin translation was only a minor assistance for Luther" (WADB 6, 1929: p.lxxiv).

In the 1941 essay entitled "Is Luther's German New Testament based on Greek text? (Hatte Luthers Verdeutschung des Neuen Testaments den griechischen Text zur Grund-

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¹ Cf. *TRE* 6 (1980), pp.240f.; *EKL* 1 (1986), p.485; Groß, p.110.

² Although Kooiman states that "in various places he (Luther) clearly makes use of Erasmus' (Latin) translation," (p.91) he does not give any reference.

lage?),” Dibbelt questioned the commonly held view. After meticulously examining the general study of classical literature and languages in the early sixteenth century and in particular Luther’s own knowledge of classical languages,³ Luther’s letters,⁴ scriptural quotations in his biblical lectures,⁵ “A Letter to the Translator” which states his thoughts on translation,⁶ and Luther’s request at the Marburg debate,⁷ Dibbelt concludes that Luther, though he learned the language for a short period of time, never mastered the Greek language sufficiently to translate the New Testament from the original Greek text on his own.⁸

Dibbelt further shows, mainly through the comparison of Luther’s translation with the Vulgate, that Luther’s text was largely based upon the Vulgate and that Erasmus’ Latin translation and notes were indispensable to Luther’s work, he concludes that Luther’s is hardly a translation from the original Greek text.

Dibbelt’s study is unrivaled in vastness and in the depth of its treatment of the material including Luther’s own works, and thus, the core of his essay is quite convincing. On the other hand, however, the amount of his textual examination of Luther’s German New Testament itself is small and this weakness invited Bornkamm’s criticism.

2. Heinrich Bornkamm

Bornkamm’s essay, “On the sources of Luther’s translation of the New Testament (Die Vorlagen zu Luthers Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments),” which was published six years after Dibbelt’s essay, consists of two parts: (1) Greek text and Latin translations; and (2) Luther’s translation and the Zainerbibel.

Part 1 starts with a consideration of whether Luther used Erasmus’ second critical edition or not. W. Walther, for example, argued against such use on the basis of the passages in which Luther unknowingly translated errors contained in the Vulgate even though Erasmus had pointed them out in his notes. To this Bornkamm responds and reaffirms that the original text for Luther’s translation was Erasmus’ second critical edition: there are a greater number of passages where Luther obviously used Erasmus’ second edition; and as for the alleged passages in which he overlooked the notes, presumably Luther did not have time enough to consult every note of the second edition as he completed the translation of the New Testament within only eleven weeks, while simultaneously engaging in other works; at the Wartburg castle, Luther had at first only the Gerbel edition of the Greek text,⁹ and did not receive the entire

³ In the early sixteenth century, *bonae artes* means classical literature, particularly Roman classics. It can be assumed that Luther, who mastered *bonae artes* as a liberal arts student, studied Roman poetry, to which he frequently refers, but not Greek language.

⁴ While Latin words are found only occasionally among Greek words in the letters of the Humanists of the time, Luther’s letters exhibit the opposite situation.

⁵ The lectures on Romans, Galatians and Hebrews (1515-1517) are proven to be based on the Vulgate. In the lectures on Romans, whose hand-written manuscripts exist, there are only three textual quotations in Greek.

⁶ Sendschreiben vom Dolmetschen (1530).

⁷ When U. Zwingli quoted biblical passages in Greek, Luther requested that quotations be given either in Latin or in German.

⁸ When Ph. Melancthon came to the University of Wittenberg as a Greek instructor (1518), Luther attended his lectures and studied Greek.

⁹ The Greek edition which prints only the Greek text of Erasmus’ first critical edition, published in 1521 by Nicholas Gerbel who was a Humanist/Jurist and said to be Luther’s friend. Cf. Kooimann, pp.133f.; Bluhm, pp. 7, 52; Groß p.110; Voltz, p.47 (Bild 36).

second critical edition of Erasmus until later; as for the Vulgate, it was engraved in Luther's mind so that he could always quote from memory if necessary.

