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<Abstract>

A Study on Translating the Nature of the Wisdom and Its Role in Creation in Proverbs 8:22-31

Prof. Jung-Woo Kim
(Chongshin University)

The aim of this paper is to suggest a most up-to-date translation of Proverb 8:22-31 which is understood as one of the most difficult passages in the book of Proverbs. Based on the philological, syntactical, exegetical and rhetorical analyses of the text, I come to the conclusion that the personified wisdom in the present passage took the role of 'witness' in the creation of the universe; as she was 'brought forth' (קנה) before the creation, she has the privilege of witnessing the whole process of the creating activity of the LORD. I have argued that the term אָמוֹן in v. 30 should best be rendered as 'creator' rather than 'architect', 'master craftman' or 'child'; based on my analysis that grammatically it is used as the accusative of state, and refers to the creator LORD in the sentence. Thus v. 30a was translated in terms that "I was beside Him who was the creator". I have attached a tentative new Korean translation of the passage at the end of the paper.

<Abstract>

Particularities of the Translation of Vulgate Considered on the Basis of Rhetorical Analysis of Psalms 1-3

Prof. Cheol-Woo Park
(Korea Nazarene University)

It is true that Korean Old Testament scholarship does not pay due attention to the study on the Vulgate despite its importance for the Bible translation and exegesis.

The purpose of the present article is to reassess the principles and particularities of Jerome's Latin Bible translation, Vulgate. Here I have dealt with the matters on the basis of the literary analysis of the first three psalms of the O. T. I tried to carry it out by the observation of the rhetorical and semantic characteristics of his translation, particularly by the comparative observations of Hebrew Bible(MT), Septuagint, Psalterium Gallicanum(Psalmi iuxta Septuaginta emendati), and Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos(Psalmi iuxta Hebraicum translati). Here I have focused on the facts related to the translation of the Bible.

Jerome was faithful to the Hebrew texts in his translation, at least in his translation of the Psalms. Actually it was the goal of his translation. He was serious about the literary and theological contents of the texts, but at the same time he tried to reproduce the rhetorical and structural particularities of the Hebrew texts in his Latin translation of the Bible. He tried to represent the literary excellency of the Hebrew poetry in his translation. This was another important goal of his translation.

He tried to achieve it by reproducing in his Latin translation the phonetic particularities of the Hebrew poetry(Ps 1:5, 6; 2:2; 4:3), its poetic terseness (Ps 1:3; 2:4, 10), and the particular semantic connotations of the Hebrew language (Ps 1:1, 2; 2:3, 10, 12; 4:4). His word choice was based on the very careful analysis of the meanings of the words in their own literary and theological contexts(Ps 1:3, 5; 2:1, 2; 3:2; 4:2). He also introduced special Latin complex words(Ps 2:2, 5; 3:2; 4:2).

He sometimes accepted the expressions of the already existing translations. But mostly he tried to produce a new translation with the freshness of expression in his translation with his literary creativity. He tried to be faithful to the Hebrew texts, but he did not purport to translate them mechanically. He did it on the basis of the deep knowledge of both the source language and the target language, that is, Hebrew and Latin. Especially he shows his very careful consideration about the users of the target language. These are the basic principles of the Bible translation that we have to bear in mind in our translation of the Bible. But the study of Vulgate provides various insights for the actual translation. It should also be very useful for the exegesis on the Biblical texts.

<Abstract>

Inquiry into the Translation of the Sentence with the Preposition על : in 2Kings 23:29 and 2Chronicles 17:1b

Prof. Hee Sook Bae

(Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary)

This paper reconsiders the appropriateness of translating the preposition על shown in 2 Kings 23:29 and 2 Chronicles 17:1. Many Bible Versions present the translations of each text incompatible with each other in their content. This can be ascribed to the contradictory understanding of the preposition על. It was already in the early translations that the preposition על was translated in a hostile meaning when it was used with the verb עלה in 2 Kings 23:29. But with the discovery of Babylonian Chronicle in the twenties century, the phrase עלה with על became translated in the opposite meaning respectively, with the history of background of 23:29 being revealed. It showed that Paraoh-necho king of Egypt went up to the aid of the king of Assyria to the river Euprates, not against him. Considering it historically, the modified translation is correct. But can the translation influenced by the historical knowledge be considered adequate?

Translation is to reproduce text as close as possible to the original. Therefore it should be avoided to translate the text according to the historical facts. The intention that the author wants to include should be figured out first for the translation close to the original text. In the text 2 Kings 23 the author puts more emphasis on the report of the death of Josia, not on that of the precise historical fact in the context containing 2 Kings 23:29. Therefore, considering the context the preposition על corresponding to this phrase should be translated in the neutral meaning. I am to propose that it be more adequate to translate the corresponding phrase as just going up to the river Euphrates not as going up against or to the aid of the king of Assyria. Such translations are already shown in other modern translations.

However there is an assertion that the preposition על should be replaced by אל for such kinds of translation. But this seems not necessary because there are many usages using על together with אל in the Bible in order to present the same meaning.

Then is there no possibility of the preposition על being translated in a more

positive meaning? 2 Chronicles 17:1b shows the possibility that the preposition על can be translated in a positive meaning when used along with the verb with which it is used. The hithpael of the verb חזק is often used with the preposition על. In this case, it can never be translated in a negative meaning.

For this very reason, the meaning of the preposition על should be comprehended in a larger context and translated giving attention to the subordinate verb.

<Abstract>

Harmony of Formal Correspondence and Dynamic Equivalence in Translating Parallel Texts of the Synoptic Gospels

Prof. Jae-Sung Kim

(Hanshin University)

While the *Korean Revised Version* adopted the principle of formal correspondence as its translation principle, the *Common Translation* adopted the principle of dynamic equivalence. *The New Korean Standard Version* did not selected one alternative of them but tried to maintain harmony between formal correspondence translation and dynamic equivalence translation.

The purpose of this paper is to review how much it is successful to maintain such a harmony in the *New Korean Standard Version (NKSV)* and the *Revised New Korean Standard Version (RNKSV),* especially in translating parallel texts of the synoptic Gospels.

For this purpose, we will first examine how *NKSV* and *RNKSV* translated some correspondent Greek texts into some diverse and different Korean expressions, contrasting the texts of the synoptic Gospels. And we will examine why such different expressions should be made in process of translation and if those expressions are necessary for Korean usage or not.

For this analysis, we will examine 1) phrases which added or omitted some words, 2) phrases which are different in honorific expressions, 3) phrases which are different in forms of quotation, 4) phrases which are assimilated to parallel text, 5) phrases which are different in tense and voice, and 6) phrases where comma either omitted or added, the exclamation mark or question mark or space are used or not etc. Then we will propose a new way for further translation through this analysis.

<Abstract>

An Educational Suggestion for Translating the Biblical Greek Article

Prof. Hyung Dae Park
(Chongshin Theological Seminary)

In the Greek New Testament the article, ὁ, ἡ, τό, seems to be an essential element for translation in that it appears most frequently with versatile functions. Nevertheless, the Greek article is mainly omitted in the process of translation at all the Korean Bibles. Simple omission may not be a good solution. At lectures on Greek grammar in Korea, in addition, it is generally suggested that the Greek article should be translated into Korean like the demonstrative pronoun, such as 'Keu'. This suggestion is enough to make students have doubts about the difference between the Greek article and the demonstrative pronoun.

If the article did not have any important function within the sentence, it would be okay to despise it in the process of translation. However, if it had any essential, even diverse and so difficult to be defined, role in a sentence, undoubtedly it should find a space in the translated expression/text.

Expectantly in a sense, there are some expressions in Korean which may be seen as equivalent to the Greek article. They are 'Keo/Ke' and 'Keosigi'. Especially the latter is grammaticalized by Keun-young Park as a word referring to 'deixis', 'definiteness', 'substitution', 'gaining time', and 'hesitation'. On the basis of the characteristics of the Greek article and of 'Keo/Ke' and 'Keosigi', this article suggests to employ these words in order to make students understand the Greek article and to translate it into Korean for the Bible.

<Abstract>

Translation and Exegesis of the Bible in the Letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians

Prof. Kyong Chul Cho
(Methodist Theological University)

This study deals with the importance of the interaction of exegesis and translation of the Bible, especially highlighting some examples in the Letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians. The Apostle Paul, in 1 Cor 12 and 14, introduces the spiritual gift of the translation (ἑρμηνεία) in the explanations of the prophecy and strange tongues. Without the translation of strange tongues, they are not understood in the church, therefore people are asked not to speak them open in the church. In this case, the translation of the Bible to the church is necessary as far as the strange tongues are spoken. Without the translation of the strange tongues, it is very hard for people to understand God and bear any spiritual fruits in their mind, as Paul emphasizes in 1 Cor 14:14.

But the translation of the Bible is very difficult and complex task. Translation must be based on the good knowledge of the lexical and grammatical structure of the source language. For the translator, understanding the source text is the prime goal in Biblical exegesis that is a critical explanation or interpretation of the Bible. Exegesis also leads to discover relevance of translation.

We can find some cases in the Letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians, for example, expressions written in the context of a specific type relation, addition or omission of some characters in exegetic expressions, impossible translation without clear exegetic explanation, and the same partial translation with a different set of words.

We may notify above-mentioned examples in not only Korean Translation, but also English and German Translation. In this regard, this study suggests that exegesis is not only essential in the translation of Bible, but also critical in the analysis of the Bible.

<Abstract>

A Proposal for Easy Korean Bible Translation
for Migrants in Korea and Korean Immigrants Abroad

Prof. Jeong Hui Kang
(Hannam University)

This paper deals with the necessary of easy Korean Bible translation which can be readily understood by the migrants in Korea and Korean immigrants abroad. The starting point of this issue is the writer's personal experience which is to have been giving the lecture, 'Learning Korean Language through Korean Bible' to them during more than ten years.

Easy translation for them will have to be paraphrased the difficult Korean words derived from Chinese languages or the typical Korean idioms in the existing translations. If some expressions are not appropriate to follow this way, the usages and meanings should be explained in the footnote according to the Korean educational levels of the perspective readers.

Thus, translation for the migrants in Korea and Korean immigrants abroad must be easier than the *Revised New Korean Standard Version* (2001). In order to prove it, this paper critically reviews some sentences, vocabularies, expressions, etc. in the Gospel according to Luke of the *RNKSV*, and proposes the substitutes with the proper Korean grammar.

<Abstract>

The Development and the Map of Contemporary Translation Studies

Prof. Sung Hee Kirk
(Sookmyung Women's University)

Modern translation studies have flourished since the last half of the 20th century partly because of the exponential increase of the volume and types of texts translated and partly because of EU requirements that all the documents should be translated into all the official languages (23 languages as of 2009) which forced people to realize the importance of effective and efficient translation method.

In an attempt to provide a theoretical framework for this newly emerging discipline, Holmes proposed a map of translation studies. In this map, he divided translation studies into two branches: pure and applied. The pure branch is further divided into theoretical and descriptive; and the applied branch is divided into translation education, translation aids, translation policy, and translation criticism.

According to Chesterman, some of the concepts, norms, strategies and values in the pool of contemporary translation studies are from previous generations. Chesterman introduces five supermemes that come up again and again in the history of translation: source-target, equivalence, untranslatability, free-vs-literal, and all-writing-is-translating. Building up from these five supermemes, he introduces eight major stages in the development of translation studies from ancient times: words; the words of God; rhetoric; logos; linguistic science; communication; target; and cognition.

In this paper, an attempt is made to provide analysis, critical assessment and classification of various branches of contemporary translation studies building on the concepts introduced by Holmes and Chesterman. The analysis reveals that the modern translation studies could indeed be divided into pure and applied branches as Holmes suggested. The pure branch could also be divided into theoretical and descriptive branches. But unlike Holmes' map, the pure branch is divided into translation methodology oriented translation studies and translation research method oriented translation studies. The descriptive branch is divided into linguistically oriented translation studies; culturally oriented translation studies; medium oriented translation studies; and specific text type and genre oriented translation studies. The applied branch is divided into translation education, translation evaluation and translation aids.

<Abstract>

Inter-Semiotic Translation and Bible Translation:
Searching for Various Models of Inter-Semiotic Bible Translation

Prof. Jayhoon Yang
(Hyupsung University)

Traditional understanding of the act of translation may be roughly and loosely defined as an act of transferring a text of a language to another one in a corresponding language with equivalence. This paper begins with redefining this understanding by asking and answering the questions of (1) what does "a language" and "another one" mean? (2) what does a "text" mean? and (3) what does "an act of transferring" mean? The traditional concept of translation is focused on the different languages with regard to the first question, that is as an inter-lingual process. This paper suggests that the act of translation is not only the matter of between different language systems but within the same one, as Jakobson puts it as the 'intra-lingual' level.

The concept of "text" should be reconsidered in this post-modern society. It is more than letters on papers; it includes various kinds of vehicles for representing certain meanings, i.e. cultural productions. Therefore, this paper follows Jakobson's theory of "inter-semiotic" translation. This paper suggests a few models of inter-semiotic translation that may be applied to the Bible translation. It firstly suggests musical production as an example of inter-semiotic Bible translation, providing J. S. Bach's *Passion* works. It also deals with *pansori*, a Korean traditional musical performance. This paper moves on to the visual productions such as film and UCC. It continues to deal with visual artistic productions on the paper, the manga Bibles, *Bible Illuminated* a mook style bible, Bible for children, picture Bible such as *the Lego Bible*, and finally the Bible on the cyber space.

Examining a few models of inter-semiotic Bible translation, it briefly deals with some criteria that should be considered in producing and criticizing such modes of Bible translation: theological, literary, artistic, historical aspects, and acceptability. Lastly, it points out the problem of ideology that always be examined in making and evaluating the inter-linguistic, and especially, intra-linguistic and inter-semiotic translation productions, which is eventually related to the answer to the third question above of "an act of transferring".

Challenges for Bible Translation Today

Simon Crisp*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to give you what must inevitably be a brief outline of some of the many different factors which Bible translators have to take into account as they practise their craft － and reflect on their activity － in the first decade of a new millennium. The main theme of my paper will be the following: it used to be thought that the choice facing Bible translators was a relatively simple one, between a translation which was more literal and one which was more free. And in the case of the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, it was generally felt that faithfulness to the text required a rather literal rendering of the words and phrases of the original. Then, in the 1960s, came something of a revolution. From Eugene Nida[1] we learned that the meaning of the biblical text could be expressed as a series of "kernel propositions" independent of the form of the source language; that these propositions could be transferred from one language to another at the level of deep structure; and that they could be re-arranged and re-expressed according to the grammatical rules of the target language, with the original meaning remaining intact in its new guise. The reader of the translated text, therefore, would have access to the same meaning as the reader of the original text, and the translated text would have the same impact on its readers as the original text had on its first readers (or hearers). In this way was born a simple yet powerful explanatory model which has had enormous influence on the practice of Bible translation, giving rise to a whole series of common language translations. The approach known as dynamic equivalence (later restated as functional equivalence) came to dominate the

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1) The essential texts are: Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964); Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill for the United Bible Societies, 1969); Jan de Waard and Eugene A. Nida, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville: Nelson, 1986).

practice of the major Bible Translation agencies and to be worked out in practice in a huge number of Bible translations, both in major languages with many millions of speakers and in the majority of missionary translations into smaller languages around the world.

The great German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher, who also wrote important works on issues of language and translation,[2] makes a useful distinction between two fundamentally different approaches to translation: "The translator can either leave the writer in peace as much as possible and bring the reader to him, or he can leave the reader in peace as much as possible and bring the writer to him".[3] This statement eloquently captures the basic dilemma of Bible translators: to preserve the wording of the original text in as literal a way as possible and find other ways of explaining it to the reader, or to make the meaning as clear as possible even at the expense of the original form and structure of the text. If we apply this distinction to Nida's theory of translation, then, we can see that the trend in Bible translation in the second half of the twentieth century was overwhelmingly in the direction of bringing the text to the reader.

At this point it may already be useful to turn from the discussion of theory and look at a concrete example. The issues touched on so far emerge clearly in Mark 1:4, which has been discussed both by Nida himself and in the subsequent literature, and which is also frequently presented at practical training seminars for Bible translators.

ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης [ὁ] βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ καὶ κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (RSV)

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2) The key text is the article "Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens", Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Erste Abteilung, Schriften und Entwürfe, Band 11* (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 67-93. A partial English translation may be found in Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet, eds., *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Chapter 4.

3) It should be pointed out that Schleiermacher himself did not see these two approaches as having equal merit: from his perspective of German Romantic philosophy he clearly prefers the option of leaving the writer in peace and bringing the reader to the text, relying on the Spirit of the Language (Geist der Sprache) to make up for any gaps in understanding.

So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching. "Turn away from your sins and be baptized," he told the people, "and God will forgive your sins." (GNT)

So John the Baptist appeared in the desert and told everyone, "Turn back to God and be baptized! Then your sins will be forgiven." (CEV)

Leaving aside the text-critical question of the presence or absence of the Greek article and therefore the translation of βαπτίζων, the issues raised by this example are essentially two: firstly, the syntax has been rephrased (in particular, direct speech has been used instead of indirect speech; and secondly, abstract nouns have been changed into verbs. Nida argues that the "basic kernels" which make up the phrase "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" are as follows:

(1) John preached X (in which X stands for the entire indirect discourse)
(2) John baptises the people
(3) The people repent
(4) God forgives X
(5) The people sin

The modern English renderings just cited find direct speech to be a more appropriate (more functionally equivalent) way of expressing the notion of preaching (and CEV indeed dispenses with the technical term *preach*), and also restate the abstract nouns *baptism*, *repentance* and *forgiveness* as verbs. The wording of Mark's text, then, has been sacrificed in the interests of clarity, and the result is claimed to be functionally equivalent in the sense that the reader of the modern English translation has the same possibilities of understanding the content of the message as the reader or hearer of the original text.

A quick consideration of this example already throws up several questions. Do the modern English renderings we have quoted say the same thing as the original Greek? Nida's theory of functional equivalence translation claims strongly that the English and Greek do indeed say the same thing, and he does so by claiming that there is an invariant core of meaning which remains unchanged when expressed in different grammatical forms (for instance abstract nouns or verbs, direct or indirect speech) or in different languages (in this case English

and Greek). This argument depends of course on linguistic considerations, specifically on an early form of the theory of syntax developed by the famous American linguist Noam Chomsky, which allowed surface structure elements to be re-expressed as kernel propositions having some kind of universal status, and which entailed a more or less complete separation of content from form. Now all of this looks more than a little naïve in the light of modern linguistic and literary theory.

The criticism most frequently levelled at functional equivalence in Bible translation is that it sacrifices the richness and multi-dimensionality of the text in favour of clarity of expression, and thereby impoverishes the reader. In the case of our example, this would imply claiming that μετανοία means much more than either of the two modern renderings just cited, and so these translations deprive the reader of access to the full richness of the text or (worse) deceive by over-simplification. The only way to retain faithfulness in translation, according to this argument, is to adopt a more conservative rendering and – to go back to Schleiermacher's distinction – to find other ways of bringing the reader to the text.

In what follows I shall try to show how more recent developments in Bible translation theory have led to a situation which is much more nuanced than the model proposed by Nida and his followers. On the one hand we see a tendency to take functional equivalence to its extreme logical conclusion, with highly explicit translations which are clearly intended to stand alone, in the sense of giving their readers access to the full range of background and implicit information which is assumed to have been available to the original readers or hearers. On the other hand, though, there is growing recognition of a wide range of relevant factors which complicate the translation task and require the production of different kinds of translation: developments in communication theory, audience response, linguistics and hermeneutics, advances in biblical studies, lively debate about the role of implicit information, and increasing concern with the status of the text as a literary artefact on the one hand and as an oral production on the other, have all had a role to play.

2. Communication

The functional equivalence approach to Bible translation presupposes a model of communication which has become known as the conduit metaphor: a sender encodes a message which is successfully decoded by a recipient. This simple linear model is extended in the case of translation by a sender/recipient (the translator) who passes the same message on to a second recipient, still essentially in linear fashion and with the content of the message unchanged. In Nida's definition, "translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, firstly in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style".[4] This is a classical example of the conduit metaphor, which has been criticised as creating the illusion of objectivity: "It reifies meaning and gives it some kind of privileged, free-floating status, thereby allowing all linguistic exchanges to have equal participants. It equalizes exchange because the crux of the exchange is taken out of the participants and cast in terms of universal accessibility … The conduit metaphor reduces language to some sort of effortless gathering of objectified meaning by people who are ultimately all the same".[5] Recent application of communication theory to Bible translation has resulted in a much more complicated picture, in which the mismatch of sociocultural, organisational and speech-situation frames between sender and recipient surrounds the process of encoding and decoding in such a way as to cast doubt on the possibility of fully successful communication. Each participant has his/her own presuppositions, the set of cultural understandings which they share with their own language community, and these interact with the message itself to such an extent that the ability of the message recipient to understand what is being communicated depends to a significant extent on the extent to which these presuppositions can also be successfully conveyed and decoded. As has been justly observed, the reading of texts, the translation of texts and the construction and interpretation of meaning from texts is not an innocent process. It involves presuppositions and assumptions, prejudices and biases, value systems and belief systems, textual traditions and practices, world views, ideology and interests, all of which are brought to bear on new texts in attempts to construct or reconstruct meaning from them.[6] The

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4) Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice* (see note 1 above), 12.
5) William J. Frawley, *Text and Epistemology* (Norwood: Ablex, 1987), 136.
6) See Aloo Osotsi Mojola and Ernst Wendland, "Scripture Translation in the Era of Translation Studies", T. Wilt, ed., *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference* (Manchester: St Jerome), 8.

result of all of this has been for Bible translators to be much less confident and more cautious about their own understanding of the source text and their ability to communicate it to a new audience.

3. Audience response

The question of audience response was of course at the heart of Nida's theory of functional equivalence, in the sense that equivalence of function was understood to mean that the reader of a Bible translation should have the same (or an equivalent) response to the translated text as the first readers had to the original. In the functionalist school of translation associated with German scholars like Hans Vermeer and Christiane Nord this principle has been elevated to the status of the central plank in what has been termed *skopos* theory (from *skopos* in the sense of "purpose, aim, intention, function"), but with the emphasis now explicitly on appropriateness for the intended audience. Nord thus formulates the *skopos* rule as follows: "translate/ interpret/speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and in precisely the way in which they want it to function".[7]   The full implications of this approach for Bible translation are only now being worked out, notably in the work of Lourens de Vries:[8] at the very least they provide one more challenge to the 'one size fits all' mentality of functional equivalence, and incidentally may also be seen as providing a theoretical justification for the ever increasing multiplicity of modern Bible translations.

4. Linguistics and Hermeneutics

Readers of the Bible have long been used to seeing the text divided into

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7) Christiane Nord, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1997), 29 (citing Hans Vermeer).
8) For example Lourens de Vries, "Bible Translations: Forms and Functions", *The Bible Translator* 52:3 (2001), 306-319.

chapters and verses — a system of division invented for ease of reference in the 12th century (by Archbishop Stephen Langton).[9] Bible translators have also tended to treat the text sentence by sentence, without paying all that much attention to larger structural units. One of the most active areas of study in modern linguistics however is exactly the way in which larger units of discourse (larger than the sentence) are organised. In this area, known as discourse analysis or text linguistics, scholars have shown that the larger structures of discourse vary considerably from language to language, and that this fact should be taken account of in translation.

A good example of this from Bible translation concerns the chronological ordering of events in narrative text. The story of the death of John the Baptist in Mark chapter 6 is arranged in quite a complicated way, particularly in verses 16-20:

> But when Herod heard of it he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly.

The chronological order of events is actually rather different to the way in which they are presented in the text, and looks essentially as follows:

1. Herodias was the wife of Philip, Herod's brother (verse 17)
2. Herod married Herodias (verse 17b)
3. John the Baptist rebuked Herod for this (verse 18)
4. Herodias had a grudge against John (verse 19)
5. Herod ordered John's arrest (verse 17a)

Translators need to take account of such differences in structure (and also of

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9) There were of course well developed systems of text segmentation in the manuscript tradition (notably the massoretic text divisions in the Hebrew Bible, and the tradition of marking logical sense units in the New Testament); the reference here is to the particular system of chapter and verse numbering familiar to us from our printed Bibles.

matters like different patterns of argumentation in the Letters of Paul), even though in many cases they will be obliged to preserve the order of the original text. In some languages, though, it might be necessary to re-order even the verses from Mark just quoted, in order to make the sequence of events clearer to the reader.

The area of linguistics which has had most impact on modern Bible translation theory is pragmatics — the study of the complex way language functions when used in real life (as opposed to on the pages of grammar books!). A notion of particular importance here is the idea of conversational implicatures – these are essentially devices which make it possible for a speaker to communicate to a hearer more than is actually said. The conversational exchange A: I am out of petrol / B: There's a garage round the corner,[10] for example, contains the implicature that A, by walking a short distance, could solve his problem by buying petrol from the garage round the corner (and that the garage is open, that it has supplies of petrol, and so on). This kind of device is probably a universal feature of language, but the specific implicatures are closely tied to individual languages and cultures, since they depend on the shared assumptions of a speech community. Such phenomena are of direct relevance to translation, since by definition there are two speech communities involved, each with its own set of assumptions. A nice biblical example is in Matthew 26:64, where Jesus' response to the question of whether he is the Messiah is Σὺ εἶπας. It is not quite clear what the implicature is here, and modern English translations take it in different ways: NIV 'yes, it is as you say'(agreeing), but GNB 'so you say' (neutral) and CEV 'that is what *you* say!' (disagreeing?). Increasing awareness of such nuances enables Bible translators to gain a better understanding of what is going on in the biblical text and so to make more informed choices in their work.

The practical application of implicature and speech act theory to Bible translation essentially brings functional equivalence to a more sophisticated level, by refining what it means for a translation to be linguistically equivalent to

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10) Examples like this are well known through the work of H. P. Grice on the one hand, and J. L. Austin and John Searle on the other (see in general Yan Huang, *Pragmatics* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], especially Chapters 2 and 4; and for an application to biblical studies Richard S. Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* [Edinburgh & New York: T&T Clark, 2001]).

its source text. Discussion of the nature of human language itself however has the potential to subvert functional equivalence in a more radical way. The argument goes roughly like this: If language is first and foremost composed of logical propositions with a single meaning, then there are general rules for interpretation which apply to all texts, and therefore unimpeded access to the meaning intended by the author, which is identical with the single meaning of the logical propositions. Such, in essence, is the Western linguistic tradition (at least before the rise of pragmatics), and it is this kind of philosophy of language which provides the hermeneutical foundation for historical-critical interpretation of the Bible and consequently for functional equivalence in Bible translation. It is an optimistic, positive, modernist view of language, confident about our ability to discover and (re-)express the meaning of texts. Other traditions of linguistic philosophy however are much less sanguine about the logical, propositional nature of human language; they are less optimistic about access to authorial intention and to (complete) understanding of texts, and their implication for translation theory is to relativise the whole notion of equivalence.[11]

5. Implicit information

The question of how much implicit information to make explicit in a Bible translation is of a somewhat different order to the other matters considered here, but it deserves attention because of its clear practical impact on the publication of modern Bible translations. At one level it relates to the perhaps trivial issue of whether it is permissible in a translation of the Gospels to say River Jordan instead of Jordan (the justification being that most readers will associate 'Jordan' only with the modern state), or whether 'your honoured ancestor Abraham was overjoyed that he was going to experience my glorious coming'[12] is a faithful rendering of 'your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day' in John

11) These arguments are presented in more detail by Simon Crisp, "Icon of the Ineffable: An Orthodox View of Language and its Implications for Bible Translation", A. Brenner and J.W. van Henten, eds., *Bible Translation on the Threshold of the 21st Century* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

12) Literal rendering of a draft translation in one of the languages of Central Asia.

8.56. At the level of publication however the issue of the inclusion of extraneous materials (footnotes, introductions, glossaries and other readers' helps) has a long and chequered history particularly in the Bible Society movement. At the time of the founding of the BFBS in 1804 the charter of the organisation was to publish the Scriptures "without note or comment". This was more a way of maintaining fragile unity amongst representatives of different Christian denominations than a statement of theological conviction, and over the course of time was gradually transmuted into a policy to publish without *doctrinal* note or comment. Over the past few years however a much more significant shift has been taking place with the addition of a commitment to "help people interact with the Word of God" to the traditional Bible Society activities of Bible translation, publication and distribution. Will this lead to a higher degree of explicitness in the text of the translation itself, or on the contrary to more conservative translations with a more extensive range of readers' helps?

6. Literary Theory

One of the most influential developments in Bible translation over recent years is the rise of a 'literary turn', and consequently much more serious attention paid to the literary form of the text. In the functional equivalence approach, as we have seen, content was given absolute priority over form – indeed, it was clearly envisaged that the form of the message *had* to change in order to ensure that it was understood. At one level of course this is a truism (otherwise the only faithful type of translation would be an interlinear gloss), but more significantly this divorce of (language-specific) form from (universal) content lies behind the great majority of Bible translations produced over the last half century. The tide has now begun to turn however, as the impact of studies in biblical poetry, rhetorical criticism and discourse analysis is taken on board by theorists and practitioners of Bible translation. The practical effect to date, though, has often been a smaller or larger step back from more idiomatic to more literal translations. In spite of the considerable amount of work done in the field of general translation studies on techniques for preserving the literary characteristics of texts in translation, there remains much to be done if these

insights are to be integrated into the practice of Bible translation.[13]

7. Non print translation

One area where our contemporary culture does have a clear impact on Bible translation concerns the decline in reading and the effect of this on the reception of the text of Scripture. Of course primary illiteracy (the inability to read or write) remains a significant issue in many parts of the world, but in the majority of developed countries the problem is essentially one of what has been termed functional illiteracy − large numbers of people who have learned in school how to read and write, but for whom written or printed text is no longer the preferred means of accessing information. Among the challenges facing Bible translators today, then, is how to produce a faithful version of the Scriptures for listeners or viewers. In what ways does a translation for audio or video differ from a printed text? In general, a translation made to be heard will need to use simpler forms of language, shorter sentences, in order to match the information load to the way in which spoken language is processed. One specific example is the way in which discourse participants are referred to. In a printed text it is perfectly permissible to write "and he said to him", because the surrounding context makes it clear who is being referred to, and this information is easily processed by the eye. In an aural translation however it is frequently necessary to specify exactly who the participants are ("and Jesus said to the blind man"), since this information is not easily retrieved from its context by the hearer. In a translation for video, on the other hand, such information may be completely redundant (given that the participants are visible to the viewer), and the same information may need to be presented in more dramatic form, for example as straight dialogue (without any speech frame).

There is also a more general hermeneutical issue raised by non print translation. Although many Bible texts show clear signs of their origin in spoken

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13) A significant step in this direction has been taken in the development, by Ernst Wendland and Timothy Wilt, of a "literary-functional equivalence" approach to Bible translation; see especially Ernst R. Wendland, *Translating the Literature of Scripture: A Literary-Rhetorical Approach to Bible Translation* (Dallas: SIL International, 2004).

language (for instance Gospel parables, liturgical Psalms), and even written texts like Paul's letters must originally have been read aloud, the form in which the text has been transmitted to us is a written one (after all, we do call it "Holy *Scripture*"). We may be justified in asking whether the kind of adjustments needed to make the written text comprehensible to a listener (and even more so, to a viewer) do in fact fundamentally alter the nature of the text itself. This is another aspect of the basic question of faithfulness in Bible translation (what does it mean to be faithful to the original text?), and it is one which Bible translators are increasingly having to consider.

8. Conclusion

In this short paper, I have tried to give an outline of the way in which Bible translators' perception of their task has changed in recent years, and to show how changes in our understanding of language and communication have influenced our views about what constitutes faithfulness to the original text and how the translation task might look. It used to be thought that translators had to decide essentially whether to make their translation literal or free: now however they need to take into account the many different factors which we have summarised. This means that it is no longer possible to speak of only one good or faithful translation, but rather of a range of many possible translations for different audiences, functions and needs. All of this makes the task of translation more complex and challenging, but at the same time more exciting.

A Case for De-familiarizing 2 Corinthians

Philip H. Towner*

1. Introduction

Four interests or issues have converged to shape the writing of this paper. First, I am starting to work on a commentary on 2 Corinthians, so matters of exegesis, interpretation, and theology in this unique part of the Pauline corpus are always in front of me these days. Second, of course, is the fact that in the UBS or ABS, exegesis of the biblical text is never done without some consideration of the implications for translation. And in observing translations of 2 Corinthians, I ask what exegetical decisions, theological assumptions, ecclesiastical forces, and so on, have contributed to shape the finished translation. But, third, and equally important is the way in which the study of Bible translation is being enriched as it comes to be seen within the larger world of translation studies.

For me, one locus of this enrichment is the program of the Nida School for Translation Studies, based in Misano, Italy.[1] There, in an annual two-week workshop, Translation Studies scholars (specialists in literary translation, in the effects of translation on cultures, interpreting, dubbing, and so on) and Bible translation specialists engage in a rich dialogue. One of the outcomes has been an increasing awareness of translation as a force—a force exerted intentionally—for the change of culture. Bible translation can no longer simply be regarded as an activity with results in the church; it is not a neutral activity, nor is it one simplistically motivated by the desire to do good for the church. Moreover, it is not an activity that can be done without asking questions of motivation and of appropriateness of method.

Fourth, a logical outcome of this rich engagement of Bible translation with

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1) www.nidainstitute.org/TheNidaSchool/

Translation Studies has been an awareness of the ethical dimensions of translation. There are three UBS colleagues with us here today who joined me in some early explorations into the ethics of Bible translation. At this point, it is sufficient to say that the character of translation as a power activity raises all kinds of questions about the activity itself. As we will see, my interrogation of a certain type of translation of 2 Corinthians really becomes an ethical examination of a translated text and its potential to influence an audience. This will involve considering matters of accuracy, underlying exegesis, and inscribed interpretation; but above all I am concerned for the ethical consequences of the translated text, and matters of language register, prominence, paratextual elements and their function all play their parts in evaluating the translated text.

Frankly, as the interrelation of exegesis, interpretation, translation and motivation becomes clearer, it is difficult to carry out any one of these operations in isolation from the others. When one becomes aware of the tremendous potential for translation to create opportunities for greater inter- and cross-cultural understanding, let alone for helping churches to engage the Scriptures more effectively, one also has to become aware of the potential for translation to divide people and hinder understanding. In any case, several interests and issues converge to shape my reflections with you around this NT text. I am grateful for the chance to experiment with you.

The paper divides into four parts. Part A sketches the larger translation studies framework for thinking about translation method and motive. Part B provides an overview of the literary features of 2 Corinthians, and asks how a modern reader ought to read a letter not written specifically to her or him. Part C focuses on thematic and exegetical issues that govern translation of the piece of 2 Corinthians that we will observe. This is done against the background of the translation offered by the CEV. Part D evaluates aspects of the CEV translation and then offers some examples of translation strategies that seek to de-familiarize a text that has been made to be unnaturally familiar.

2. Hearing Other Voices

Translation studies and cultural studies scholars have made the case that

translation is one of the primary means by which culture, and cultural identity, may be constructed.2) As such, translation is a means of exerting power—for good or ill. My working assumption is that translation of the Bible, as it has been done through history and is done throughout the churches of the world today, is equally a culture-shaping and identity-creating activity and equally a means of exerting power with good effects and bad effects. People in control, in positions of authority, will determine what is translated for their churches and church communities. They will determine which source texts are authoritative and so should be the basis of a translation; which existing translations may serve as relay or model translations and so perpetuate a translational "shape"; which level of language should be used and so delimit the target audience's reception; which method of translation will be applied, foreignizing or domesticating, formal equivalence or functional equivalence, form-based or meaning-based, and so orientate the target audience to the authoritative source text or tame the source text to perform for the target audience's pleasure. All of these questions and options are considered, some consciously and some unconsciously, in the organizing, preparation, and execution of Bible translation projects.3) While lofty missionary agendas and intentions may outweigh everything else when and if translational motivation is considered, these features of translation just enumerated plainly reveal issues of power and therefore issues of ethics in the translation activity.

In many cases, nowadays, another complication enters the equation—that of commercial publishers. On the one hand, while all of the factors above are still in effect, the issue of motive is more easily identified as that of commercial return.4) Even if a publisher of religious books plans a Bible translation in conjunction with a Christian denomination or collaboration of essentially like-minded denominations, it will only take the project forward beyond planning to implementation if there is promise of an acceptable commercial return. But, on the other hand, all of those above-mentioned elements are still in play in this

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2) Edwin Gentzler, *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory* (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), 2.
3) See, Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 174-186.
4) Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an ethics of difference* (London/New York: Routledge), 1998.

commercially driven translation enterprise. Driven by commercial and market concerns, and financed as only commercially successful companies can manage, the potential to exert culture-shaping and identity-shaping force is likely to be all the more effective in the results it achieves—whether such results are ultimately for good or ill.

In this paper, I wish to select one element of the power panoply sketched above for examination in the context of a particular manifestation of translation power and the exegetical decisions that lie behind it. Always in my mind, when the exegetical discourse seems to get a bit heavy, are those questions of how the translation of a text exerts power (with all of the decisions and motives that lead to the translated text)—for good or ill. Moreover, I am more interested in raising awareness of the power transaction at work than I am of countering the translation specimens to be examined with corrective alternatives, though some alternatives will be offered.

Going back at least to the 1990s and the work of Lawrence Venuti in his book, *The Translator's Invisibility,*[5] the debate about the relative virtues of foreignizing translations (those which move the reader to the author/favoring source text) and domesticating translations (those which move the author to the reader/favoring target audience and language) surfaced in various contexts. Post-colonial studies, particularly as driven in and through research into the translation of non-Western texts into the commercially dominant Western markets, linked such practices to the hegemonic (domesticating and colonizing) goals of the West, and urged that translation be done in such a way that the Other (non-Western original, often indigenous) cultural voice might be heard in the West and allowed to challenge the receptor values and assumptions.[6]

I would wish to point out that this apparent duality of possible translation methods has been challenged in ways that call for greater descriptive nuance. But Eugene Nida worked with this dipolar model (formal equivalence versus dynamic or functional equivalence; form-based versus mean-based; etc.) and did

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5) Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation,* 2nd ed. (London/New York: Routledge, 2008 [1995]).

6) See Maria Tymoczko, "Post-colonial Writing and Literary Translation", Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, eds., *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), 19-40; Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler, eds., *Translation and Power* (Amherst/Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002) esp. xi-xxviii.

much by his championing of naturalizing translations in favor of the target audience to encourage current thinking about Bible translation in these simple "either/or" terms.[7]   We can debate what happens to the two options‒foreignizing and domesticating‒when they are made to occupy opposite ends of a continuum, and so seem also then to admit to various blends of the two in the middle regions that separate the extreme poles. In any case, the originator or popularizer of this apparent duality was Friedrich Schleiermacher.[8] In 1813, in a lecture titled "On the Different Methods of Translating," he effectively reduced translation methods to two. Either the translator moves the reader to the author (through a literal rendering of the source text), or the movement is reversed and the author is moved to the reader (through a naturalizing or domesticating translation)‒"there are simply no other ways of proceeding." For Schleiermacher, the superior model was the translation that moved the reader in the direction of the author. His larger goal was in this way to establish the German language as a world language, a language of scholarship, at a time when French was dominating.

Schleiermacher admitted that translations can never be fully adequate to the foreign text, but he set before the translator these two choices: A domesticating practice that would reduce the foreignness of the text by subjecting it to the receiving audience's cultural values (a translation which in Venuti's view is "fluent," masking or erasing any signs of foreignness)[9]; and a foreignizing practice which subverts the receptor culture's values (a translation which is in some senses resistant to the target language and capable of bringing the values of the original text's culture to bear on the receiving audience's cultural assumptions).

Schleiermacher intended that close adherence to the foreign text should produce in the reader of the translation a sense of its foreignness. But later translation theorists saw in this preference for the foreign voice an ethics of

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7) Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

8) Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On the Different Methods of Translating", S. Bernofsky, trans., Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader,* 2nd ed., London/New York: Routledge, 2004 (1813), 43-63.

9) Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation,* 2nd ed. (London/New York: Routledge, 2008 [1995]), 12-13, 16-17.

translation that had as its focus the value of utilizing translation as a way of giving expression to the "cultural Other".[10]   And, as indicated above, it is this ethical frame within which Venuti and many of the post-colonial specialists work. Venuti, influenced by Derrida, further stresses the violence that is unleashed in translation: "The viability of a translation is established by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which it is produced and read. This relationship points to the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation: the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs, and representations that preexist it in the translating language and culture, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation, and reception of texts".[11] Thus translation is an act of violence. For the translator it will be a question of deciding the degrees and direction of that violence in the translation task before her/him.

This particular discourse—including topics such as the options open to the translator, the unavoidability of violence in the act, the potential of translation to change culture or to suppress foreign values through fluency strategies—has many implications for the translation of Sacred Texts such as the Christian Scriptures. But we can perhaps see the more obvious of these implications by tracing one further turn in the discussion. Reacting to the simplistic nature of Schleiermacher's binary model, which Venuti seemed to have taken up, Anthony Pym responded with a critique of translation as cultural mediation in which he stressed the mediating location of the translator and also the act of translation in intercultural spaces and communities.[12] He points out that Schleiermacher intentionally excluded such communities (populated by half-breeds who belong to no culture).

What this challenge from Pym does is to complicate models of translation, at least those constructed simplistically around the duality of foreignization and domestication. This reaction has in turn had the effect of eliciting from Venuti a much more nuanced description of the foreignizing task. Venuti suggests: "to

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10) Ibid., 2008; Berman, A., "La Traduction et la letter, ou l'auberge du lontain", *Les tours de Babel: Essais sur la traduction* (Mauvezin: Trans-Eurio-Repress), 1985.
11) Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation,* 14.
12) Anthony Pym, "Schleiermacher and the Problem of *Blendlinge*", *Translation and Literature* 4 (1995), 5-30.

advocate foreignizing translation in opposition to British and American traditions of domestication is not to do away with cultural political agendas─such an advocacy is itself an agenda. The aim is rather to develop a theory and practice of translation that resists dominant values in the receiving culture so as to signify the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text".13) He draws on Philip Lewis's notion of "abusive fidelity" to extend the lines of his theory. We should notice the language of violence at play here in the term "abusive." Lewis understood that a relationship of abuse existed between a translation and the foreign text, and he resisted strategies of fluency (in rendering the foreign text) so that he could imitate in the translation features in the foreign text designed to "abuse" or "resist" dominant cultural values and assumptions in the foreign language and original setting.14) This strategy of "abusive fidelity" directs the translator's attention to experimentation with phonological, syntactical, and discursive structures in the language of translation that allows a kind of matching of the polyvalencies and plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own in the translated text.15) Schleiermacher simply wanted to evoke a sense of the foreignness in the translated text. But the experimental approach of Lewis shows a different kind of possibility as the translator works with various aspects of the translating language, not only lexicon and syntax, but registers and dialects, styles and discourses.16) Venuti calls this strategy "resistancy, "not merely because it tries to avoid the narrow kinds of fluency that have long dominated English-language translation, but because it challenges the receiving culture even as it enacts its own ethnocentric violence on the foreign text".17)

Finally, Venuti points out that a foreignizing strategy does not simply abandon fluency, or, if you like, readability. But fluency is reinvented in innovative ways. The goal of foreignizing translation is not to frustrate or impede reading, nor is it to yield a wooden, artificial translation that can be called "translationese." The goal is to create "new conditions of readability".18)

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13) Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation,*19.
14) Ibid., 18.
15) Ibid., 18-19.
16) Ibid., 18.
17) Ibid., 18.
18) Ibid., 19.

Experimenting with fluency in the way that creates a foreignizing translation (capable of criticizing the receiving culture) will require the translator to draw on resources available in the translating language with the goal of allowing the foreign text to speak to the receiving audience in ways that allow the voice of the foreign Other to be heard without being suppressed by the receiving culture's values or language.

It may be helpful to identify the orientations of some of the dualities introduced in this discussion within translation studies. On the one hand, the terms "domestication" and "foreignization" as descriptive of translation strategies are orientated to ethics and reflect ethical attitudes towards a foreign text and culture, ethical effects produced by the choice of a text for translation and by the strategy with which it is translated. On the other hand, terms like "fluency" and "resistancy" refer to discursive features of a translation strategy in relation to the reader's cognitive processing. There are other terms with other nuances that belong to this discussion broadly described by the domesticating-foreignizing duality. "De-familiarization" is another way of considering resistancy. As a strategy or translating technique/goal, it seeks to render the text in such a way that readers can read something new, hear another voice, discover possibilities in a text that, through overuse or domestication of the text, have become obscured.[19] In some ways, it is the habituation or over-familiarity of the Biblical text in communities that makes "defamiliarization" a useful concept. It is, I would argue, the danger of domesticating translations to render a text as seeming so familiar, so native to the target audience, that foreign or original voices can simply not be discerned—they are drowned out by the illusion created in the translation of utter naturalness.

This discussion, which is still underway in the world of translation studies, is the background to a question I will seek to explore within the context of 2 Corinthians: essentially, What would a de-familiarizing translation strategy yield in the case of parts of 2 Corinthians? The relevant discussion in translation studies just introduced provides a useful lens. Venuti's agenda is that foreignizing translation [in its nuanced form] allows the translator to restrain/reduce/avoid ethnocentric (i.e. target audience induced) violence in

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19) See Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories,* Rev. 2nd ed. (Clevedon; Buffalo; Toronto; Sydney: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2001), 156.

translation and thereby release rather the foreign voice to engage critically with the translated text's culture. Pym's agenda is to see in translation, whatever strategy is used, and its location in those "intercultural spaces," the potential to assist in the global task of cultural mediation and understanding (this emerges in several of Pym's works).[20] Clearly these agendas converge at some important points despite very different orientations. My own hypothesis regarding approaches to translating Sacred Texts (in our case a New Testament text in the letter genre) engages with several issues.

In the field of Biblical Studies, the application of post-colonial theory to NT and OT exegesis has yielded some interesting results. Included among the issues often raised in such studies is the question of how in the translation of the original languages into the languages of the colonial oppressors, Western values were elevated and indigenous, non-Western values suppressed. Translation matters emerge from time to time *as* translation matters, but generally translation is a function of exegesis for these practitioners, even if the results are the same.

Recently, a publication emerging from the activities of one of the SBL Groups focused on Social Sciences and Biblical Exegesis took up the topic "The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation".[21] It is interesting to see in this volume that the lead chapter is titled "Foreignizing Translation".[22] The author makes very selective use of Venuti's book, *The Translator's Invisibility*, to unveil for his readership the very duality that we discussed above, harking back simplistically to Schleiermacher. However, while the author makes strategic use of the metaphor of foreign travel, coming from Schleiermacher and repeated by Venuti, to describe the need for the translation to "send the reader abroad" (movement towards the foreign, original text, instead of vice versa), he does not seem to understand the broader program of foreignizing translation as set out by Venuti, among others, or chooses not to enlarge upon it. For Rohrbaugh foreignizing translation is that which brings to light most clearly aspects of the ancient Palestinian socio-cultural reality often obscured by modern translations. Thus a foreignizing approach to the translation of Matthew 1:18 has the potential

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20) See Pym, "Schleiermacher and the Problem of *Blendlinge*".
21) Dietmar Neufeld, ed., *The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation,* Symposium Series, 41 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008).
22) Richard. L. Rohrbaugh, "Foreignizing Translation", D. Neufeld, ed., *The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation,* Symposium Series, 41 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 11-24.

to "lead the reader back to" the original sense of the Greek term *mnesteutheseis*, translated or mistranslated in the NRSV with the modern and Western term "engaged," but really meaning something more like "contractually bound to marry".[23] While I would grant that Rohrbaugh's limited application of a foreignizing translation method does yield in this kind of interpretive instance a more satisfactory result, his intention is not so much Venuti's as it might be Schleiermacher's. In this case, foreignizing translation is a tool applied sporadically with the goal of shedding light on aspects of the Greek language and culture that need some socio-cultural clarification. Yes, the technique sends the reader "abroad" to the author, but the only goal is that of recreating the original cultural setting. This is useful for exegesis and honoring of the "author's" text, but does not intend (explicitly) any critical engagement of the receptor culture. The same is true for the rest of Rohrbaugh's examples,[24] which amount to a number of translation or exegetical problems caused by a failure to see the cultural "embeddedness" of the language of the NT Greek text.

Rohrbaugh identified his technique with the Schleiermacherian dichotomy and utilized Venuti's discussion of Schleiermacher to explain one danger in translations that over-favor the target audience's language and cultural assumptions. But in the end, his application is exegetical. He is unconcerned with translation as a power-activity or of considering it within the context of violence as Venuti does.

While my own exploration will have an exegetical component, my concern with the ethical duality of translation method (or intention), and mainly with the aims of domestication, inspires an attempt to probe the more fundamental questions related to a translation's power to affect cultural or community identity and the legitimacy of domesticating strategies to do so, particularly when domestication of the text through translation (all for the benefit of the target audience) obliterates original voices while it fabricates new ones.

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23) Richard. L. Rohrbaugh, "Foreignizing Translation", 18.
24) And those of the other contributors to the volume, excluding Sandys-Wunsch, John, "Comments from Someone Who Once Shook Hands with S. H. Hooke", D. Neufeld, ed., *The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation.* Symposium Series, 41 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 139-146.

3. Corinthians in Literary Overview

It is a widely accepted rule of New Testament studies that the letters associated with the Pauline mission grew out of the apostle's pastoral and mission activities in and with the communities of believers he established. Assuming the movements of Paul can be correlated with the historical and cultural situations of the churches and individuals he addressed, this rule goes a long way in setting the parameters for interpretation and translation of the letters. On the one hand, it is the nature of letters (at least the kind associated with Paul) to be occasional, linked specifically to a situation in history and culture, addressed specifically to some group (or groups) or individual with whom Paul wished to communicate. The letters of Paul presume, for the most part, an already existing conversation, and this is sometimes a fairly straightforward element of background, as in the case of the Thessalonian letters, and sometimes rather convoluted, as in the case of 2 Corinthians within the Corinthian correspondence. On the other hand, and following from this literary reality, anyone outside that original communication loop wanting to "hear" the letter approaches the activity as an eavesdropper. Such a one is not one of the original voices, not part of the original conversation. We are in that position. If you imagine a Pauline letter as an email, we are not in the list of recipients─not in the "to" category, not in the "cc" category, and not even in the "bcc" category─Paul did not imagine "readers" beyond "the church that is in Corinth" and "the saints in Achaia." Those in and about the church of Corinth who occupy the position of his opponents─those he eventually terms "Satan's servants"─probably fall into the category of the "cc" recipients, that is, those whom Paul wished to hear his message but whom he did not wish to address directly. He may have imagined the further copying of the letter for didactic or parenetic use among other churches in his orbit, but his imagination in this respect did not exceed his basic historical, linguistic and cultural purview. These are surely observations that help to establish certain exegetical parameters. But they are also crucial in determining the goals of translation.

2 Corinthians is no exception. But it is surely the Pauline letter with the most complicated set of historical, social and ecclesiastical elements behind it. It was most likely written in stages to the church in Corinth, and secondarily to that

wider readership in Achaia. The theme of acceptance of Paul's apostolic authority and mission in Corinth echoes in and against such issues as a Corinthian misunderstanding of Paul's travel intentions, his harsh treatment of disloyalty, his desire to engage the church in his collection for Jerusalem and the presence of a Jewish-Christian opposition in Corinth. A deep and robust theological presentation of Christian existence is the glue that holds the whole together. This is true, and we'll need to explore one element of this presentation in a moment.

But before we get to this stage, we have to acknowledge consciously the complexity of the situation and the limitations and obligations we face as translators. First, our canonical 2 Corinthians represents several literary parts (at least two, perhaps more) of a complicated conversation and relationship between the apostle and the church.[25] Second, our access to it, as already pointed out, is indirect, as eavesdroppers and even further removed than that. Third, for the most part we do not have access to one of the principal voices in the conversation—that of the main recipients, the Corinthians to whom Paul writes. We have only, or largely, Paul's word, Paul's side of the matter. And this is true in all his letters, and even more so in the case of the other NT letters. How do we do justice to the silence of this Corinthian voice? How do we acknowledge it? How do we allow it space in a translation, even if that space only serves to contribute to the translated text the ambiguity and ambivalence that silence often adds to a conversation? I am aware that for various reasons the churches of the early centuries made decisions that included Paul's one-sided letters to the growing canon of Christian Scriptures. I do not dispute these decisions, but rather seek to acknowledge that within his letters there is always the unacknowledged silence, the dance-partner, or partners, without whom the letter would not have been a letter but instead an essay. But I do not think the answer is to make any attempt to recover or reconstruct, through clever mirror-reading, letters or orally delivered messages that no longer exist. Yet within each part of 2 Corinthians there is that Other voice of the recipients—a response, a shrug, an ambivalent presence, shadows in the corner—that translation must account for,

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25) See Victor, P. Furnish, *II Corinthians,* AB 32A (Garden City; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 35-54; Margaret Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians 1—7,* ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 3-49; Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9,* Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

must allow space for, if only that the ambivalence can be registered in some way. It will be my argument that domesticating strategies, which seek to put modern readers (perhaps of all languages, but certainly in the case of the English common language translation we will briefly consider) in the place of the original recipients can only do so by obliterating that original silent voice. More on this momentarily.

Let us return to crucial matters of background that will guide us. All interpreters acknowledge that one of the major issues engaged by Paul in 2 Corinthians is the disruptive presence of a distinct opposition. There is less agreement as to the identity of this group and its relation to the less clearly defined detractors of Paul in 1 Corinthians, but we are probably safe to conclude that they were in some sense Jewish or Judaizing Christians.[26] What is crucial is to understand that from the outset Paul is in apologetic mode, giving answer to apparent charges leveled against him, in his absence, by an opposition that is present. His basic attitude towards the church and his abilities and authority to serve it are questioned. He is charged with being heavy-handed (1:24; 10:8), "tearing down" the community instead of building it up (10:8; 13:10), and criticized for his lack of effective communication skills (10:10; 11:6). They disparaged his weak or unimpressive physical presence (10:1), along with the way he compensated for this by sending fierce letters from a great distance (10:10). Paul's changes of plan were taken for a weak will and a vacillating or even capricious spirit (1:17-19; 10:2). And his way of writing was judged to be worldly and impenetrable (1:12-13). In any case, it is this criticism of his weakness that will be central to our examination of certain translation tendencies in CEV.

Certain other specifics emerge that round out the picture of contempt held for Paul by this group. Paul's insistent and sustained argument for apostolic authority in chs. 10－13 makes clear their rejection of his apostleship. They apparently regarded him as a pretender, who failed to demonstrate the signs of apostleship in the church's presence (6:8; 12:12), and who did not measure up in comparison with the Jerusalem apostles (11:5; 12:11). He lacked the requisite

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26) Cf. Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in 2 Corinthians: A Study of Religious Propaganda in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); C. K. Barrett, "Paul's Opponents in II Corinthians", *NTS* 17 (1971), 233-254.

letter of commendation to validate his credentials (3:1-3).

On a number of levels, then, in 2 Corinthians Paul can be seen as attempting to respond to charges against him that had hardened into a determined stance against his authority to lead the community. In and through the give and take, a profile of the opponents, at least from Paul's perspective, also emerges. But at this point we do not need to explore Paul's name-calling, of which the majority belongs to the latter part of the canonical letter. For the points I wish to make we need to keep several things in mind.

First, charges have been made against Paul by his opponents and the church at large is now skeptical of Paul's authority and claim to be an apostle. These charges range from his unimpressive presence, to the failure to have letters of recommendation (probably) from Jerusalem, to above all an interpretation of his sufferings by the critics as evidence of weakness which does not befit (and so invalidates a claim to be) an apostle.[27]

Second, Paul cannot sidestep these charges, he cannot avoid them, and no simple exertion of authority will make them go away. Instead, he must reorientate the Corinthians' understanding of his sufferings and weakness. He must demonstrate that these "disqualifying" marks actually, when understood in accordance with a theology of the gospel, are evidence of God's power.

Third, so Paul will drive his readers on this course that reaches a theological climax in chapters 4 and 5 in an articulation of the gospel that is surprising and that pushes the limits of our theological flexibility somewhat. But what is crucial for my considerations is the rhetorical device that Paul employs from chapter one onwards intended to implicate the Corinthians' experience of Christian existence in himself and his ministry, before the theological statements of chapter 4 and 5 are reached. The device occurs in various forms, but its goal is consistently to engage the Corinthians in a sort of dance: the "we/us" of the Pauline mission is interpreted in terms of the "you" of the Corinthian experience of the faith. The anchor is the core fact of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[28] But, neither the degree of Paul's reflection upon his sufferings nor the

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27) See also Steven J. Kraftchick, "Death in Us, Life in You: The Apostolic Medium", David M. Hay, ed., *Pauline Theology, Volume Two: 1 and 2 Corinthians,* Symposium Series, 22 (Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 175; P. Furnish Victor, *II Corinthians,* AB 32A (Garden City; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 277.

28) See also Steven J. Kraftchick, "Death in Us, Life in You: The Apostolic Medium".

frequency of appearance of this device can be found in other Pauline letters. In the next brief section, I will first set out the device in its several forms. Then, we will consider the core gospel statements towards which the device drives as Paul's argument unfolds.

4. "Death in us; Life in you": Our Sufferings, Your Comfort: the Apostle's Self-Validation and the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

When the opening section of 2 Corinthians is compared with other Pauline letters, it is clear from the start that something unusual is going on. All of the other Pauline letters (except for Galatians) begin this introductory section with a statement of Pauline thanksgiving (Ephesians does as well, though the form is different and the thanksgiving is somewhat delayed). In the case of 2 Cor 1:3-4, however, Paul shifts to a Jewish blessing form. This produces, in vv.5-7, an emphasis on the theme of "partnership" in suffering and comfort and the appearance of an unusual "compelling of partnership" phraseology. The blessing continues in vv.8-11 with Paul's allusion to his Asian trials and the frank statement of hope in God's future (or ongoing) deliverance *and* the relation of this to the Corinthians' prayers for Paul. The blessing concludes by stating that the goal of this experience of suffering and divine deliverance is the multiplication of thanksgiving to God expressed by the Corinthians—the addressees. Consequently, in this opening the "thanksgiving" statement is (1) left until the end, (2) linked to the deliverance of God in which Corinthian prayers are central, and (3) descriptive of the thanksgiving of the Corinthians, not, as typically, of Paul. The question is, what has motivated this deviation from the typical Pauline letter opening (cf. especially 1 Cor 1:4)?

If we bear in mind the apologetic nature of this section of 2 Corinthians, and the reshaping of Corinthian understanding that Paul is undertaking, I would describe Paul's motive on the basis of 1:5-6:

NRSV 2 Corinthians 1:5-6, 11
5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our

consolation is abundant through Christ.

6 If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering …

11 as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

GNT 2 Corinthians 1:5-6, 11

5 Just as we have a share in Christ's many sufferings, so also through Christ we share in God's great help.

6 If we suffer, it is for your help and salvation; if we are helped, then you too are helped and given the strength to endure with patience the same sufferings that we also endure …

11 as you help us by means of your prayers for us. So it will be that the many prayers for us will be answered, and God will bless us; and many will raise their voices to him in thanksgiving for us.

Paul's aim in this "compelling of partnership" statement, and statements like it in 2 Corinthians, is often misinterpreted as designed mainly to heal a rift that has occurred between himself and the community, by emphasizing how deeply connected Paul feels to the church. That is, these kinds of "overstatements" are thought to have been aimed at convincing the community of Paul's love and commitment for it, when its members feel strongly that Paul has slighted and embarrassed the church by his decision to cancel his visit. While these were undoubtedly goals of Paul in relation to this community, the "compelling of partnership" statements drive towards a different goal. If Paul were making negative statements about wrongdoing, this kind of argumentation would aim to implicate the addressees in the crime being described, to catch them in his logical trap, to establish their criminal involvement. "Implicating" is still the goal here, though Paul is describing not crimes, but experiences of suffering, weakness, divine salvation and thanksgiving. Bear in mind, again, Paul is giving answer to the misunderstanding (or opponent's charge) that his sufferings are proof that God is not with him, that his apostolic authority is invalid.