Bornkamm does mention Dibbelt's meticulous examination of Luther's knowledge of the Greek language. He agrees that since Luther was educated not among Humanists but among Scholastics, the Latin bible was much more familiar to him than the Greek even though he studied Greek, and that the two Latin translations (the Vulgate he could readily quote from memory, and Erasmus' Latin translation printed parallel to the Greek text) were indeed indispensable to Luther in his translation process.

However, in contrast to Dibbelt's painstaking and demonstrative examination of Luther's biblical quotations in his lectures and writings prior to the translation, Bornkamm finds his examination of Luther's translation *per se* remarkably unpersuasive. He selected examples only from the notes in WADB (*Anmerkungen und Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament*, WADB 6, pp.535-594; *Anmerkungen und Erläuterungen zum Text*, WADB 7, pp.555-655), but we simply cannot grasp the realities of the translation process by such a "sampling test." We can gain an overall understanding of the translation and can appreciate the actual treatment of the sources in detail only by close scrutiny of a particular part of the Bible, e.g., one book in its entirety. Bornkamm chose the entire Epistle to the Romans for such comparative examination and classified it into eight points (1. passages where Luther translated based on the Vulgate; 2. where he departed from the Vulgate by following Erasmus; and so on) and examined them. As a result, he reached the following conclusion:

Luther chose the appropriate German words case by case, utilizing other sources along with the Greek original. There are indeed some passages (e.g., Rom 9:28) where he follows the translation errors of the Vulgate by overlooking Erasmus' notes, but this does not devalue Luther's achievement in examining the text and sources in his disposal, flexibly responding to each case, and finally combining them into a living language. It is obvious that the original Greek text occupied the center of the whole translation process at all times. Therefore Dibbelt is mistaken when he states that the Greek text was only occasionally used through Erasmus' notes. While Luther certainly did not depend exclusively on the Greek text, his translation would not have been possible without that text. The translation process was indeed complex.¹⁰

3. Heinz Bluhm

The 1967 essay of the Boston Germanist, Heinz Bluhm, deals with our text, i.e., Galatians. Bluhm first confirms that the sources available to and used by Luther were: (1) Erasmus' second critical edition; (2) the Vulgate published in Basel in 1509; and (3) German translations prior to his own. After a comparative examination of these, Bluhm makes the following points: (i) there are over 60 passages where Erasmus' Greek text and the Vulgate differ from each other; (ii) in only six of these does Luther's translation depend on the Vulgate, the rest are based on Erasmus' Greek text; (iii) where Erasmus' Latin translation appears to depart from his Greek text, Luther's translation follows the Greek text; and finally, (iv) the differences between the Vulgate and the Greek text are not significant in the passages where

¹⁰ Reviewing this essay, Lohse states that Bornkamm does not prioritize any of the sources in Luther's translation process. Lohse, pp.123f.

The Zainerbibel treated in part 2 is one of the major German translations prior to Luther's. Since this is beyond the scope of our study, we shall skip Bornkamm's thesis concerning it.

Luther's translation is based on the Vulgate. As a result, Bluhm argues that the *Septemberbibel* is proven to be a translation from Erasmus' Greek text.

Having reviewed each of Bluhm's examinations in detail, we could not agree with his overall conclusion, as we shall explain in detail in the next section.¹¹

III. *The Translation Process of the Galatians of the Septemberbibel*

Based on the above review of scholarship, we shall attempt an examination of the translation process of the *Septemberbibel*. This examination is a limited one. First of all, we shall limit our material to the Galatians. This is because Galatians is in manageable size as a meaningful material, and because the Galatians is presumably an appropriate sample, for it was significant for Luther himself. Secondly, as we have repeated above, we do not treat the issue of the relationship of Luther's translation and the previous German translations (except when it appears in our quotation from Bluhm), and limited our examination to the relationship between Luther's translation (hence L) and the four texts, i.e., the Greek text of Erasmus' second critical edition (EG2), his Latin translation (EL2), his notes (EN2) and the Vulgate (V).¹² We also consult, for reference, the texts of the fifth edition (EG5, EL5) and notes (EN 5) contained in the Works of Erasmus, six-volume Leiden edition (published in 1705; we used the 1962 reprint edition by Georg Olms), together with the Greek text of Erasmus' first critical edition (EG1), Latin translation (EL1) and notes (EN1).