To explain the logic, Paul as much as says:

1. my apostolic experience of the sufferings of Christ (that is, the apostle's experience sharing in Christ's messianic sufferings which led to his death;

3:10) are accompanied by experiences of divine comfort;

2.　my sufferings, at the same time, are instrumental in your comfort and salvation;

3.　and our experience of divine comfort is also for the sake of you Corinthians and your comfort (which you experience as you patiently endure the same sufferings for the faith);

4.　finally, even the thanksgiving to God (the ultimate goal), offered because of the evidence of God's blessing, comfort, and salvation linked to Paul's ministry, will come from the Corinthians.

In short, Paul begins the letter by immediately implicating the Corinthians in the apologia he is creating to validate his apostolic ministry. Do the Corinthians necessarily pick up on this immediately, or, for that matter, accept Paul's interpretation? Probably the answer to the first question is "no"; the answer to the second is not completely known, but that is immaterial here. The foundation of Paul's argument is yet to come. But at this point, let us see how this argument of "Corinthian implication" unfolds through additional similar "compelling partnership" phraseology.

a.　In 1:14, a similar "compelling of partnership" comment occurs in the statement about eschatological boasting: "as you have already understood us in part‒ that on the day of the Lord Jesus we are your boast even as you are our boast"‒NRSV.

There is a mutuality in the eschatological benefits that accrue to Paul's apostolic ministry. Paul's use of the past tense ("as you have already known in part") implicates the Corinthians already in this partnership.

b.　1:24 is a compressed restatement of the "implicating" of the Corinthians in Paul's ministry: "I do not mean to imply that we lord it over your faith; rather, we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand firm in the faith"

In this case, Paul reiterates the statement of motivation now in the context of explaining why he chose not to return to Corinth when he had said he would. His decision was "for the Corinthians' benefit."

c.　2:1-5 is saturated with this "compelled partnership" theme.

1 So I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. 2 For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? 3 And I wrote as I did, so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice; for I am confident about all of you, that my joy would be the joy of all of you. 4 For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. 5 But if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but to some extent‒ not to exaggerate it‒ to all of you.

In this case, Paul implicates the church in the "pain" caused by the disciplinary force exercised. What Paul has felt has also been felt by the whole church (v.5). The church is implicated in the very apostolic ministry that is under scrutiny. Had this paragraph occurred without the preceding sections and "compelling partnership" strategy, it might appear as a simple statement of mutuality and sharing, underscoring closeness of relationship. But the case is actually not one of intimacy, but of repulsion, and Paul's strategy of "implicating" is designed to catch the Corinthians in his trap.

d.   2:10 shows a similar reciprocity and action on the part of Paul (like his suffering in 1:6) for the sake of the Corinthian church: "Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ."

Not only is the act of "forgiveness" here on the part of the church an implication of partnership in Paul's ministry, but Paul's own action is "for your sake in Christ."

e.   In 3:2 this peculiar implicating of the Corinthians in Paul's apostolate is seen again, now in the context of the discussion about "letters of commendation": "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all."

Paul's point here is that the proof of Paul's validation is what has happened in the lives of the Corinthian believers. They are implicated in the Pauline mission.

f.   4:12 is the most potent statement of the relationship to Paul and his ministry that the apostle is trying to convince the Cornithians of.: "So

death is at work in us, but life in you.”

In short, Paul at this point can say to the church that his sufferings (sharing in the sufferings of Christ), which are an embodiment of the death of Jesus, have worked to produce life (patterned after the resurrection of Jesus) in the salvation of the Corinithians who have come to faith. (see also 5:13).

The logic of Paul's argument, slowly but surely allowing the implications of Corinthian involvement in Paul's apostolic ministry, has unrolled in the context of several apologetic explanations in the first three chapters. But that argument finds its main orientation in, and is predicated upon, an explicit statement of the gospel, in explication of Paul's mission, which occurs in 4:5. At that point, Paul is speaking of the gospel he preaches plainly and its effects on those who receive it and on those who resist it. He is reluctant to be caught in a game of boasting (cf. 5:12), with the claims of the opponents in the background. Yet to set out his ministry, he must make bold claims such as in 4:1: “God in his mercy has given us this work to do.” So in 4:5 Paul plainly distinguishes himself from the core of the gospel message: “For we do not preach ourselves; but we preach Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.” It is, however, the second part of the statement that interests us here. The verb, to preach (κηρύσσειν) has two objects. The first, “Jesus Christ as Lord,” is indisputable. But the second, “and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake,” is disputed. Many commentators are reluctant to admit that Paul here includes the apostle's role as a part of the gospel.[29] But it is not his role, as such, but his behavior with and for the Corinthians (as alluded to in the partnership implicating statements) to which Paul refers.[30] And that “cruciform” manner of behavior is, if you will, the human embodiment of the gospel—the demonstration of Jesus' death and resurrection in the ministry of Paul, which, Paul has been arguing, is evident in the way he has given himself for the Corinthian community.

I grant that this connection requires several leaps. Allow me to sketch the logic.[31] The foundation for this thinking is chapter 5 and its development of the

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29) Cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians,* 223; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Letter to the Corinthians,* HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1973),134.

30) See also Steven J. Kraftchick, “Death in Us, Life in You: The Apostolic Medium”, 168-170.

31) I adapt ibid., 167-169.

death and resurrection of Jesus as the central gospel precept. The explicit claims of 5:18-19 and the ἵνα and ὥστε clauses of vv.15, 16, 17 and 21 provide important keys for determining Paul's understanding of the scope and meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection.

(1) God's act of reconciliation was in and through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and according to 5:20 that same reconciling activity is manifested in Paul's ministry. That is, the shape and quality of that activity of ministry are defined by those founding events, and God's appeal for reconciliation is made through Paul's ministry. Moreover, the granting by God of this ministry (to the Pauline team or to all believers, depending upon how the "us" in v.18c is read) is part of God's reconciling activity. (2) The reconciliation is cosmic in scope (5:19), which excludes elitist understandings of salvation. In this connection, the "all" of v.14b is emphatic and extended conclusively to v.14b ("therefore all"). The result is that an ontological shift of universal proportions has occurred; the death of the one means that all have died.[32]

5:15 implies that the eschatological purpose of Christ's death and resurrection is not personal gain (or a personal ticket to heaven for each one who believes); rather it is a missiological, missional purpose: "that those who live will no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died and was raised on their behalf." Consequently, the logic of Paul is thus: dying with Christ means dying to self, but living for Christ (see 4:5 "for Jesus' sake") manifests itself when one takes up the mission of Christ and lives in the service of others.

The experience of the death and resurrection of Jesus has its ultimate goal in the reconciliation of the entire world to God (v.19a). But it is in expressing this event in Jesus, and then reexpressing it in those who believe in Jesus, that the message of reconciliation executes its task.

In any case, Paul's logic, predicated on the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his association with Jesus' death (dying to self) and life (living for others), finds explicit expression in the straightforward statement of the gospel, in 4:5, which associates Jesus Christ as Lord with the "life for others" manifested in Paul. Paul's strategy, beginning in chapter 1 with the first "compelling partnership" statement, and developing in other contexts with similarly shaped and themed statements, implicates the Corinthian church in this divine mission

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32) See esp., ibid., 168.

of reconciliation. Whether they believed it—whether Paul won his argument and reshaped Corinthian thinking about weakness as a stage for the manifestation of God's power, is not entirely known. If the remaining parts of 2 Corinthians represent additional Pauline letters in a sequence of ongoing responses to the questions about him being raised in his absence, we might guess the process was a longer one than Paul hoped at the end of chapter 5. What must be seen in any case is that this language compelling partnership is not simply a plea on Paul's part, a begging, that the church please understand that all he did was for them. Rather, Paul insists, at first in veiled form, but eventually in bold theological relief, that the Cornithian experience of God (of the gifts of the Spirit, of divine power in miracles, in the give and take of Christian community discipline, in healings, in suffering persecution) is the result of Paul's ministry "in weakness." Their Christian "DNA" is Pauline; their cause is the Pauline gospel. In his weakness and sufferings, so misunderstood and maligned by his opponents as invalidating his apostolic claims, God had manifested and executed the ministry of reconciliation with its basis in the death and resurrection of Christ.

This is the argument Paul mounts, and some translations give the modern reader access to this argument—allow the voices to be heard. But some do not. In this closing section, I finally get to my translational points.

5. Translation that Hears Other Voices

5.1. Evaluating a Domesticating Translation

As I think will be apparent from my opening section, my concern is with translations designed to domesticate the translated text—to make it seem natural to the target audience, to make it seem to belong to the target audience's literary context, to make it easily accessible, and obviously relevant. In the case of translations of the Bible, often the underlying motive is evangelistic. But there are ethical issues to consider, especially if translation is properly located among the power activities that influence cultural-identity, for good or ill. There are voices that any text's author meant to be heard, voices that belong to and in fact actually constitute the original message of the text, and to silence those voices is an act of violence in some measure or other. Well-intentioned or not, such

treatment of even an ancient text like 2 Corinthians must be questioned. As I will attempt to briefly (and incompletely) demonstrate, domestication not only involves bad or questionable exegesis, it also distorts the voices in the ancient conversation inscribed in the ancient text.

At this point, it remains to offer an evaluation of a translation that reflects the limitations and abuses associated with domestication. But we must first rehearse some of the assumptions of this method of translating that are at odds with the text before us. As I explained above, 2 Corinthians is not a letter written to people in the 21st century. We are not a part of the conversation. We can only ever be eavesdroppers—this is the nature of the letter genre, especially as used by Paul. Therefore, I have to question the idealistic goal often associated with the domesticating/naturalizing program: "to produce in the ultimate receptors a response similar to that of the original receptors." Paul did not write with us in mind. Furthermore, while we might in our translations achieve something that approximates an original reponse in the case of clearly universal statements of theology or ethics, or in the case of relating historical or mythical narrative, it is not possible for us to step into the shoes of the Corithinian believers' and assume their role in the conversation Paul engages them in. All we can do is listen.

This is especially true in the kind of discourse that unfolds in 2 Cor 1—4. Paul is engaged in offering an explanation that will, if successful, reshape Corinthian understanding. He is, via letter, speaking specifically to the Corinthians, though others (e.g. believers in Achaea and eventually other Pauline churches) are invited to listen. We have not specifically been invited to listen, but the church has made this possible through its adoption of the Pauline texts as canonical—though we are very far removed from the conversation.

(1) To illustrate what I feel are the dangers of domestication, I will draw on the CEV. First, some global observations. Whatever conclusions scholars come to regarding the integrity of 2 Corinthians, a complicated literary history is evident, and structural uncertainty is the result. Yet one of the chief tasks of this type of translation is to remove the kinds of uncertainty that frustrate or even offend the impatient modern reader and raise immediately questions of relevancy that might dissuade the modern reader from attempting to engage the text. The section 6:14—7:1 presents a classic case. This is often regarded as part

of a separate letter, added to other pieces of Paul's Corinthian correspondence at some point to form our canonical 2 Corinthians.[33] My view is that, however we explain its association with the canonical letter, it is an insertion of some kind. 6:13 has Paul urging his readers to "open their hearts," and 7:2 resumes that thought in a way that suggests the intervening unified material (6:14—7:1) was inserted. While the CEV is not the only translation by any means to employ the strategy, the insertion of section headings before and after this intervening unit disguises these textual seams, smooths the bumps in the text caused by the insertion of material, and creates for the modern reader the illusion of flow and unity.

As it does so, it also removes what must have been an oratorical rest, a performance caesura or period of silence that may, as the letter was performed or read, have been the occasion for the Corinthian voice to be heard either audibly with puzzled or assenting sounds, or visibly with shrugs or gestures. But after the CEV has bridged the textual gaps, one can read without being challenged to consider the implications of such a pause.

(2) This kind of domesticating road repair is designed to give the text in translation the illusion of fluency in the target language. In translation of 2 Corinthians it is perhaps most obvious in the case just described. But it also occurs in other less obvious ways. Paul's language is richly textured, complex, and carefully measured to achieve his goals of explanation and reconceptualization. While the punctuation of the scholarly Greek texts we use aims to make "best guesses" about Paul's meter and rhythm, and so identify those places where the public reader/performer would have paused for effect or communicative emphasis, the CEV often takes its own course in this matter. Sometimes this is because English has different requirements from Greek, and so achieving any kind of naturalness will require some reorganization of the syntax and adjustment of accompanying punctuation, and so on. But sometimes nuances in the Greek text (such as paradox, irony, metaphor, word-play), and not simply punctuation, invite conceptual rests or responses or reflection, and in any case are capable of driving the reader or hearer of the text to a profound depth of pathos and emotion. Domesticating translation strategies can so flatten the rich

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33) See Hans Dieter Betz, "2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1: An Anti-Pauline Fragment?", *JBL* 92 (1973), 88-108.

original texture that the potential for apprehending pathos and emotion is all but removed, and in place of complexity and richness (as in a good wine) there is left a lowest-common-denominator text that fails to attract attention.

The CEV falls into this trap. It has selected a colloquial register aimed at readers for whom English is not a first language. It's most noticeable method is to simplify sentence structure, shorten the original Greek sentences and reorder words to comport with current American stylistic canons, and lexical choices that in some cases reflect (in my way of thinking) a rather superficial, almost gushing, simplistic descriptiveness (e.g. the juxtaposing of "terrible" and "wonderful" in 1:5 when neither of these extremes is suggested by the text). In shortening the sentences, sentence number is of course increased, which requires repetition of the pronouns for the added subjects and objects.

Although the Greek of Paul's letters belongs to what is broadly called *koine* Greek, there are various levels of register that can be reached (compare Luke, Paul, Hebrews, 1 Peter). It is ironic, to say the least, that this richly textured and complex letter, in which in 10:10 Paul refers to the claim of his opponents that "his letters are weighty and strong," should be rendered in such a register-lowering, flattening manner.

(3) In the CEV's translation of 1:3-7, the multiplication of sentences is immediately apparent. While NA27 punctutes the text to produce 4 sentences, the CEV doubles this to 8 sentences. To illustrate the effects of a less radical functional equivalence treatment, the GNT renders the text in 5 sentences. In the case of the CEV, this shortening of sentences carries with it a necessary addition of pronouns (explicitation) and the repositioning of pronouns from object to subject or relocation of pronouns to the heads of sentences. This reflects current English strategies for clarity and simplicity of communication. But some of this remodeling is also shaped by the domesticating goals and theological assumptions which of course rest on exegetical decisions.

For example the CEV translation of 1:5 can be observed in a way that pulls together several of the observations of domestication just cited. First, we can note what seems a fairly harmless move. The Greek of 1:5 is a neatly balanced "just as, so also" sentence (καθὼς . . . οὕτως . . .). By repeating the main verb, "to abound" (περισσεύειν), Paul has foregrounded the abundance of (1) "the sufferings of Christ" and in balance (2) "the comfort which is through Christ."

Reference to the recipients of these things is made by use of the first person plural accusative pronoun "us" (ἡμᾶς; referring to Paul or Paul and his team), related to the verb by preposition in the first case, and by the genitive case in the second (ἡμῶν).

How does the CEV reshape these things? By moving the pronoun to the subject position, "we," the CEV shifts the focus to the people. The thought of the "abundance" of these things expressed through the repeated verb, which is a measure of "amount," is shifted to a shared experience of things described by their quality ("we share in the terrible sufferings; we also share in the wonderful comfort"). The CEV chooses a different foreground, a different emphasis, and diminishes Paul's description of the situation, and lightens the mood considerably in a way that would be far more palatable to the "light-hearted and always optimistic" mood of materialistic America. The reorientation of the text produced by the addition of "terrible" and "wonderful" buys in too deeply to the superficial values often expressed embarrassingly by the stereotypical public-relations person or in advertisements that employ too easily the extremes of life for a culture that is already inured to actual extremes by an ease of life that is not only taken for granted but also virtually unknown in so much of the rest of the world. The CEV's translation makes Paul's message about "us," and the rest, after the prominence of "us" is settled, is either "terrible" or "wonderful"; yet Paul's translation is about "the sufferings of Christ" and "divine comfort" and how humans relate to these things.

The domesticating result smoothly gives the illusion of accessibility and relevance to the modern reader: the impression is that the reader in the 21st century is among the "we" of Paul's writing. This may satisfy the egoistic desires of a Fundamentalist assumption about the Scriptures being written for us (anywhere and at all times), but it does so at the expense of rewriting the text in a way Paul did not have in mind.

The texture is flattened and the apologetic tone (at times almost adversarial) in which Paul wrote is erased. The text is remade to sound as if Paul is simply giving an uplifting homily to encourage those facing hardship, when the actual purpose, so much clearer in the Greek and in less-domesticating translations (GNT, NRSV), is to describe and interpret Paul's suffering, and (as argued above) to implicate the Corinthians in the faith-experience (death and

resurrection) embodied by Paul. The CEV domesticating strategy may achieve that illusion of simplicity and accessibility of language, but in the process, it obliterates the actual message.

(4) Another illustration of the effects of domestication. Paul's paradoxical opening statement "compelling partnership" in 1:5-6 is similarly drastically reduced from a statement of purpose ("if we suffer . . . it is for your comfort and salvation") to a neutralized statement of hope ("we suffer in the hope that you will be comforted and saved"; CEV). In fact to read the Greek text, "hope" or even open-ended uncertainty is the farthest thing from Paul's mind. Instead, CEV supplies an interpretation of suffering as if it aims to encourage Paul. Paul's rhetorical goal is different.

(5) The same flattening result is evident in 1:14. There Paul's implicating statement looks at the Eschaton and he boldly asserts that on that day "we are your (cause of) boasting, and you are ours." CEV reconceptualizes this (presumably in a way that gets past the strangeness of Greco-Roman honor and shame categories, but completely misses Paul's point) as a day of mutual admiration, and in the process pulls the rhetorical teeth from the text, and fails to capture the "compelling partnership" intention of Paul's statement: "Then, when our Lord Jesus returns, you can be as proud of us as we are of you."

(6) The illustrations of this domesticating process could be multiplied. One final and key example may be seen in that linchpin statement in 4:5. It is a troublesome statement, as noted above. Paul seems to include his ministry to the Corinthians (or his ministry as exemplified in his behavior with the Corinthians) as a part of the gospel he proclaims: "For we do not preach ourselves; we preach Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake." The Greek text intends the following logic:

$$\text{Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον}$$
$$\text{(we)} \quad \text{κηρύσσομεν} \qquad \text{δὲ}$$
$$\text{ἑαυτοὺς δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν.}$$

This startling text is deflated by the CEV as follows: "We are not preaching about ourselves. Our message is that Jesus Christ is Lord. He also sent us to be your servants." Compare the logic this restructuring expresses:

> We are not preaching about ourselves.
> Our message is that Jesus Christ is Lord.
> He also sent us to be your servants.

Probably for exegetical reasons, the CEV diminishes the focus on the activity of proclamation (which is the only verb in the sentence) by breaking the original sentence into three short sentences. The CEV has succeeded in communicating something in straightforward and explicit form, but in the process it has failed to bring Paul's meaning to expression.

(7) I must summarize this critique at this point. First, as I have just suggested by looking at 4:5, the CEV domesticating strategy has misread a key text, the text that in fact unlocks the theme of "compelled partnership" in the early chapters. It is this theme that is central to Paul's reorientation of the Corinthian's evaluation of his suffering. Second, its choice of register and radical program of reducing discursive complexity, executed by shortening of sentences, shifting of pronouns from object to subject (refraining from passives), flattens what is originally a richly textured and highly nuanced use of language. Third, instances of excessively dramatic language make Paul into an American public relations officer, where the overuse of such effusive and extreme language has rendered it practically meaningless, even if it is typical of one broad usage of American English. These things combine to give an illusion of modern N. American teen-level English fluency to the text.