1.

(1). Galatians 1:5

EG2: $\hat{\omega}\ \hat{\eta}\ \delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$

EL2: cui gloria

V: cui est gloria

L: *wilchem sey preß*

While EL2 is a literal translation of EG2, V supplies the indicative "est" (= to whom is glory). L disagrees with these in supplying the subjunctive "sey" (= to whom be glory).

Erasmus' notes are of use here. EN1 and EN2 write "Est, non est in graecis, sed tantum, cui gloria," thus criticizing V. EN5 adds to this "ut sit optantis" to make clear optative implication of the Greek phrase. Thus we can infer that L is under the influence of EL2, and still more of EN2, when L departed from V and used subjunctive "sey" here.

¹¹ Bluhm has developed a vast study on the relationship of Luther's and the previous German translations utilizing the above sources (3) and it is quite interesting. However, since it is beyond the scope of our study, we need to skip it.

¹² Because we did not have access to the 1509 edition of the Vulgate which Luther allegedly used, we used (1) the 1510 edition of the Vulgate (published by Jacobus Mareschal in Lyons); (2) the Vulgate contained in WADB 5; (3) the 1509 edition of the Vulgate quoted by Bluhm. Commenting on (1), *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of the Holy Scripture in the Library of the British & Foreign Bible Society* states that "this edition closely follows the Basel Bible of 1509" (compiled by P. H. Darlow & H. F. Moule, Vol.II/2 [reprint, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint, 1963], p.917). According to WADB 5 Einleitung p.x, (2) has the same text with the 1509 edition of the Vulgate except the sentences not designated in italics etc.

(2). Galatians 1:6

EG2: ἐν χάριτι
 EL2: per gratiam
 V: in gratiam
 L: durch die gnad

Translated literally, EG2 is “in the grace.” V is “into the grace,” and EL2 departs both from EG2 and V, and has “through the grace” or “by the grace.” It is apparent that “durch die gnad” in L is from EL2.

EL1 has “in gratia” (literal translation of Greek) and Luther’s 1546 edition has “in die gnade” (= V), and thus this must have been a difficult passage where both Erasmus and Luther changed their minds. But at the time of the *Septemberbibel*, L is under the influence of EL2.

EG1 has *χάριτι θεοῦ* (= god’s grace), while EG2 has *χάριτι χριστοῦ* (= Christ’s grace). Luther has “gnad Christi” (= Christ’s grace), and this is one of the evidences which show that he had Erasmus’ second edition as his original text and not the first edition. Also, modern translations sometimes render the phrase as “into the grace,” showing noticeably that V still lives on through the influence of Luther’s translation (after 1546). Cf. BIBLE: Colloquial Japanese (Japan, 1954, 1955) and BIBLE: The New Interconfessional Translation (Japan, 1987) both translate the phrase “into the grace”. However RSV and NRSV render it “in the grace”, and REB “by the grace”.

(3). Galatians 1:7

EG2: εἰ μὴ τινές εἰσιν, οἱ
 EL2: nisi quod quidam sunt, qui
 V: nisi sunt aliqui qui
 L: on das etliche find, die

When compared with other three texts, L is closest to EL2, and even shows in part literal correspondence between the Latin and the German.¹³

(4). Galatians 1:17

EG2: πρὸς τοὺς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλους
 EL2: ad eos qui ante me fuerant apostoli
 V: ad antecessores meos apostolos
 L: zu denen, die fur myr Apostel waren

Translated literally, EG2 would be “to the Apostles before me.” V changes into a somewhat smoother Latin “antecessores meos.” On the other hand, EL2 supplies words absent in EG2 (“qui” and “fuerant”) and renders “to those who had been Apostles before me.” L also supplies words in the same manner and except for the different order required by the grammatical rules of the Latin and German languages the words show one to one agreement.

This passage is one of the five which Bluhm cites to prove that L is not from V but from EG2 (p.149). Bluhm argues that it is not clear as to whether L is from EG2 or from EL2, while L obviously depends neither on V nor on the prior High German Bibles. This argument is evidently wrong.

¹³ EG1 lacks a comma before “οἱ.”

(5). Galatians 2:3

EG2: *τίτος ... ἔλλην ὄν*

EL2: Titus ... cum esset Graecus

V: titus ... cum esset gentilis

L: *Τίτῆς ... ὁβ er wol ein friechē war*

According to Bluhm, pre-Lutheran High German Bibles have “thyt wie das er was ein heiden,” but “thyt” became “tytus” since Eggesteyn redaction, and since Zainer “das” became “wol.” From these sources he argues that it is impossible to determine on which of the two texts, EG2 and EL2, L depends. However, when compared with “gentilis” of V and “heiden” of the pre-Lutheran German Bibles (from which Luther adopts “wol”), L is more likely to be influenced by EL2 than EG2, and also presumably shows the result of consulting EN2. EN1, EN2 and EN5 agree in having “id est graecus cum esset.”

(6). Galatians 2:8

EL1 and EL2 both have the entire verse 8 in parentheses. While EG1 and EG2 both do not use parentheses, L has the entire verse 8 in parentheses. It would be safe to say that this is from EL2.¹⁴

EL2 uses parentheses in some other passages, and those parentheses do not necessarily correspond to those in L. However, it could be argued that L’s use of parenthesis shows that it is influenced by EL2.

(7). Galatians 2:17

EG2: *Εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ*EL2: quod si dum quaerimus iustificari per ChristumV: quod si querentes iustificari in ChristoL: *Ἔσλten myr aber, die da suchen durch Ḫhriftum rechtfertig zu werden*

In literal translation, *δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ* would be “be justified in Christ.” The translation “in Christo” of V is a literal one. EL2 renders *ἐν* into “per,” and “durch Christum” in L follows this.

(8). Galatians 3:2, 5

EG2: *ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως*EL2: ex praedicatione fidei (3:2, 5)V: ex auditu fidei (3:2, 5)L: durch die prediget vom glamben (3:2)durch die prediget des glambens (3:5)

V translates literally *ἀκοή* (= hearing) of the Greek text into “auditus.” In contrast, EL2 gives a free translation to the word *ἀκοή* and renders it as “praedicatio.” Following this, L uses the cognate word “prediget” and thus agrees with it.

However, taking into account the fact that Luther placed a theological significance upon the word “prediget,” we cannot conclude that in this passage L depends solely on EL2. Luther

¹⁴ The parentheses are inherited by the Authorized Version and Revised Standard Version through the English Bible of W. Tyndale, which is said to have received strong influence from Luther’s translation.

gave lectures on Galatians from October of 1516 to March of the following year, and published them as his commentary in 1519. According to a student scribe, it contains a description which could be the ground for translating ἀκοή here as “prediget.”¹⁵ Since EL1 agrees with V in translating this word as “auditu,” it is possible that “praedicatione” of EL2 could be a result of Luther’s influence on Erasmus. Whatever the case, it is certain that L agrees with EL2, and that both depart from the original Greek text.¹⁶

(9). Galatians 3:5

EG2: *ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;*

EL2: Qui igitur subministrat vobis spiritum, & operatur virtutes in vobis, utrum ex operibus legis, an ex praedicatione fidei **id facit?**

V: qui ergo tribuit vobis spiritum, et operatur virtutes in vobis, ex operibus legis an ex auditu fidei

L: *Der euch nu den geist reychet, vnd thut solche thatten vnter euch, thut erß durch die werck des gefetzß? odder durch die prediget des glawbensß?*

V is faithful to the Greek original text in lacking the main verb. In contrast, EL2 completes the sentence by adding “id facit” which is absent in EG2; “thut erß” in L corresponds to this exactly. Furthermore, “reychet” in L is closer to the “subministrat” in EL2 than ἐπιχορηγῶν in EG2 or “tribuit” in V.

(10). Galatians 3:13

EG2: *γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κατάρα*

EL2: dum pro vobis factus est execratio

V: factus pro nobis maledictum

L: *da er wart eyn vermaledeyung fur vns*

Here L seems to be under the influence of both V and EL2. EL2 has “pro vobis” in correspondence with ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν in EG2. V differs from this and has “pro nobis” instead. L follows V, thus rendering “fur uns.” The “vermaledeyung” in L is closer to V than to EL2. On the other hand, “da er wart” in L corresponds to “dum ... factus est” in EL2.