The goal is to make the modern reader of the text feel after reading that "this is written to me." Subjective or not, my sense in reading the CEV translation of 1:3-7 alone is that the domestication of the text has so flattened out the discourse, universalized it, that the reader is invited too easily to "enter" a conversation in a role he or she is not qualified to fill. The domestication fills all the spaces, removes all the rests, and in the process of deproblematizing the ancient foreign text, it has made it unnaturally familiar, excessively fluent. The puzzles Paul poses to the Corinthians—through language play and his "compelling partnership" sentences—are deconstructed by the familiarizing technique of the CEV. And a significant voice, or voices, is obliterated. One is that of Paul himself. The drastic program of this domesticating translation has either caused, or been based upon, certain exegetical errors. Paul's voice is obscured. The other voice is that silent one I referred to before. Without the rests

and stops and puzzles―when the text is rendered smooth as cream―the thought of a resisting and responding original audience is obliterated. Yet to fully appreciate and comprehend Paul's voice, the existence of that Other―even a silent Other―is crucial to understanding the drama and chaos of the Corinthian situation and ultimately the theological expression it helped to generate. This kind of translation is not a success in delivering meaning, even if it produces a text that is readable. It is also very probably a translation that breaches translation-ethical principles. In response, I would propose the need to reproblematize the text, to defamiliarize it, so as to enable modern readers to take the rightful place of eavesdroppers and to create the space for the silent Corinthian Other to be "heard."

6. De-familiarizing Strategies

Finally, in offering a few defamiliarizing moves to allow the foreign voice to be heard, I will begin with an exegetical adjustment at 4:5 upon which is based the significant theme that has been silenced. Then, I will suggest some strategies for restoring the voices of 1:3-7.

(1) 4:5 makes a theological statement about the gospel that is fundamental to an understanding of Paul's argument about his sufferings. A straightforward glossing of the Greek text is:

> For we do not preach (κηρύσσομεν) ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

The main verb expressed in the first clause remains in effect following "but" (ἀλλά), taking both "Jesus Christ" and "ourselves" as parallel objects.

> "For we do not preach ourselves
>   but
> we (preach)
>   Jesus Christ as Lord
>   and

ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake."

There is certainly some level of ambiguity built into this statement, if only in the fact that we cannot be sure how Paul meant to include "ourselves" as in some sense the object of proclamation. The CEV, discontent with this ambiguity, resolves it, as observed above, by breaking the single statement into three separate sentences and inscribing a heavy interpretation upon the final clause:

We are not preaching about ourselves.
Our message is that Jesus Christ is Lord.
He also sent us to be your servants.

This is an over-interpretation that, perhaps more than anything we have considered in 2 Corinthians, illustrates the idea of translation as violence. This text, through domestication, has been made subservient to an interpretation not readily evident in the text itself, nor particularly recommended by anything in the context. By over-translation or domestication (according to a theological norm), the ambiguity inherent in the original that might release alternative possible readings is obliterated. The foreignizing solution is to return to a translation that leaves other "readerly" options open.

(2) Turning now to 1:3-7, as argued, the CEV in flattening out the texture of the original confuses the voices of the conversation and ultimately illegitimately fills in the silence with a domesticating strategy probably intended to hyper-emphasize accessibility and relevance for its audience. To allow rediscovery of the voices that create the foreign conversation, I would defamiliarize by adding some prominence to the pronoun-participants. For example, on the likely assumption that when Paul uses the first person plural pronoun ("we"/"us") he often means "me" (note 4:5 where Paul himself broadens out the referent with the reciprocal pronoun, "ourselves"), I would suggest shifting the rhetorical "we" to "I". In opposition to the pronoun "I," I would then stress the Otherness of the plural "you" by translating "you, Corinthians." Compare, for example, the CEV rendering of 1:6 with a foreignizing defamiliarization:

CEV:

We suffer in the hope that you will be comforted and saved. And because we are comforted, you will also be comforted, as you patiently endure suffering like ours.

Defamiliarizing translation:

If *I* am afflicted, it is for the sake of the comfort and salvation of *you Corinthians*;

if *I* am comforted, it is for the sake of *your* comfort which will enable *you* to endure the same sufferings *I* suffer.

This is a quick, first-go, but you can see how I would wish to shift the focus in comparison with the domesticating approach of the CEV. (a) In this way, I aim to sharpen the focus on the original participants or voices. Only a first full reference to "you Corinthians" is needed to create this sharpness. (b) Such a translation disallows and discourages inappropriate fantasizing on the part of modern readers—it "delays" the modern reader from entering the conversation and helps clarify where authentic universal entrances may be implied by the plural pronouns (i.e. where "our," "we," and "us" possibly refer to all believers). (c) Also, this treatment of pronouns sharpens the contrast between Paul, on the one hand, and the Corinthians, on the other hand, and clarifies the adversarial atmosphere that exists, as it also heightens the surprise that comes in the "compelling partnership" statements.

(3) Drawing also on 1:6 and the treatment just offered, the importance of translation for stressing what I have called the "compelling partnership" theme emerges. The CEV translation of 1:6 removes any causality from the statement about Paul's suffering/comfort and that of the Corinthian's. But, if my exegesis is correct, and if this thematic statement is properly linked with 4:5, causality is indeed to be stressed. It will then be explicated in terms of 4:5. My concern (in serving the foreign text and the modern reader) is somehow to ensure that 1:6 is appreciated for its thematic value and that the link is made to 4:5. To this end, I offer one further, more radical, foreignizing of 1:6 to stress the surprising causality and to insist that the reader be on the look out for its later explanation:

I was afflicted *precisely* for the sake of the comfort and salvation of *you Corinthians*;

I was comforted for the sake of your comfort which will enable *you* to endure the same sufferings *I* suffer.

The assertiveness and causality also possibly allow the reader to react with puzzlement, surprise, even to object to the formula Paul suggests, but all in a way that just might create that conceptual space for the silent Other voice of the listening Corinthians to be "heard." To flatten this out as the CEV has done removes any bump in the discursive and conceptual road. Reproblematizing the text in translation forces the reader to come to terms with the objecting or wondering silence.

(4) Finally, regarding the matter of foregrounding and prominence, certain adjustments to the domesticating translation could be made to insure that the foreign stresses are recovered. In the first place, to return to the violent domestication of the CEV in 1:5, this would mean restoring the foreign choice to emphasize human beings over the sufferings of Christ and the divine comfort he gives to human beings, and the lexical shift away from superficial American extremist language ("terrible," "wonderful").

CEV:
We *share* in the *terrible* sufferings;
but also *share* in the *wonderful* comfort he gives.

An adjustment is needed to restore a non-egoistic emphasis:
Defamiliarizing translation:
Just as the sufferings of Christ abounded in my case,
so also my comfort has abounded through Christ.

This kind of translation adjusts the register to conform more closely to the Pauline gravitas, as it also repositions the divine as the orientation point in Paul's argument.

These examples are just samples of what a defamiliarizing approach in translation might yield as seen in comparison to a domesticating approach. In responding to domesticating translations with a competing foreignizing approach, it is important to stress that the goal is not to be slavishly "faithful" to the foreign text, as such, which would very likely yield a translation written in

"translationese." But the goal is to pay attention to the subtleties and the valencies of the foreign text so that in translating another kind of fluency can be achieved which resists accommodation to the values of the receiving culture and allows the values of the foreign culture and author to engage critically those of the culture and reader receiving the translated text. The goal is not to impede reading or to cause puzzlement; the goal is to open up new possibilities for the reader as the receiving culture engages with and is penetrated by foreign possibilities. In the case of the Christian Scriptures this kind of translation has to face the daunting task of challenging "readings" of the Sacred texts for which the churches down through history have all claimed ownership. While I may presume justifiably that these readings are therefore "familiar" for the communities that have owned them, produced them and perpetuated them for their traditions, this does not mean the prospect of "defamiliarization" is one that will be tolerated. This dynamic at work within the ecclesiastical universe parallels the one at work in the world of commercial production of literary translations, where those who publish establish the norms and canons of readability and acceptability. All I can do here is acknowledge that an ethical battle is being waged; the outcome is far from certain.

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Lost in Translation:

─ Revelations 2:12-17: A Case Study for Idioms in Translation ─

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1. Introduction

The appropriate translation of a particular type of «elementary lexical units», that «resist interruption and re-ordering of parts»,[1] in general called idioms, regularly causes enormous difficulties and necessitates additional exegetical efforts.

A native speaker of English knows precisely what this is, a *red tape*; and he knows perfectly well that a red tape means delay, postponement, interruption, and a huge loss of time, before some bureaucratic body will have resolved an important inquiry or a pressing application. But the same English speaker will be at odds, if confronted with a phrase like *office mould*. This expression is not introduced as an elementary lexical unit into the English vernacular, although its single components, *office* and *mould*, are each well known and defined lexical items. Yet the composite lexical unit *office mould* makes sense only in its German representation *Amtsschimmel*, in which it is a perfect translational correspondent, in fact the closest natural equivalent for the English *red tape*.

Each natural language owns an abundance of such idioms and presumably everyone exploits them frequently. New idioms are constantly added to the already established pool of jargon and phraseologies. In short, one may look at idioms «as a lexical complex which is semantically simplex.»[2] These lexically complex word clusters are also semantically by no means simple, for the meaning of this compound is not at all disclosed by stringing together the senses of each single lexical element. Therefore one cannot infer from traditional

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1) D. A. Cruse, *Lexical Semantics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), 38.
2) Ibid., 37.

lexeme based dictionaries the meaning or rather the semantical function of idioms. Not infrequently they are the main causes for the exegetical *cruces interpretum*. In modern languages special dictionaries comprising also a wide selection of idioms assist conveniently the translator.

Dictionaries of classical languages such as Latin or Greek contain, if at all, merely scarce hints for an idiomatic use of such phrases. They usually provide glosses as translational equivalents and sometimes add information for selected specific usage.[3] Yet idioms existed already in ancient languages. They also occur in the source texts of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Biblical writings. And as far as they are already identified,[4] modern Bible translators feel fit to render them dynamically in their target language.

The task before us is to employ a method by which one can identify an idiom, retrieve its original and contextual meaning, and deliver it into an appropriate receptor language expression. In this paper I shall approach the problem in a rather practical manner by demonstrating a feasible historical and philological method and testing it on a particular passage from the letter to Pergamum in the book of Revelation (2:12-17). The idiom at stake is an expression in Rev 2:17 traditionally rendered as *white stone*. The whole verse runs like this:[5]

> *To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.*

The Greek source text writes:[6]

> Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκήν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.[7]

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3) Cf. John A. L. Lee, *A History of New Testament Lexicography* (New York & elsewhere: Peter Lang, 2003), 4ff.

4) E.g. Jean-Marc Babut, *Idiomatic Expressions of the Hebrew Bible. Their Meaning and Translation through Componential Analysis* (BIBAL Diss. ser. 5), North Richland Hills; Texas: BIBAL Press, 1999.

5) New Revised Standard Version. 1993. London: Geoffrey Chapman (NRSV).

6) Eberhard & Erwin Nestle, Barbara & Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzer, (eds,), 27ᵗʰ rev. ed., 9ᵗʰ corr. imprint 2006. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft (Nestle-Aland²⁷).

This sentence concludes the letter to Pergamum. One therefore is advised to take into account foremost the close context of Rev 2:12-17, i.e. the artificial and fictional letter of the risen and ascended Lord Christ to the leader of the Christian community in the Minor-Asian city of Pergamum, one of seven such epistles to Christian leaders and their congregations in cities of Western Asia, which the Lord revealed and dictated (Rev 1:11) to his servant John (Rev 1:1).

I plan to adopt the perspective and focus of contextual semantics and semasiological investigation in place of a componential analysis of each lexical element in a complex expression that makes an idiom.[8] Other than a metaphor an idiom commonly receives its meaning and semantic purpose independently from the meaning and function of its single lexical elements and also without the help of their components. If we cannot trace the origin and the history of an idiom, we hardly have a chance to identify its meaning. A survey of as many as possible different contexts to an idiom under investigation will yield clues that ultimately guide to the perception of its semantic substance.

2. «White Pebble» (Rev 2:17)

In revelation 2:17, Christ promises that he will give a white stone to those who win the victory, and on this stone[9] will be written a new name,[10] which no

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7) There are few variants in ancient Greek manuscripts, which do not affect the translation of verse 17 in a relevant way: Cod. Sinaiticus, Clementine Vulgate, and Syriac Philoxeniana omit the first occurrence of αὐτῷ; some late Minuscles, the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea, few Vetus Latina manuscripts, Harclensis variants, Sahidic translation, and Beatus of Liébana add φαγειν after first αὐτῳ: *I will give him to eat*. Very few manuscripts, among them Cod. Sin., add before του μαννα a preposition, either απο or εκ, Cod. Weißenburg (P 024) offers instead of του μαννα: απο του ξυλου. Cod. Sin. omits the second occurrence of the phrase δωσω αὐτῳ. None of these variants interfers with the phrase of the λευκη ψηφος, the idiom under scrutiny, in a syntax or semantics altering way.

8) Cf. Jean-Marc Babut, *Idiomatic Expressions of the Hebrew Bible,* 6-10.

9) Heinrich Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT 16a)(Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1974), 66s interprets the stone as an entry ticket to heaven in analogy to the cultic festival meals of king Antiochus of Commagene: «Zu diesem Zweck konnten [!] andernorts weiße Steine mit einem Namen darauf gebraucht werden. In Kommagene wurde als Ausweis etwas anderes gebraucht, ⋯ nämlich ein goldener Kranz.»

10) Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (KEK 16)(Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1896), 251, thinks this white stone (!) with the unknown name written on it to be an amulet

one knows except the person who receives the stone.[11] The phrase «those who win the victory», in Greek the dative masculinum singular participle νικῶντι,[12] by virtue of context refers to those, who endure suffering and persecution and in spite of this privation and pain persevere faithfully with Christ and His church. The meaning of νικᾶν in this context therefore is rather *to prevail*, *to succeed*, *to triumph* [13] and implies that Christ will gain victory and triumph in the eschatological battle against Satan and all evil powers and thus all those, who staunchly endure with Christ, too.

There is an old and firm tradition in English translations, to render Rev 2:17b in such a way that the image of a white stone with a name written on it, known only by the person who receives the stone is to be taken literally as an imprinted object of stone. The interpretations still cover a wide range: amulet,[14] the tablet

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with an efficient witchcraft formula: «Der weisse Stein mit dem unbekannten Namen ist ein Amulett mit einer wirkungskräftigen Zauberformel ⋯ Wenn den Gläubigen in der zukünftigen Zeit der Stein mit dem unbekannten Namen gegeben wird, so heisst dies, dass sie Herren der zukünftigen Welt sein werden.» I regard it as highly improbable that the Biblical book of Revelation thinks, a believer would enter the world to come merely on account of a witchcraft amulet. This kind of exegetical guesswork without linguistic method and analysis of textual semantics arrives at incredible imagination.

11) Also Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT IV,4) (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr [Paul Siebeck] [= HNT 16, 3rd ed., 1970], 1926), 25, interprets this stone as an amulet: «Das Bild vom weißen Stein, mit aufgeschriebenem unbekannten Namen, führt in die weitere Sphäre des Amulett- und Namenglaubens ⋯ Durch den neuen Namen werden die ψῆφοι unüberwindliche Beschützer gegen alle dämonischen Angriffe. Der Name ist natürlich der Christi; er ist neu, wenn er in der Form bisher unbekannter, nur dem Empfänger verständlicher Zeichen und Zahlen auf dem Stein eingeschrieben ist ⋯ Namen und Zeichen bilden auch bei den Mandäern den Schutz der Seele auf ihrer Wanderung zum Ort des Lebens ⋯» Cf. also Johannes Behm, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (NTD 11), 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1949), 21; Eduard Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (NTD IV,4)(Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1965), 28; Hubert Ritt, *Offenbarung des Johannes* (NEB 21) (Würzburg: Echter, 1986), 28s. Recently this interpretation has been repeated by Heinz Giesen, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (RNT)(Regensburg: Pustet, 1997), 115s.

12) The singular is to be seen as collective in number, and the masculinum as gender-inclusive.

13) Cf. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978=91940 [11843]), 1176; Friedrich Palm, Passow II/1, 350f; Otto Bauernfeind in ThWNT IV, 941-945. —WB s.v. und Traugott Holtz, EWNT II cols. 1148-1150, fail to realize that context and register deserve due consideration when establishing meaning and significance of a word.

14) Placidus Häring, *Die Botschaft der Offenbarung des heiligen Johannes* (München: J. Pfeiffer, 1953), 69; Jürgen Roloff, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (ZBK NT 18) (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1984 [3rd ed., 2001]), 55.

of someone victorious in sports competitions,[15] an entry ticket for a festival banquet.[16]

The Greek word underlying the translation «stone» is ψῆφος. In Greek ψῆφος refers to a little stone or, more precise on the level of referential semantics, to a pebble, which can be found at river banks and sea shores.[17] Such pebbles were used for board games and as dice,[18] casting lots,[19] and also for calculations.[20]

A further and the most prominent use of ψῆφος in Ancient Greece was in the process of secret voting, either in the city assembly or, more often in court by juries. The following two classical texts show that the court juries in Athens put their voting pebbles initially into two different vessels, one for the verdict of guilty, the other one for the verdict of not guilty. It was the container (κάδισκος) then, not the colour of the pebble, that was significant for the resulting verdict.

Ἀγαμέμνων δίκας γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης θεοὶ κλυόντες ἀνδροθνῆτας Ἰλιοφθόρους	Agamemnon: Not mortal voice, but gods himself decreed revenge on Troy detested

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15) Cf. Placidus Häring, *Die Botschaft der Offenbarung des heiligen Johannes,* 69f.

16) Heinrich Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes,* 217f.

17) Cf. Theophrastos, causa plant. III.6.3; Strabo, geogr. 17.1.34; Cassius Dio Hist.; Pausanias I.4.9.6 and Naumachius Epicus: πολυψηφῖδι θαλάσσης.

18) Cf. Suetonius, Περὶ τῶν παρ' Ἕλλησι παιδίων 1.70ff: Ἐγίνετο δὲ αὕτη κυβείας οὖσα εἶδος διὰ τῶν ἐν πλινθίοις ψήφων ἐξήκοντα λευκῶν τε ἅμα καὶ μελαινῶν. Χρῆσις τοῦ παιγνίου τοῦδε παρὰ Φιλήμονι ἐν τῷ μεθύει, διαγραμμίζει, κυβεύει.

19) Phylarchus (according to Zenobius Sophista, Proverbs I.6.13) tells that the Skyths put every night, when they lay down to sleep, a pebble into their quiver, a white one, if the day was without trouble, a black one, if the day was troublesome. When they got killed in action the quiver was emptied and the pebbles were counted: if the white pebbles outnumbered the black ones, it was said, that the fallen had had a good fate. Cf. also Diogenianus Gramm., Proverbs 6.9: Λευκὴ ψῆφος: ἐπὶ τῶν εὐδαιμόνως βιούντων. and Vettius Valens Astrol., anthologia I 245.34-246.4: Παραπλησίαν δὲ ἄν τις εἰκάσειεν ταύτην τὴν ἀγωγὴν τῇ διὰ λευκῶν καὶ μελαινῶν ψήφων μαρτυρία: παίγνιον γὰρ ὁ βίος καὶ πλάνη καὶ πανήγυρις. καὶ γὰρ φιλόνεικοί τινες ἄνδρες δόλον πανοῦργον ἀλλήλοις μηχανώμενοι κινοῦντες τὰς ψήφους διὰ πολλῶν εὐθειῶν κατατίθενται εἴς τινας χώρας προμαχεῖν προκαλούμενοι.

20) The English word *calculation* derives from *calculus,* the Latin equivalent for Greek ψῆφος (cf. Ovid, metamorph. XV 44).