(11). Galatians 3:14

EG2: *ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ ἀβραάμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*

EL2: ut in gentes benedictio Abrahae veniret per Christum Iesum

V: ut in gentibus benedictio Abrahae fieret in Christo Iesu

L: *auff daß die benedeuyung Abrahe unter die heyden keme, ynn Christo Ihesu*

V renders γένηται (= occur, become) in EG2 into a roughly synonymous “fieret,” whereas EL2 translates this as “veniret (= come).” The “keme” in L is certainly from EL2.

As for (i) εἰς τὰ ἔθνη and (ii) ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, L corresponds to EL2 on (i), and to V on (ii). As for (i), EL2, but not V, is closer to the literal sense of EG2; and as for (ii), V, but not EL2, is closer to the literal translation of EG2. Therefore, it is assumed here that L compared EL2 and V, and chose the one closer to EG2. Of course, we cannot rule out the

¹⁵ WA 57, Die erste Vorlesung über den Galaterbrief, Die Glossen, pp.20f.

¹⁶ Tyndale’s English Bible also uses “preaching” for this term in these passages.

possibility that L translated here straight from EG2 without being influenced either by EL2 or V.

(12). Galatians 3:15

EG2: *ὅμως ἀνθρώπου κεκυρωμένην διαθήκην, οὐδεὶς ἀθετεῖ, ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσεται*

EL2: Hominis licet testamentum, tamen si sit comprobatum, nemo rejicit, aut addit aliquid

V: tamen hominis confirmatum testamentum nemo spernit aut superordinat

L: verachtet man doch eines menschen testament nicht (wenn es befestiget ist) und thut auch nichts datzu

While “confirmatum” in V is closer to the literal sense of the original Greek *κεκυρωμένην*, EL2 replaces the participle with an adverbial clause; L follows EL2 on this point.

(13). Galatians 4:29

EG2: *ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ τότε ὁ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς, ἐδίωκεν τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα, οὕτως καὶ νῦν.*

EL2: sed quae admodum tunc is qui secundum carnem natus erat, persequabatur eum, qui natus erat secundum spiritum, ita & nunc.

V: sed quomodo tunc is qui secundum carnem natus fuerat persequabatur eum qui secundum spiritum ita et nunc

L: Über gleich wie zu der zeit, der nach dem fleisch geporn war, verfolgete denen, der nach dem geist geporn war, also geht es ist auch.

In the Greek text, *γεννηθείς* meaning “one who was born” appears only once, being omitted after *κατὰ πνεῦμα*. Corresponding to this, “natus fuerat” appears only once in V. In EL2 and in L, in contrast, “natus erat” and “geporn war” (respectively) appear twice each, supplementing the omission.

(14). Galatians 5:1

EG2: *Τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ οὖν ἧ Χριστοῦς ἡμᾶς ἠλευθέρωσε,*

EL2: In libertate igitur qua Christus nos liberavit,

V: qua libertate nos Christus liberavit

L: So befehlet nu ynn der freyheit, damit uns Christus befrehnet hat,

As a single glance reveals, “ynn der freyheit” in L corresponds “in libertate” in EL2. On this point, L is influenced by EL2 rather than V, whose rendering is closer in expression to that of EG2 than that of EL2.

(15). Galatians 5:10

EG2: *ἐγὼ πέποιθα εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ, ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο φρονήσετε*

EL2: Ego confido de vobis in domino, quod nihil aliud sensuri sitis.

V: Ego confido in vobis in domino quod nihil aliud sapietis

L: Ich verfehe mich zu euch ynn dem herrn, yhr werdet nichts anders gefhnnnet seyn,

The issue here is the *ὅτι* clause. EG2 uses a future indicative *φρονήσετε*, and so in V. EL 2, however, uses a construction of future participle + present subjunctive, “sensuri sitis” after “quod.” L uses a subjunctive “werdet ...gesynnet seyn,” placing a future nuance on “werdet” because there is no corresponding form in German to the Latin word “sensuri.” L is most

likely influenced by EL2.

(16). Galatians 5:25, 6:16

- 5:25 EG2: *εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχώμεν.*
 EL2: Si vivimus spiritu, spiritu et incedamus.
 V: Si spiritu vivimus: spiritu et ambulemus
 L: *So wñr ðm geñft leben, fo laßt uns auch ðm geñft einher treten.*
- 6:16 EG2: *καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν,*
 EL2: Et quicumque iuxta regulam hanc incedunt,
 V: Et quicumque hanc regulam secuti fuerint
 L: *wnnd wie viel nach ðifer regel eyñher treten,*

L has “eyñher treten” in both cases for the twice used Greek verb *στοιχέω*. This German does not seem to originate directly from EG2, nor does it correspond to V; thus it is most probably derived from “incedo” in EL2. Also in 6:16, “secuti fuerint” in V corresponds to the future tense *στοιχήσουσιν* in the Greek text, whereas both EL2 and L render it in present indicative.

2. Bluhm’s examination

Finally, we shall examine the five passages (see 2.3. above) on which Bluhm grounds his argument that Luther’s translation is based not on EL2 but on EG2. (G = pre-Lutheran High German Bibles)

(1). Galatians 1:15

- EG2: *ὅτε δὲ ἐδόκησεν ὁ θεός, ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου*
 EL2: Ast ubi deo, qui segregauerat me ab utero matris meae ... visum est
 V: Cum autem placuit et qui me segregavit ex utero matris meae
 L: *Da es aber Gotte wolgefiel, der mich von meyhner mutter leybe hat außgefondert*
 G: *Wann do es dem geuiel der mich sundert von dem leib meiner mutter*

Bluhm concludes that “wolgefiel” in L is solely from EG2, being unrelated to either V or EL2. However, L does correspond basically to both “placuit” in V and “visum est” in EL2, and thus their influence is quite possible. It is also possible that “geuiel” in the pre-Lutheran German translation(s) influenced L.

(2). Galatians 4:30

- EG2: *οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδείας μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρως*
 EL2: non enim haeres erit filius ancillae cum filio liberae
 V: Non enim heres erit filius ancillae cum filio liberae.
 L: *Demn der magd son sol nicht erben, mitt dem son der freyen.*
 G: *Wann der sun der diern der wirt nit erbe: mit dem sun der freyen*

Although the possibility of L being a direct translation from EG2 cannot be rejected, as Bluhm says, V and EL2 are also sufficiently possible source for L. Here too, the possibility is even greater that “erben” in L is under the influence of “erbe” in G.

(3). Galatians 5:21

EG2: *ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες, βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν*

EL2: quod qui talia agunt, regni dei haeredes non erunt

V: quoniam qui talia agunt regnum dei non consequentur

L: das, die solchs thun, werden das reich Götts nicht erben

G: ... die gewinnen nit das reich gotz.

If L translated *κληρονομέω* into “erben” under the influence of G in 4:30, then it is natural for L to translate likewise here. At least it is impossible to argue that L is exclusively from EG2.

(4). Galatians 6:1

EG2: *ἀδελφοί, εἰάν καὶ προληφθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινι παραπτώματι*

EL2: Fratres, etiam si occupatus fuerit homo in aliquo delicto

V: Fratres & si preoccupatus homo fuerit in aliquo delicto

L: Lieben bruder, so ein mensch etwa von ernen sehl ubereylen murd

G: Vnd bruder: vnd ob der mensch wirt bekumert in etlicher misstat

Bluhm insists that “ubereylen” in L derived solely from EG2, though he gives no explanation as to how he understands the meaning of each text. The meanings of *προληφθῆ* and “ubereylen” are not clear. Hans Volz, in his *Worterkklärungen zur Lutherbibel von 1545*, which is in essence “A Concise Dictionary of Luther’s German Bible,” only gives a definition “(plötzlich) überfallen” to the term “ubereylen,” while A. Götze adds “überraschen.” D. Sanders places “übereilen” in this passage under the heading called “jn. durch grössre Eile einholen und zuvorkommen, jn. überrarschen, ereilen,” while J. und W. Grimm placed it under “hinreizen, überwältigen.” On the other hand, “occupo” has meanings such as “to catch, capture, overwhelm, attack (suddenly), forestall, and to go ahead,” which overlap beautifully with those of “ubereylen.”¹⁷ Furthermore, EN1, EN2 and EN5 explain “occupatus” as “praeventus antequam potuerit cavere.”¹⁸ It seems, therefore, that L understood and translated the term, under the influence of EL2, and probably referring to EN2, something like “to be attacked (or captured) by error (unawares); to fault.” We cannot conclude that L is solely from EG2; rather it is more reasonable to take the influence of EL2 and EN2 into consideration. More accurately, this influence of EL2 and EN2 has a much greater likelihood than the direct translation from EG2.