εἰς αἱματηρὸν τεῦχος οὐ διχορρόπως ψήφους ἔθεντο· τῷ δ᾽ ἐναντίῳ κύτει ἐλπὶς προσῄει χειρὸς οὐ πληρουμένῳ.	and cast decidedly their votes into the lethal urn, the other jug barely received a glimpse of hope. *Aeschylus, Agamemnon 813-817*
᾽Αθήνη ἐμὸν τόδ᾽ ἔργον, λοισθίαν κρῖναι δίκην· ψῆφον δ᾽ ᾽Ορέστῃ τήνδ᾽ ἐγὼ προσθή- σομαι. ... νικᾷ δ᾽ ᾽Ορέστης, κἂν ἰσόψηφος κριθῇ. ἐκβάλλεθ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα τευχέων πάλους, ὅσοις δικαστῶν τοῦτ᾽ ἐπέσταλται τέλος.	Athene: Now it's my turn to pass a crucial verdict: I place my pebble for Orest into the jug … Yet equal count of votes acquits. You jurors, who received this charge, out of the jugs now pour the votes. *Aeschylus, Eumenides 734f, 741ff*

These two passages from the trilogy *Oresty* by Aeschylus (put on stage in 458 B.C.) reflect a court procedure in the time of Pericles, mid 5th century B.C. This routine was to ensure the secrecy and unmanipulable independance of court decisions. For this reason the ballot urns were jointly covered by a κημός, a funnel-shaped top from wickerwork, allowing a juror to place the voting pebble unseen into one of the two urns, either into the condemning or into the acqitting one. But it seems that these devices were not sufficiently efficient for the purpose of keeping the vote concealed from intruding observation, be it that the movement of the upper arm or the noise of the falling pebble disclosed the verdict. A speech from the orator Lysias (450-380 B.C.), which he delivered after 403 B.C., highlights the importance and necessity of secret ballot and how this was violated by unscrupulous or anti-democratic politicians as for instance the Thirty, i.e. oligarchical tyrants, who rather oppressed than governed Athens for half a year in 404/ 403 B.C.

οἱ μὲν γὰρ τριάκοντα ἐκάθηντο ἐπὶ τῶν βάθρων, οὗ νῦν οἱ πρυτάνεις καθέζονται· δύο δὲ τράπεζαι ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν τῶν τριάκοντα ἐκείσθην· τὴν δὲ ψῆφον οὐκ εἰς καδίσκους ἀλλὰ φανερὰν ἐπὶ τὰς τραπέζας ταύτας ἔδει	The Thirty (tyrants) sat on those benches, where now the officials sit; in front of the Thirty stood two tables. And the pebbles were to be placed openly on these tables instead of in ballot boxes; the pebble for the verdict of guilty had to be placed on the table closer to the tyrants; how could there anybody be acquitted?

τίθεσθαι, τὴν μὲν καθαιροῦσαν ἐπὶ τὴν ὑστέραν, ὥστε ἐκ τίνος τρόπου ἔμελλέ τις αὐτῶν σωθήσεσθαι;	*Lysias oratio XIII,37*

Because the system of one kind of pebbles and two receiving containers under a cover did not satisfactorily guarantee the desired and required secrecy, two as regards colour different pebbles were introduced, a black one for the verdict of guilty and a white one for the verdict of not guilty. The atticist Pausanias (2nd century A.D.) quotes from a non extant comedy, named Cheirones, of the famous Kratinos (5th cent. B.C.), a contemporary of Aristophanes (445-386 B.C.), which illustrates the greed of corrupt jurors, who in addition to their legal remuneration of 3 oboles tend to accept bribes.

«ΑΙΞ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑ»: τὰ τοῦ λευκοῦ κυάμου γένη, ᾧ ἐψήφιζον καὶ ἐχειροτό-νουν. Κρατῖνος ἐν Χείρωσιν καὶ παροιμία τὸ "αἶξ οὐρανία" ὁμοία τῷ "λευκὴ ψῆφος": ὡς γὰρ ᾿Αμάλθεια τροφὸς ἦν τοῦ Διός, οὕτω καὶ ἡ τοιαύτη ψῆφος ἔτρεφε τοὺς δωροδοκοῦντας δικαστάς.	«Celestial Goat»: The seed of the white bean, with which one votes in assemblies. Kratinos comments ironically in his comedy named Cheirones: «The Celestial Goat is similar to the white ballot pebble. In the same way as the goat Amaltheia fed the baby Zeus this pebble fed the corrupt jurors.» *Pausanias Atticus (2nd cent. A.D.) Atticon onomaton synagoge Alpha.48*

Of course, the atticist Pausanias lived some 600 years later. But we can trust his reference to Kratinos. The general information that jurors were greedy we also find with Aristophanes in his famous extant comedy *The Wasps*. This means, we may safely infer that the use of white and black pebbles in arriving at court decisions began somewhere in the second half of the 5th cent. B.C.

The Athenian jurisdiction in ancient time did not know an independent professional judge. Furthermore, experience had led to the assumption that human beings are generally subject to the temptation of corruption. Therefore the Athenian court system tried to prevent dishonesty and bribery by huge juries of more than 200 members. The benches, δικαστήρια, not seldom had more than 500 members and it is mentioned that once all 6000 annually elected jurors jointly decided one single case.[21] These jurors had to listen silently to the

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21) Cf. Gerhard Thür, "Das Gerichtswesen Athens im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr", Leonhard Burckhardt and Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg, eds., *Große Prozesse im antiken Athen* (München:

speeches delivered by prosecutor, who was a private person, and by defendant, who had to defend himself without the assistance of a lawyer. Only the help of an orator, who prepared the speech, was permitted. Defendant and prosecutor were given an equal amount of time for their speeches, measured by a water-clock, κλεψ-ύδρα.[22] A speech could last about 15 to 30 minutes. Immediately after the speeches the jurors received the pebbles and cast their vote into a bronze urn. Discussion and consultation were prohibited. This also aimed at the preclusion of external influence. A second jug from wood received the unused pebble so that secrecy of vote was secured and manipulation of further cases was averted.[23] The white pebble was cast in favour of the defendant, the black one supported the case of the complainant.

Plutarchus in his biography of Alcibiades provides us with the following anecdote, which offers not only a good understanding of the unpredictability of Athenian court juries but also of the functioning of black and white pebbles.

ἐν δὲ Θουρίοις γενόμενος καὶ ἀποβὰς τῆς τριήρους, ἔκρυψεν ἑαυτὸν καὶ διέφυγε τοὺς ζητοῦντας. ἐπιγνόντος δέ τινος καὶ εἰπόντος: "οὐ πιστεύεις ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη τῇ πατρίδι;" "τὰ μὲν ἄλλ᾽" ἔφη "πάντα: περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς οὐδὲ τῇ μητρί, μήπως ἀγνοήσασα τὴν μέλαιναν ἀντὶ τῆς λευκῆς ἐπενέγκῃ ψῆφον." ὕστερον δ᾽ ἀκούσας ὅτι θάνατον αὐτοῦ κατέγνωκεν ἡ πόλις: "ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ" εἶπε "δείξω αὐτοῖς ὅτι ζῶ."	He [Alcibiades] arrived in Thurioi, disembarked the triere, hid, and escaped the bailiffs. Someone recognized him and asked him: «O Alcibiades, don't you trust your own country, do you?» «In general I do», he answered; «but concerning my very life I do not even trust my mother, for she might unwittingly cast the black pebble instead of the white one (into the ballot box).» When he later learned that the city had passed a death sentence, he said: «I will show them that I still live!»
	Plutarchus (46-122 A.D.), Alcibiades 22

Since the time of Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.) and Aeschines (389-314 B.C.) we find repeatedly the phrase «to give a pebble» with the clear meaning «to cast a vote»[24]. Another frequent meaning of the phrase διδόναι τινὶ ψῆφον is, to

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C.H.Beck, 2000), 207f.

22) Cf. Ibid., 40, 46f.

23) Ibid., 47f.

24) Aeschines, Ktesiphon 16.11: τῷ τοῦ νόμου δικαίῳ χρὴ διδόναι τὴν ψῆφον, Timarchus 77.4, 179.5; Xenophon Athenaios, hell. 7.3.2; Aristotle, Ath. pol. 55.4; Flav. Josephus, ant. 19.268; Archestratos Siculus I.15; Appianus, hist. Rom. 150.7; Aelius Aristides Rhet 46.129, 49.381: τῷ πολέμῳ τὴν ψῆφον δίδωσι; Cassius Dio, hist. 38.17.2: τὴν γὰρ σῴζουσάν σφας ψῆφον δεδωκὼς ἦν; idem, hist. 40.55.2: καὶ ὁ μὲν οὐκέτι

hand out the voting pebbles or, more often, simply, to request s.o. to make his vote.[25] The verb ψηφίζεσθαι deriving from the noun ψῆφος means «to vote». But even where the voting was done by raising the hand it was called ψηφίζεσθαι. Moreover, the judgement or a public decision was usually called ψήφισμα irrespective of method, technique, and procedure. This shows the following quotation from Aristotle.

οὕτω δίδωσιν ἐν μὲν τῇ βουλῇ τὴν ἐπι-χειροτονίαν, ἐν δὲ τῷ δικαστηρίῳ τὴν ψῆφον· ἐὰν δὲ μηδεὶς βούληται κατ-ηγορεῖν, εὐθὺς δίδωσι τὴν ψῆφον·	So he makes them vote in city council by raising hands, in court by means of the pebble; If no one wants to accuse, he makes them vote right away; *Aristoteles (384-322 B.C.)* *Constitution of the Athenians 55*

In the 4th century B.C. disc-shape bronze medals were in use for voting in Athens, as we learn from Aristotle.[26] Even these bronze tokens were called ψῆφοι. Recent excavations in Athens brought six such bronze «pebbles» to light.[27] They were fit with a little tube protruding from the centre of the disc on either side. These bronze-ψῆφοι existed in two different versions, one with a hollow tube, the other with a massive tube. The disc with the massive tube was used in place of the white pebble, i.e. voting in favour of the person accused and freeing her from the charge. The hollow tube disc replaced the black pebble in favour of the suitor. The judge took the voting disc (still called pebble!), while giving it into the bronze urn in such a way that thumb and pointing finger covered the tube and no one was able to observe, which vote he was about to cast. Yet everyone present could see, that the juror cast exactly one vote. Neither cumulation nor abstention were permitted.

[ψῆφοι δέ] εἰσιν [χ]αλκαῖ, αὐλίσκον [ἔχουσαι ἐν τῷ μέσῳ, αἱ μ]ὲ[ν] ἡμίσειαι τετρυ[πημέναι, αἱ δὲ ἡμίσειαι πλ]ήρει[ς·]	Ballot pebbles come as bronze disks with a grip on each side formed by an axis, half of these axes remain hollow, half of them are filled.

τὴν ψῆφον ἔδωκεν; Claudius Ptolemaios Mathematicus 7.4.4.1: διδόντας τῷ κατ᾿ ἐπικράτησιν πλείους ἔχοντι ψήφους οἰκοδεσποτείας; Alexander Rhet. 2.29.1; Dionys. Hal. antiqu. Rom. 6.66.4.

25) Demosthenes, or. 59.109; Aristotle, Ath. pol. 68.2; Plutarchos, Numa 7.1, Poplicola 7.5, Titus Flamininus 2.2; Dionysios Hal. antiqu. Rom. 4.12.3, 7.59.7, 7.61.5, 7.64.6; Harpocration, lex. 79; 288; Aelius Aristides 46.246.

	Aristoteles, Constitution of the Athenians 68.2

The reason for this change from real pebbles to bronze discs lay most probably in the fact that judges (at all times) tend to become corrupt[28] and to manipulate the interpretation of laws to the benefit of persons, who are willing to pay them to this purpose.[29]

For dating the change from real black and white pebbles to bronze discs two scholia to Aeschines (389-314 B.C.) may be helpful:[30]

ἐψηφίζοντο οἱ δικασταὶ διὰ λευκῆς καὶ μελαίνης ψήφου· καὶ ἦν ἡ μὲν μέλαινα ἡ καταψηφιζομένη, ἡ δὲ λευκὴ ἡ σώζουσα.	The jury voted with a white and a black pebble, the black one condemning, the white one pardoning.
τετρυπημένη δὲ ψῆφος ἦν ἡ καταδικάζουσα, πλήρης δὲ ἡ ἀπολύουσα.	The hollow pebble condemned and the filled one released.

If these scholia are correctly based on utterances of Aeschines, we are to assume that during the active time of Demosthenes' fierce foe Aeschines the bronze discs began to replace the pebbles, i.e. in the middle of the 4th century B.C. If we further take into account that the Macedonian conquest of Athens at

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26) Aristotle, Ath. pol. 68. According to Photius, Lex. Seg. 51.8.44.464.8ss: «τετρυπημένη ψῆφος: τῶν ψήφων οὐσῶν χαλκῶν καὶ αὐλίσκον ἐχουσῶν αἱ μὲν ἦσαν τετρυπημέναι ὅσαι καὶ κατεψηφίσαντο, αἱ δὲ πλήρεις ἀτρύπητοι ὅσαι ἠφίεσαν τοὺς κρινομένους.» Cf. Harpocration, lex. 288: Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν Ἀθηναίων πολιτείᾳ γράφει ταυτί "ψῆφοι δέ εἰσι χαλκαῖ, αὐλίσκον ἔχουσαι ἐν τῷ μέσῳ, αἱ μὲν ἡμίσειαι τετρυπημέναι, αἱ δὲ ἡμίσειαι πλήρεις. οἱ δὲ λαχόντες ἐπὶ τὰς ψήφους, ἐπειδὰν εἰρημένοι ὦσιν οἱ λόγοι, παραδιδόασιν ἑκάστῳ τῶν δικαστῶν β΄ ψήφους, τετρυπημένην καὶ πλήρη, φανερὰς ὁρᾶν τοῖς ἀντιδίκοις ἵνα μήτε πλήρεις μήτε πάντη τετρυπημένας λαμβάνωσιν." Pausanias, hist. I.48. 2, writes that even white beans were used in place of a voting pebble. But this may well be sharp irony. Until the discovery of the writing ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ in 1879 (now in Berlin) only these fragments were known. Ten years later another papyrus of this writing was published (London 1888/9)

27) Cf. John McKesson Camp, *The Athenian Agora. Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 1986), 107-113 with illustrations and photographs Nos. 80-86 and map 129.

28) Cf. William Tarn, *Die Kultur der hellenistischen Welt* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), 101f.

29) Luke 18:2-5 is also an example. For this context cf. Aristotle, AthPol 68 and 69.

30) Scholia in Aeschinem 1.79 (Vat. Laur).

the end of the 4th cent. B.C. saw the closing stages of autonomous and independent Athenian jurisdiction, we may deduce that the bronze discs, which were exclusively used in the city of Athens, were so for merely a few decades.

Further tools to prevent corruption were random choice generating alotting machines, so that no juror was able to choose his case, and water-clocks,[31] which measured the time allocated for the speeches in court. The time measured by *choes* of water (1 *chous* [χοῦς] roughly equivalent to an American gallon) literally «ran out» at a pace of some three minutes per gallon.

The white pebble or rather the acquitting filled bronze disc also was called σῴζουσα ψῆφος[32] and the black pebble or rather the condemning hollow bronze disc was also addressed as καταδικάζουσα ψῆφος.[33] This indicates that in court the verb σῴζειν has a specific meaning, namely the meaning of declaring someone as innocent, passing the verdict of not guilty, pardoning somebody. The Suda-lexicon adds the explanation ψῆφος μέλαινα ἡ καταδικάζουσα, λευκὴ δὲ ἡ δικαιοῦσα.[34]

Bronze voting discs, found above left in Piraeus, above right on the Agora in Athens

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31) Illustrations are to be found in Thür, "Das Gerichtswesen Athens im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr", 40.

32) Cf. Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.), De falsa legatione 66.6; Cassius Dio (150-235 A.D.), Historiae Romanae 38.17.2.

33) Cf. Lucian of Samosata.(120-180 A.D.), Phalaris 2.5.6.

34) Suda, Psi 85.2: «The black pebble is the condemning, the white one is the discharging.»

An official judgment passed in court and published could have the following very short form, reduced to the absolute necessary amount of information:

οὗτος ἀπέφυγεν παρὼν καὶ ἀπολογού-μενος· τὸ δικαστήριον ἡ στοὰ ἡ ποικίλη. τῶν ψήφων αἱ τετρυπημέναι: 100. αἱ δὲ πλήρεις: 399.	This one was summoned, was prosecuted and defended himself. Jury: Stoa Poikile. Hollow pebbles [guilty]: 100; Filled [not guilty]: 399. *Inscriptiones Graecae II² 1641 lines 25-33* *(mid-4th cent. BC)*

It is informative that according to this inscription, found on a stele with records of the Delian confederates (amphiktyones) at Athens, the plaintiff received hardly 20% of the votes possible in favour of his proposal. This was the required minimum.

Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ μεταλάβῃ τὸ πέμπτον μέρος τῶν ψήφων καὶ ἀτιμωθῇ ὁ ἐνδείξας ἐμὲ Κηφίσιος οὑτοσί, οὐκ ἔξεστιν αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τοῖν θεοῖν εἰσιέναι, ἢ ἀποθανεῖται.	For if this Cephisius, who reported me to the authorities, does not receive one fifth of the votes, he will be dishonoured and must not enter the holy shrine, or he will die. *Andokides (* 440 B.C.), De Mysteriis 33*
Μέλητον μὲν οὖν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκῶ, καὶ νῦν ἀποπέφευγα, καὶ οὐ μόνον ἀποπέφευγα, ἀλλὰ παντὶ δῆλον τοῦτό γε, ὅτι εἰ μὴ ἀνέβη Ἄνυτος καὶ Λύκων κατηγορήσον-τες ἐμοῦ, κἂν ὦφλε χιλίας δραχμάς, οὐ μεταλαβὼν τὸ πέμπτον μέρος τῶν ψήφων.	I seem to have again escaped Meletus, and not only escaped, for it is obvious for everyone that he would have to pay 1000 Drachmas for not receiving one fifth of the votes, if Anytos and Lycon had not come up to sue me. *Platon (427-347 vChr.), Apologia 36a*
ὅσοι δ' ἂν γράφωνται γραφὰς ἰδίας κατὰ τὸν νόμον, ἐάν τις μὴ ἐπεξέλθῃ ἢ ἐπεξιὼν μὴ μεταλάβῃ τὸ πέμπτον μέρος τῶν ψήφων, ἀποτεισάτω χιλίας δραχμὰς τῷ δημοσίῳ.	If the plaintiff in a private action compliant with the law does not succeed or does not receive at least one fifth of the votes in favour of his suit, he is liable to pay 1000 Drachmas to the treasury. *Demosthenes, Against Meidias 47*

Summarizing the data so far presented one realizes that the Greek lexeme ψῆφος as used from the 5th century B.C. onwards owns several lexicographical meanings, which all depart from the referential meaning. First of all ψῆφος refers to a little stone as found at river banks or on beaches and named in English *pebble*. Such an item was used for quite a few different purposes: as dice or piece in games, as movable object in calculation devices like an abacus, as gemstone, and as ballot. So the lexeme integrated these usages in its semantical functions and adopted them as meaning. Depending on context

ψῦφος means in fact dice, piece, gemstone, calculator, or vote. The handling of pebbles in court decisions became the most prominently one, and therefore the word ψῦφος eventually adopted the meaning «vote» as the most frequent and therefore as the most obvious meaning. The physical composition became unimportant, even irrelevant; important and relevant were purpose and application. This is illustrated by the following text.