(5). Galatians 6:12

EG2: *μόνον ἵνα μὴ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διώκωνται*EL2: tantum ne **ob crucem** Christi persecutionem patianturV: tantum ut **crucis christi** persecutionem patiantur

L: alleyn das sie nicht mit dem creuß Ghrifti verfolget werden

G: das sy allein nit leiden die iagung des kreutzes cristi

¹⁷ Cf. *OLD*; Blaise; Niermeyer; Defferari.

¹⁸ The meanings of “praevenio” include: “anticipate or forestall (a person, event, etc., often with the idea of preventing); take precedence over, surpass” (*OLD*). See also the dictionaries listed in n. 17 above. Both Blaise and Niermeyer give to the term “praeventus” a definition “être mis dans son tort — to be put in the wrong,” and Niermeyer cites an example “Si fuerit in causis praeventus.” If EN2 used the term in the same sense shown in this example, then it means that Luther misunderstood the meaning.

Here, the issue is the relationship among: (i) $\tau\hat{\omega}\ \sigma\tau\alpha\nu\rho\hat{\omega}$; (ii) “ob crucem” (= EL2); and (iii) “mit dem creutz” (= L). While recognizing the possibility that (iii) made a reference to (ii), Bluhm concludes that it is more probable that (iii) is a direct translation from (i). Here again, however, Bluhm does not show how he understands the meaning of each text. Although the meaning of the dative of (i) is not clear, it is hard to take it to mean “with the cross.” The sense of (ii) would be “because of the cross” or “for the sake of the cross.” Though the meaning of “mit” in (iii) is not all certain, it is difficult to take it in the sense “with.” EN1 and EN2 give an explanation: “Ne cruce Christi persequantur. Ut persequantur, passive accipias, hoc est, ne crux Christi adducat illis persecutionem” (EN5 adds another explanation to this sentence). Here again, rather than taking directly from EG2, it is more likely that by making reference to EL2 and EN2, L used “mit” in the sense either “because of (or, for the sake of) the cross” or “with reference to the cross.” At least it is hard to take this passage as an evidence for “directly from EG2 alone.”

Bluhm goes on to argue that L solely agrees with EG2 as the verb-only expression without noun when compared with “persecutionem patiantur” (noun + verb) in V and EL2, and hence L is a direct translation from EG2. This is a hasty argument; EN2 does have a verb-only expression without noun, i.e., “persequantur,” and this clearly indicates that it is not possible to limit the origin of L to EG2 alone.

IV. *Conclusion*

We have observed many correspondences between the translation of Galatians in the *Septemberbibel* and the Latin translation of Erasmus’ second critical edition. In contrast, as far as the Galatians is concerned, we could not find any passage of which we could confidently say that Luther’s translation is solely from the Greek text of Erasmus’ second edition, and not from any other sources.

Erasmus significantly revised his Latin translation of the first edition for the second edition, and Luther’s German translation went through repeated revisions between the *Septemberbibel* in 1522 and the edition of 1546, the year he died. We can observe in this process their careful word selection and endless improvement. However, at least at the time of the *Septemberbibel*, Luther’s translation of Galatians appears to have received not a little influence from Erasmus’ Latin translation and notes.

We do not intend to deny Luther’s great achievement in the history of Bible translation. We should not forget, however, that in addition to the Greek text of his critical edition, Erasmus’ Latin translation and notes played an important, probably even greater, role, in that achievement.

We would like to continue the project by extending our investigation to pre-Lutheran German Bibles, and by taking Luther’s biblical interpretation and theology into consideration.

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