Ἀνὴρ γὰρ ἰδιώτης ἐν πόλει δημοκρατου-μένη νόμῳ καὶ ψήφῳ βασιλεύει·	In a democracy essentially common man reigns by law and vote. *Aeschines, Against Ctesiphon 233*

A further detail concerning the appearance of the bronze voting disc[35] is to be mentioned, for it sheds light on the phrase καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γε-γραμμένον Rev 2:17. On the voting discs found on the Agora in Athens is engraved ΨΗΦΟΣ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑ, literally: «Public Pebble» or «pebble for casting votes and belonging to the people». A dynamic gloss may even render «National Ballot». This may have been another precaution against corrupt judges, who previously collected pebbles at river banks and now might have been tempted to forge bronze pebbles. The meaning is clear: This bronze pebble belongs to the people or to the city/state and is to be used on behalf of the city or pertaining to public affairs. Discs found in Piraeus carry single capital Greek letters. Each letter indicates a particular bench, δικαστήριον, i.e. court jury. The inscriptions on the bronze discs, that serve as ballot pebbles, name the court, where the particular type of bronze pebbles is used. This again serves as precaution against manipulation and manoeuvring. From this we must conclude that by the time of Aristotle's *Athenaion Politeia* only official tokens issued and imprinted with the sign of relevant judicial authorities were to be used in court and for each court its own proper series. In spite of the fact that these tokens were made from bronze they were denoted as «pebble» thus demonstrating that the metonymical significance and the symbolic use had become a lexicalized meaning of the Greek word ψῆφος, and that in this case the function was

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35) I wish to remind the reader that this bronce disc in Greek texts is always (without any exception!) called ψῆφος, «pebble». Only by the adjectives «pierced» (τετρυπημένη) and «massive» (πλήρης) or «not pierced» (ἀτρύπητος) it becomes clear, of which material the vote casting requisite is made of. The word ψῆφος in this context has completely acquired the meaning «ballot». In order to understand and translate Rev 2:17 this is to be kept in mind.

semantically more important than the material composition. This is indirectly indicated also by Act 26:10 in the Lucan speech of St. Paul before Agrippa:

> Act 26:10
> ... ὃ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλούς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβών, ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον, ..
> NRSV Act 26:10
> *And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death.*

Surely Luke does not imply that St. Paul used a (black) pebble for the process of passing the verdict of a death sentence against the early Christians. The phrase does not even prove that Paul was a member of an official court with this purpose. The phrase *to cast a pebble* is at his time already an idiom with the precise meaning *to cast a vote*. The character of the vote can be formal and official, but it can also be personal and private, meaning: I agreed with the death sentence and supported it by assisting in executing it. For Act 26:10 this is accepted by most modern translations.

The Greek lexeme ὄνομα not only refers to proper names but to designations of things and matter also. Therefore one is not obliged to assume a natural person being indicated in Rev 2:17. In the context of ballot pebbles the phrase ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον rather means, that it is not the people's court or the official state's court that delivers, but delivery will be solely in the name of a new court, by the court of God, where Christ is the juror and judge.

Thus ψῆφος, predominantly used in the context of politics and jurisdiction, means the pebble, by which a vote is cast; in most cases it means the vote itself, even if the vote is cast by raising hand or by small metal discs.[36] In connection with the adjective attribute λευκή («white») the noun ψῆφος refers to the absolving judgement by a jury member,[37] whereas the black pebble (μελαίνη

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36) This seems to be reflected by Julius Wellhausen, *Analyse der Offenbarung Johannis* (AGG NF IX,4)(Berlin, 1907), 6, who translates Rev 2:17b: «⋯ und ich gebe ihm eine weiße Marke ⋯»

37) Cf. Plutarchos, Alc. 22. Diogenianus, prov. 6.9.1; Claudius Aelianus, var. hist. 13.38.13; Pausanias, att. onom. syn. 48.4; Lucianus, Harm. 3.34; Vettius Valens, anth. 246.1.

ψῆφος) signifies a condemning vote at court.[38]

The phrase διδόναι ψῆφον means to cast a vote, as can be seen from the following classical texts.

Εἰ μὲν τοίνυν, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, συνέβαινεν τοῖς Ἁλιμουσίοις περὶ ἁπάντων τῶν δημοτῶν <u>διαψηφίσασθαι</u> ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, εἰκὸς ἦν καὶ εἰς ὀψὲ ψηφίζεσθαι, ἵν᾿ ἀπηλλαγμένοι ἦσαν ποιήσαντες τὰ ὑμῖν ἐψηφισμένα. εἰ δὲ πλείους ἢ εἴκοσιν ὑπόλοιποι ἦσαν τῶν δημοτῶν, περὶ ὧν ἔδει τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ <u>διαψηφίσασθαι</u>, καὶ ὁμοίως ἦν ἀνάγκη συλλέγεσθαι τοὺς δημότας, τί ποτ᾿ ἦν τὸ δυσχερὲς Εὐβουλίδῃ ἀναβαλέσθαι εἰς τὴν ὑστεραίαν καὶ περὶ ἐμοῦ πρώτου <u>τὴν ψῆφον διδόναι</u> τοῖς δημόταις; διότι, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, οὐκ ἠγνόει Εὐβουλίδης ὅτι, εἰ λόγος ἀποδοθήσοιτο καὶ παραγένοιντό μοι πάντες οἱ δημόται καὶ <u>ἡ ψῆφος δικαίως δοθείη</u>, οὐδαμοῦ γενήσονται οἱ μετὰ τούτου συνεστηκότες.	Now, men of the jury, if the Halimusians had been deciding on that day the status of all the members of the deme, it would have been reasonable for them to continue <u>voting</u> until late, in order that they might have fulfilled the requirements of your <u>decree</u> before departing to their homes. But, seeing that there were more than twenty of the demesmen left regarding whom <u>they had to vote</u> on the following day, and that the members of the deme had in any case to be convened again, what difficulty was there for Eubulides to order an adjournment until the morrow, and then let the demesmen <u>vote</u> on my case first? The reason was, men of the jury, that Eubulides knew very well that, if an opportunity of speaking should be granted to me and if all the men of the deme should be present to support me and <u>the ballots honestly given out</u>, those who had leaged themselves with him would be nowhere! *Demosthenes (384‑322 B.C.), Eubulides 57,15f*
Χρὴ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τὸ αὐτὸ φθέγγεσθαι τὸν ῥήτορα καὶ τὸν νόμον· ὅταν δὲ ἑτέραν μὲν φωνὴν ἀφιῇ ὁ νόμος, ἑτέραν δὲ ὁ ῥήτωρ, <u>τῷ τοῦ νόμου δικαίῳ χρὴ διδόναι τὴν ψῆφον</u>, οὐ τῇ τοῦ λέγοντος ἀναισχυντίᾳ.	Citizens of Athens, speaker and law must be in agreement; if law and speaker sound different, <u>one needs to vote for the just cause of the law</u> and not for the impertinence of the speaker. *Aeschines (389‑314 B.C.), Ctesiphon 16*
ὅσα μὲν γὰρ περὶ τῶν τότε	For what he understood about what had

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38) Cf. Plutarchos, Alcibiad. 22, where it is said of Alcibiades that he answered to the question «Don't you trust your fatherland?»: «As far as my life is concerned, I do not even trust my mother, that she may not by accident cast the black pebble instead of the white one into the ballot box.» The same story we find in Claudius Aelianus Sophistes, variae historiae 13.38. Plutarchos tells this story again in apophthegmata 186. E.8‑10. Cf. also Eutecnius, alexipharmaca 17.25: τοῦ θανάτου παραιτησάμενον τὴν μέλαιναν ψῆφον

γενομένων ἐφρόνησε, πάντας εἰδέναι ἔφη τὴν γὰρ σώζουσάν σφας ψῆφον δεδωκὼς ἦν, οὐ μὴν καὶ προσήκειν ἐπὶ τοῖς παρεληλυθόσι τοιοῦτόν τινα νόμον συγγράφεσθαι.	happened then, was, that all knew, he said, that he had been giving his affirming vote, and that it was not at all appropriate for those present, to pass any such bill. *Dio Cassius (150-235 A.D.), Rom. Hist. 38:17,2*

Occasionally ψῆφον διδόναι even means «to express an opinion about someone».[39] But the phrase διδόναι ψῆφον means also *to give someone the voting pebble,* in order to make him vote on an issue or to make him pass a verdict on a person. This may be deduced from the following texts.

οὕτω δίδωσιν ἐν μὲν τῇ βουλῇ τὴν ἐπι-χειροτονίαν, ἐν δὲ τῷ δικαστηρίῳ τὴν ψῆφον· ἐὰν δὲ μηδεὶς βούληται κατ-ηγορεῖν, εὐθὺς δίδωσι τὴν ψῆφον·	So he makes them vote in city council by raising hands, in court by means of the pebble; If no one wants to accuse, he makes them vote right away; *Aristoteles (384-322 B.C.) Constitution of the Athenians 55*
Κλαύδιος δέ, ἐπείπερ εἰς τὸ Παλάτιον ἀφικνεῖται συναγαγὼν τοὺς ἑταίρους ψῆφον ἀνεδίδου περὶ Χαιρέου. τοῖς δὲ τὸ μὲν ἔργον λαμπρὸν ἐδόκει, ἀπιστίαν δ' ἐπεκάλουν τῷ πεπραχότι καὶ αὐτῷ τιμωρίαν ἐπιβάλλειν δίκαιον ἡγοῦντο ἐπ' ἀποτροπῇ τοῦ μέλλοντος χρόνου. ἀπήγετο οὖν τὴν ἐπὶ θανάτῳ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ Λοῦππός τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων πλείους.	When Claudius arrived in the Palace, he gathered his counsellors and made them judge Chaerea. Although they approved of the deed [the murder of Caligula], they accused the culprit of high treason and punished him and Luppus and even more Romans with death, a just punishment as a deterrent for the future. *Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 19:268f*
καὶ γενομένης αὐτῷ σιωπῆς, εἶπεν ὅτι τοῖς μὲν υἱοῖς αὐτὸς ἀποχρῶν ἦν δικαστής, περὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων τοῖς πολίταις ἐλευθέροις οὖσι ψῆφον δίδωσι· λεγέτω δ' ὁ βουλόμενος καὶ πειθέτω τὸν δῆμον. οὐκέτι μέντοι λόγων ἐδέησεν, ἀλλὰ τῆς ψήφου δοθείσης, πάσαις ἁλόντες ἐπελεκίσθησαν.	[Brutus] returned and said, after they had calmed down, to judge his own sons he was right, but concerning the others he was to leave the judgment with the free citizens.Whoever wishes to speak may do so and convince the people. Since there was, however, no need for speeches, the verdict was passed and those were condemned unanimously and then

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39) Cf. Aelius Aristides (2nd AD), Plato's Rhetoric 115.11: ἐξαιρεῖται δὲ ἡμᾶς αἰτίας καὶ ὁ πάντα ἄριστος Ἀσκληπιὸς, ψῆφον οὐκ ἄτιμον οὐδὲ αὐτὸς διδοὺς, τὰ μὲν ἐν μέτροις, τὰ δὲ οὑτωσὶ πεζῇ.

	executed with axes.
	Plutarchus (46-120 A.D.), Publicola 7:5-6

Thus we learn that the phrase διδόναι ψῆφον means *to vote* as well as *to have someone vote*. From the passage of Demosthenes' speech against Eubulides (oratio 57,15f) we may infer that this usage is not necessarily exclusive, but rather in form of the figure of speech of an antanaclasis, in one sentence in both functions. The way Josephus and Plutarchus employ the phrase, shows that it is clearly detached from the real procedure, for in Rome never a pebble was used in voting, but a table, *tabella*. A *tabella* was utilized in the Roman comitia for electing magistrates. In this case the citizen wrote the name of the candidate, whom he wished to vote for, on the table. Tables were also needed for passing bills. If the citizen wished to support the proposed bill, he took the table with the inscription *U. R.* (*uti rogas* = as you suggest); if he wished to reject the proposal, he took the table with the inscription *A.* (*antiquo* = leave it as it was).[40] In court each juror received three *tabellae*: one with the inscription *A.* (*absolvo* = I acquit), one with the inscription *C.* (*condemno* = I condemn), and the third one with the inscription *N. L.* (*non liquet* = no decision). In Athenian courts the third possibility, no decision, did not exist.

The idiom of the pebble even was used by Roman authors of the first and second centuries A.D. and thus entered the literary Latin culture,[41] although the Romans never at all did use *calculi*, the Latin equivalent for ψῆφοι, or *lapilli*, i.e. little stones, but wooden *tabellae*. And their courts functioned quite different from the Athenian δικαστήρια.

Mos erat antiquus niveis atrisque lapillis, / His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa; / Tunc quoque sic lata est sententia tristis, et omnis / Calculus inmitem demittitur ater in urnam. / Quae simul effudit numerandos versa lapillos, / Omnibus e nigro color est mutatus in album, / Candidaque Herculeo sententia numine facta / Solvit Alemoniden.	From of old there was the custom to condemn the defendant with black stones and to free him from guilt with white ones; so was passed the sad sentence now, and each pebble cast into the urn was black. As it was emptied, in order to count the stones, all changed their colour from black to white. Thus by Herculs' providence the white sentence acquitted the son of Alemon.

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40) Cf. Cicero, In Pis. 3; 96; Phil. 11:19.
41) Ovid, Metamorphoses XV,41-48; Pliny the Younger, Letters I,2; VI,11.

	Publius Ovidius Naso (43 B.C. – A.D. 17) *Metamorphoses XV 41-48*
Nec est, quod putes me sub hac exceptione veniam postulare. Immo, quo magis intendam limam tuam, confitebor et ipsum me et contubernales ab editione non ahorrere, si modo tu fortasse errori nostro album calculum adieceris.	I would not have you imagine that I am bespeaking your indulgence, by filing this counter-plea: on the contrary, to induce you to exercise the utmost severity of your criticism, I will confess, that neither my familiars nor myself are averse to the publication of this piece if you should give your vote in favour of what may be pure error on my part. *Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus Minor* *(62-114 A.D.) Epistulae I,2*
O diem (repetam enim) laetum notandumque mihi candidissimo calculo!	It was a day (I cannot but repeat it again) of exquisite happiness, which I shall ever distinguish with the fairest mark. *Plinius Minor, Epistulae VI,11*

We also find the idiomatic use of ψῆφος in theological texts:

εἰ γὰρ βουληθείη ὁ θεὸς δικάσαι τῷ θνητῷ γένει χωρὶς ἐλέου, τὴν καταδικάζουσαν ψῆφον οἴσει μηδενὸς ἀνθρώπων τὸν ἀπὸ γενέσεως ἄχρι τελευτῆς βίον ἄπταιστον ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ δραμόντος, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἑκουσίοις, τὸ δὲ ἀκουσίοις χρησαμένου τοῖς ἐν ποσὶν ὀλισθήμασιν.	If God wanted to judge the mortal breed devoid of pity, he would pass the verdict of damnation, since no human being lives from birth till death without failing, but freely as well as reluctantly commits transgressions. *Philo of Alexandria (1ˢᵗ cent. A.D.), Quod Deus sit immutabilis 75*
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ τῶν ἐν ψυχῇ ταμιευομένων ἐπίσκοπος ἰδών, ᾧ κατιδεῖν ἔξεστι μόνῳ, τὰ ἀθέατα γενέσει, τὴν καταδικάζουσαν ἀπὸ τούτων ψῆφον ἤνεγκε, μάρτυς ἀψευδέστατος ὁμοῦ καὶ κριτὴς ἀδέκαστος ὁ αὐτὸς ὤν:	Since the guard of all, that is buried in the soul, saw, what only he is able to see and which is concealed from mankind, he passed the verdict of damnation, for he himself is the most truthful witness and the most incorruptible prosecutor. *Philo., De migratione Abrahami 115*

ἀπαραλόγιστος γὰρ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ψῆφος εἰς τὸ δικαιότατον κρίμα.	God's verdict of damnation is not at all unreasonable. *Clement of Alexandria (2ⁿᵈ cent. A.D.), Stromateis 7.3.20*

One may be amazed to finally learn that even today, in contemporary Modern

Greek language the word ψῆφος is used with this meaning. In the Greek-German dictionary by Mandeson[42] the following meanings are presented for the word ψῆφος:

> *Voice, Vote, Pebble, little Stone, Sphere for Voting, Right to Vote, Voting System.*

Mandeson also notes specific uses:

> *δίδω ψῆφον λευκὴν* = to give a white ball or to vote
> *δίδω ψῆφον μαύρην* = to give a black ball or to deny the vote (i.e. to vote against)

Although the word for the colour black has changed in Modern Greek, the idiom is retained with the adjective μαύρη instead of μελαίνη.

It is startling then that of the translations into the three Modern Greek vernaculars, Katharevusa (καθαρέυουσα), Neoelliniki (νεοελληνική), and Dimotiki (δημοτική) only the Katarevusa version, which is very close to ancient Koine-Greek as used in Septuagint and Greek New Testament retains the idiom.

῾Ο ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκήν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων. (Koine)[43]

῞Οστις ἔχει ὠτίον ἃς ἀκούσῃ τί λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα πρὸς τὰς ἐκκλησίας. Εἰς τὸν νικῶντα θέλω δώσει εἰς αὐτὸν νὰ φάγῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ θέλω δώσει εἰς αὐτὸν ψῆφον λευκὴν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα νέον γεγραμμένον, τὸ ὁποῖον οὐδεὶς γνωρίζει εἰμὴ ὁ λαμβάνων. (Katharevusa)[44]

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42) Mandeson, Συγχρονο Ελληνογερμανικο Λεξικο. Athenai, 1469.
43) Nestle-Aland, 27th ed., 9th corr. imprint 2006.
44) ῾Η καινὴ διαθήκη τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ᾿Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Τὸ θεῖον ἀρχετύπικον καὶ ἡ μετάφρασις αὐτοῦ, ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου κληρικοῦ καὶ καθηγητοῦ τοῦ ᾿Εθνικοῦ Πανεπιστημίου, αειμνήστου Νεοφύτου Βαμβα (The New Testament in Ancient and Modern Greek. Printed for the Gideons International by United Bible Societies.

"...Ἐκεῖνος ποὺ ἔχει αὐτιά, ἄς ἀκούσῃ τί λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα εἰς τὰς ἐκκλησίας. Εἰς ἐκεῖνον ποὺ νικᾷ θὰ τοῦ δώσω ἀπὸ τὸ μάννα τὸ κρυμμένον· θὰ τοῦ δώσω καὶ πέτραν λευκὴν καὶ εἰς τὴν πέτραν θὰ εἶναι γραμμένον ἕνα καινούργιο ὄνομα, ποὺ δὲν ξέρει κανεὶς παρὰ ἐκεινος ποὺ τὸ παίρνει." (Neoelliniki)[45]"

Ὅποιος ἔχει αυτιά ας ακούσει τι λέει το Πνεύμα στις εκκλησίες. Ὅποιος νικήσει, θα του δώσω από το κρυμμένο μάννα. Θα του δώσω και μια άσπρη ψηφίδα, μ᾽ ένα καινούριο όνομα γραμμένο πάνω της, που δε θα το ξέρει κανένας άλλος εκτός απ᾽ αυτόν που θα την πάρει". (Dimotiki)[46]

It may well be that this is owed to the strong view held by Philologists of the 19th and 20th centuries, which claims that Attic and Koine Greek are so different that Septuagint and New Testament must not be read and interpreted in the light of Classical Greek. This is certainly an important and weightful argument. Yet my claim here is not, to interpret Koine texts in general on the basis of the Classical lexicon and grammar, but to realize that the idiom of the white pebble survived the historical changes of the Greek language until today and that it therefore might be advisable to use the data extant from Classical sources, in order to recover the intended meaning of Rev 2:17. The famous Greek Philologist and Harvard scholar Herbert Weir Smyth writes in the introduction to his Greek Grammar:[47]

In its spoken form the Koinè consisted of the spoken form of Attic intermingled with a considerable number of Ionic words and some loans from other dialects, but with Attic orthography. The literary form, a compromise between Attic literary usage and the spoken language, was an artificial and almost stationary idiom from which the living speech drew farther and farther apart. ··· Some writers distinguish, as a form of the Koinè, the Hellenistic, a name restricted by them to the language of the

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45) Ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη. Τὸ πρωτότυπον κείμενον μὲ νεοελληνικὴν μετάφρασιν. Ἑλληνικὴ Βιβλικὴ Ἑταιρία [The New Testament in Modern Greek (Ancient text with Modern Greek translation) Greek Bible Society] Athens 1967.

46) Η καινὴ διαθήκη. Το πρωτότυπο κείμενο με μετάφραση στη δημοτική. Ἑλληνικὴ Βιβλικὴ Ἑταιρία. (The New Testament in Today's Greek Version United Bible Societies 1989) Athens 1997.

47) Smyth, Grammar p. 4A.

New Testament and of the Septuagint ⋯ The New Testament is composed in the popular language of the time, which in that work is more or less influenced by classical models. No accurate distinction can be drawn between the Koinè and Hellenistic.

The language of the New Testament is according to Friedrich Rehkopf neither literary nor classical Greek.[48] But then again it is to be underlined that phrases from socio-linguistic areas like the medical or the forensic registers, that concern and influence strongly every-day life of citizens and provincials in the Roman empire and the Hellenistic world, more likely than not exported their specific terms into the ordinary common Greek. Therefore the hint at general differences between Attic and Koine, between literary and non-literary vernacular does not really concern these linguistic areas and consequently is neither convincing nor persuasive.

Against the background of the idiomatic use of the word pebble in Greek courts and here in the NT we may now understand, what Christ is promising to those who remain faithful to him in spite of persecution and suffering: He will cast for them the vote of acquittal. Of course, in the light of the Oresty as written by Aischylos we remember: It was the goddess Athena, who cast the pebble in favour of Orest, causing an equal vote of pebbles for condemnation and acquittal and thus acquitting him from the charge put forward by the Eumenids, the dark spirits of revenge. In order to make up for the murder of his father Agamemnon by his mother Klytaimnestra, Orest had killed his mother Klytemnaistra following orders of the god Apoll. Knowing this Greek myth and taking into account that ψῆφος usually means «vote» we must not repeat anymore the opinion, that the white pebble in Rev 2:17 serves as an amulet or as a sign of victorious faith or as an entrtry ticket to the heavenly banquet.[49]

Before I bring my survey to a close, I want to look at the final part of Rev

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48) Blass - Debrunner - Rehkopf, p. 3.
49) Vgl. Zahn 276ff. The only interpretation, which comes close to my proposal, I read in a homily never held but created as a literary genre and device and published in 1862 by Siegmund Henrici: «Neben diesem Manna aber - hält Jesus der siegenden Christenseele vor - einen weißen Stein. ⋯ Die Anerkennung des Ueberwinders, als eines Reinen, Gerechten, und eines des Ehrenlohnes würdigen Siegers. Im Alterthume, da war es nämlich bei den Gerichten Sitte, dem, der im Gerichte als unschuldig und gerecht befunden wurde, einen „weißen Stein" einzuhändigen.»

2:17.

<div align="center">

··· ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων ···

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Normally this phrase is understood in such a way that the Christian, who proudly and victoriously prevails in faith, will receive the pebble from Christ. But in light of forensic register and court language we ought to interpret the meaning and function of this last part in a different way, too. Ancient Greek texts simultaneous with the book of Revelation demonstrate that the phrase ψῆφον λαμβάνειν means *receiving the pebble, in order to cast a vote*. The recipients are citizens or jurors, who use it for decision or judgment. *Receiving the pebble* thus is synonymous with *to pass a verdict* or *to cast a vote*, respectively.

ἐκ τούτου χαλεπῶς διακειμένους τοὺς Ἀθηναίους πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπειρᾶτο παρηγορεῖν καὶ ἀναθαρρύνειν. οὐ μὴν παρέλυσε τῆς ὀργῆς οὐδὲ μετέπεισε πρότερον, ἢ τὰς ψήφους λαβόντας ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν εἰς τὰς χεῖρας καὶ γενομένους κυρίους ἀφελέσθαι τὴν στρατηγίαν καὶ ζημιῶσαι χρήμασιν, ὧν ἀριθμὸν οἱ τὸν ἐλάχιστον πεντεκαίδεκα τάλαντα.	Although Pericles tried to comfort and to encourage the Athenians, he did not succeed to calm their fury and to change their mind, until they could vote against him, dispose him of his office as commander and charge him with a ransom of at least 15 talents gold. *Plutarchus, Pericles 35.4*
Ἅμα δ᾽ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ψήφου δοθείσης, ἥ τε πρώτη φυλὴ τὸν θρίαμβον ἀπεψηφίζετο, ... ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε λαβὼν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον.	When at dawn the vote was taken, the first detachment rejected the triumph … but now go and make them vote; *Plutarchus, Aemilius 31.1*
ΚΛΩΘΩ: Παῦσαι ἀπειλῶν, ἀλλὰ ἔμβηθι· καιρὸς ἤδη σε ἀπαντᾶν ἐπὶ τὸ δικαστήριον. ΜΕΓΑΠΕΝΘΗΣ: Καὶ τίς ἀξιώσει κατ᾽ ἀνδρὸς τυράννου ψῆφον λαβεῖν;	Klotho: Cut the threats and step in; the time has come for you to appear in court. Megapenthes: And who dares to pass a verdict against the sovereign? *Lucian, Cataplus 13*

The sentence Rev 2:17b contains therefore three distinct parts with three

different acts in three diverse expressions, but to one end:

1. καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκήν,
2. καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον
3. ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων

Each of these expressions forms an idiomatic metaphor with these meanings:

1. And I will acquit him
2. in the name of a new authority,
3. which only he knows, who passes the verdict.

The three idiomatic expressions are stringed together to build one composite, bold, hybrid metaphor. All three parts of this composite metaphor have the same logical subject: It is Christ, who acquits the faithfully enduring believer; it is Christ's authority, by which this believer is acquitted; it is uniquely Christ, who knows this new authority. The qualifying adjective *new* indicates that this authority is different from the authority, that put Antipas to death. And the implied information is of course that this new authority does not put to death but grants life.

4. Translational Proposal for Rev 2:17

As translation for Rev 2:17 I propose the following rendering:

I will provide everyone, who proudly prevails, with manna stored in heaven, and I will acquit him in the name of a new authority, which no one knows except he, who passes the verdict.

Since the author of this paper is not a native speaker of English, the proposed translation can only be a tentative proposal, a suggestion, that hopefully will stimulate better and more idiomatically appropriate translations. If this presentation and proposal sufficiently demonstrated the inappropriateness of most traditional formal correspondent, so called literal translations, its purpose is

achieved. If not it may well come to pass that meaning, significance, and valueof the Biblical message linger lost in translation.

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Singing a Foreign Song at Home:
Analogy from Psalm 137

Anastasia Boniface-Malle*

1. Introduction

Conventional settings make people at ease even with situations that often contradict realities in which people find themselves. Conventionality can be imposed by culture or by religious values that are instilled through the teachings and practices of religious orientation. Religion is fundamentally pertinent in this discussion especially with reference to Africa. Africans are inherently religious. John Pobee delineates the elements of African culture, experience, and history that make African ness. "First, *homo Africanus homo religiosus radicaliter* and, thus, had a religious and spiritual epistemology and ontology.[1] In other words, although those religious values may contradict the cultural norms of a given particular people, it is astounding to see that often religious norms supersede cultural norms, at least from the external perspective. Albeit, deep inside (at least from the Africa point of view) Christians continue to carry their cultural values and practice them surreptitiously. In fact culture and religion didn't have a clear demarcation in the African world view. However with the coming of Christianity, Africans were told to separate the two, which in practice was not viable. Hence, whenever the two aspects clash in practice, Christians are labeled as "syncretistic."

This religiosity from the "surface" cannot be blamed totally on African Christianity. Rather, those who brought the Gospel in many parts of the continent did not regard African religion and culture as important aspects in evangelization. In fact African culture was considered barbaric and a hindrance to Christianity. Anyone who chose to espouse Christianity was expected to

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1) John S. Pobee, "Bible Study in Africa: A Passover of Language", *Semeia* 73: (1996), 166.

abandon African culture and practices. Failure to discard those inherent values was seen as a sign of unbelief. Furthermore, because Christianity came with what was termed as "modernization," it was believed that anyone who embraced Christianity cannot continue to live in the so called "uncivilized" way. Christianity and modernity were not clearly separated. To put it in plain language, Christianity embodied Western culture and values which were regarded as essential parts of Christianity.

The lack of clear extrication between Christianity and Western values brought disconnection or what this writer calls in this paper as "displacement or spiritual exile." In other words, African Christians are often "exiled" while living in their own land. Spiritual exile can be equally deadly as the physical one. In fact, from the world view of an African, which is inherently the same as that of the OT, one cannot separate spiritual from the physical. The Jewish exiles were not harassed physically, but the spiritual torment excruciated them. They were away from the land of Promise (which was God's gift), they had no kingship (Yahweh's representative on earth), and they had no Temple (worship was never complete without sacrifices). The lack of these three cultic institutions became a cause for lament. In a way, Israel suffered more spiritual torture than physical suffering in exile. That is why when Babylonians asked them to sing one of the Songs of Zion, they were angry for such abhorrent mockery. Instead, they reversed their request by singing a lament song, which evidently didn't require a use of harp. They had to hang their harps on the willows, sending a clear signal to the Babylonians that they "just have had it!" Jewish exiles didn't get their swords to fight their scorners, nor did they resort to resentful quietism. Instead, they expressed their anger in a peaceful protest in two ways: they sang a lament and imprecatory song and by abandoning instruments used in praise of Yahweh and Zion, the holy city. They did not keep them inside their houses; rather they hang them in the willows for all to see that Jewish exiles will not sing the happy songs in exile. It was a non-violent rebellion.

1.1. African Christianity and Spiritual Exile

When an African is dismantled from being an African and a Christian, then that person is not free because he/she lacks internal coherence and unity. That

implies cultural and religious enslavement. In other words, it is a spiritual dislocation where a person cannot sing an appropriate song for the given situation. Africans who have come to such realization would ask the same question as the Psalmist in Psalm 137, but rather succinctly, "how can one sing the Lord's song at home?" Is this "home" (Christian church) a place where one feels he/she belongs? Often our churches are foreign to the people and continue to be so as long as Christian faith does not embody what is inherently African**.**

1.2. How can we sing the Lord's Song At Home? Paradox in African Christianity

In order to appropriately respond to this question, we need to look at various aspects in the African Christianity. Firstly, Christianity as has been mentioned above came to Africa already pre-packaged. Africans were not expected to dismantle that package to choose what fits them. It was also expected that one package would fit all. Secondly, Christianity came to Africa together with or in some parts, side by side with colonialism. Christianity and the Bible were intended "to free Africans" from physical and spiritual enslavement. On the surface, however, the Bible and Christian religion were used to justify western superiority; that is, dominance over economic and political spheres, as well culture and religion. Africans were enslaved from all angles. Thirdly, even when Africans assumed theological training, they continued and still continue carrying the same "mantle." Theological books are mostly written by western scholars thus producing leaders and educators who not only impersonate their masters but became people who continue to embody and enhance western world view, however misrepresented or distorted that perspective might be.

Since our first encounter with the West over 300 years ago, our own identity has been a subject of suspicion, and all that formed the fabric of our existence became subject of questioning and attack. Actually even those good practices that could resonate with the Christian faith were counted or classified as paganism and barbaric![2] The former Senegalese president and founder of the Negritude, Leopold Sedar Senghor, once wrote that the successful project of our 'secret enemy' is making the African doubt even her own self.

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2) See, S. A, Thorpe, *African Traditional Religion: An Introduction* (1991), 2.

Colonialism and its attendant elements such as slavery, forced paid or underpaid labour on colonial farms, racial subjugation, and the brainwashing education through religion and formal education has made Africans change the focus of reference.

Since the colonial project became very successful it made Africans cast away every element of their culture and decided to live on borrowed culture. For example, for Africans to honour their dead was considered as sinful and amounted to excommunication! The Western Christianity made Africans believe that they did not have God; they only had deities and worshiped idols. Africans were convinced to believe that the Western culture is part of the Gospel which is universal and meant for the salvation of all humanity.

Africans did not take time to investigate the validity of their 'truthful claims,' they believed that westerners were the messengers of the 'word' and Africans were the recipients. People who use water from the river, they normally filter that water before they use it for drinking. If you so happen to drink without filtering, you might end up drinking the filthy stuff together with water, which could in turn lead to disease. Most of African Christians did not filter what was brought to them. They took both religion and the foreign culture. The failure of sorting out created a "vacuum" among those who confess the Christian faith. In other words, they find themselves in between the two worlds where they do not fit in either world. As a result, Africans are now living on borrowed religions and are actually ready to fight bloody wars against their own religions [Christianity and ATR] which they do not know much about and don't believe in them entirely. To put in Kwame Bediako's words, such practice can become burdensome. He says: "Christianity in Africa continues to carry a burden, a veritable incubus, which it has to come to terms with and, if possible, seek to overcome and lay to a rest."[3] In fact Bediako goes extra miles by saying that "Christianity can never become an adequate frame of reference for the full expression of African ideals of life because of its history in Africa."[4]

This and others are signs of an African who lives in ambivalence. This conflict of ideas and values create uncertainty and problems also in the interpretation of the Bible. Of particular concern in this paper is the place of

3) Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: Renewal of non-Western Religion* (1995), 4.
4) Bediako, 5.

Lament language/texts in African Christianity.

2. African Christianity and Lament

The missionary era was the time when lamenting was considered to be an embarrassment and a failure in the Western culture. This negative connotation of lamenting in the Western culture (which was looked upon as superior and "Christian") intensified the rejection of African tradition of lament. The missionary analysis of the lament over death in the Northwestern Tanzania describes lament as fear, hopelessness and horror over the enemy of life. Otto Hagena narrates his observation of lamentations over the dead among the Haya of Tanzania as follows:

> In the middle of the night I woke up, frightened upon my bed. Long lamenting sounds tear the silence, gets down in order to rise anew. And again, the same sound, the same voice, crying out of the darkness of the night ⋯ Why all these days, yes, week-long lamentations, whereby the main lamentors sometimes carry on until their voices are gone? ⋯ But anybody who has observed such lamenting more often from nearby knows: the basic tone for that is fear and the horror of the enemy of life with the creature.[5]

In the view of missionaries, such apparent desperation and hopelessness was brought about by the fact that people did not know the Lord of life. For them, the remedy is when the people see the light of Christ.

The negative attitude towards lamenting in the Western culture influenced African negativity towards their own lament heritage.

> "The missionaries told the Africans what they needed to be saved from, but when Africans needed power to deal with the spiritual realm that was real to them, the missionary was baffled. The ancestors were to be

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5) Hagena, Otto, *Schatten des Todes-Light of Leben. Bethel bei Bielefeld:verlangschandlung der Anstalt* (Bethel, 1949, 3rd ed) 3. (Wilhelm Richerbacher, Trans., Lecturer at Makumira Univeristy College, February 1998. Otto Hagena was a Bethel missionary in the Northwestern part of Tanzania in Buhaya/Kigarama between 1929-1939.

ignored; infant mortality and premature deaths were purely medical matters. Failure of rains and harvest were acts of God. Childlessness had nothing to do with witchcraft, nor was there any spiritual aspect to any other physical disorder or infirmity."[6]

The Western culture claimed on what can be known and proved rationally; problems were to be dealt with scientifically. It claimed to possess superior knowledge that could solve problems for Africans. By the time Christianity was brought to Africa, the missionary world view had somehow detached distinctively from the worldview of the Bible. The Western worldview as critiqued by African scholars had by then become quasi-scientific. Abogunrin points out, "Consequently, although the missionaries still talked about God, heaven, angels, Satan, Holy Spirit and evil forces, they were no more than cultural clutches that lacked the existential dynamism they once had before and during the medieval period."[7]

2.1. Religion, Language and Experience and the Bible Interpretation

Since it is not possible to mention all areas, in this paper we will concentrate on the area of prayer in the context of various sufferings in Africa. The question to be asked here is: how does religion, language and experience relate or should relate? Do African Christianity and worship life take into account African experiences of sufferings, especially in the era of HIV/AIDS, wars, poverty and many other underlining forms of sufferings? What form/s must or do our prayers take in such situations? What language can we use in a particular experience? How do we relate words and experience?

Psalm 137 is a clear demonstration where religion, language and experience are blended together to express denial over spiritual dominance. Like other lament psalms, Psalm 137 is an honest prayer or a proper response to particular experience. Exile was a form of colonialism where the oppressor claimed both political and spiritual dominance. Nevertheless, for the psalmists in exile,

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6) Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa* (1986), 41.

7) S. O. Abogunrin, "Biblical Research in Africa: The Task Ahead", *African Journal of Biblical Studies* 86 Vol 1 (1986), 14.

spiritual domination was not viable. At least, from the perspective of Psalm 137, defiance to spiritual mockery and dominance became a way forward. Compliance to the demand of singing the Songs of Zion would signify "forgetting Zion" that is, forgetting the events that befell Judah and Jerusalem in the day of captivity. Compliance would mean accommodating colonial supremacy even in the matters of the heart.

In our exploration for suitable Scriptures for special audiences/selection especially with relation to suffering and poverty, it is prerequisite that we utilize the Psalms of lament as prayers befitting such experiences. However, we cannot simply pick any Psalm of lament and use it in difficult situation; we must first understand that even Psalms of lament vary and they all need special attention in interpretation.

3. About Psalm 137: Challenges to Interpretation[8]

"*How can we sing the Lord's Song in a foreign land*" (Psalm 137:4).

In exile, Israel was faced by many challenges concerning their faith and worship. In the absence of the Temple, much of their formal worship patterns had to be revisited! There was more emphasis on Torah or Word of God. However, in Psalm 137, we hear that when their captors demanded them to sing "One of the Songs of Zion" Israel refused. Instead, they put their harps on the willows, and cried! Lament was their new song in their new situation!

Psalm 137 was an attempt by exile to save their nation and dignity by the means of song. The interpretation and appropriation of this Psalm has challenged many for centuries. First because of its lament nature: its language has formidable implications especially within the Christian tradition. Lament was/is seen as a sign of unbelief! Like other imprecatory Psalms, this Psalm bears curses that are unpalatable to Christians. Another component for its difficulty in interpretation is the twisting of genre conventions in the Psalm as well as its horrific conclusion of infanticide.

3.1. How can a Christian sing this Song? Quest for Methodology

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8) "See, Supplementary Volume 24, 316-317 for the Translation notes of the text of psa 137:1-9.

In grappling with the interpretation of this Psalm and other hard texts in the OT, several methodologies have been employed: 1) Omit or discard discomfort phrase/verse and retain niceties. 2) Read difficult verses metaphorically; this will include verses 8 and 9 in Psalm 137. While poetry is open to metaphorical interpretation, it is tantamount to also see literal aspects in the Psalms of Lament and particularly in this psalm. It is often tempting to go the easy way by omitting or interpreting metaphorically. Incidentally, the harsh judgment of Babylon has also found its way in the NT in Revelation 18:1ff. Of course again here, we are also tempted to read symbolically since the book of Revelation as a whole is full of symbols.

In order to understand Psalm 137 we need to employ exegesis which makes use of the scientific methods and approaches, but methods which allow a better grasp of the meaning of texts in their linguistic, literary, socio-cultural, religious and historical contexts. In other words, interpretation of biblical texts often calls for eclectic approach. In order to interpret these psalms, we must be aware of our port of entry in a way that we bring out the living voices out of these Psalms of Lament. Psalms of Lament are not simply living documents that can be twisted to befit the interpreter or the reader. They are living voices, voices of real people who lived in real political and social situations that adversely affected them.

Eclecticism involves ones' ability to be self conscious on political and historical situations where both the reader and interpreter are located. Analyzing the text alone using linguistic features is not sufficient. With particular reference to this text, a post colonial reading of the Bible is also essential. This is a reading that takes context into account.

Post-colonialism is an interpretive reading that originates from the worldview of indigenous people who were formally colonized by imperial power. It is a way for local people to use their own traditions to shape their modern world views: how they understand the Bible and religion, how they set up governments. Post-colonials read the Bible through a "contextual theology," meaning their current context provides a matrix of interpretation. Though post-colonial reader is aware of the fact that the Bible is a historical text, however, the interest focuses on what that text says given the colonial history of that particular context. This intended meaning is influenced by the past (history), religion and culture.

In summary, such interpretation must take into account the following aspects:

• Interpretation as self-involvement:
  ▸ Connectedness and association with the text.
  ▸ Interpreter as objectively informed (interact and dialogue with the text) and subjectively involved (taking life issues seriously)
  ▸ Interpreter and reader become part of hermeneutical process
  ▸ Awareness of cultural aspects-symbols and signs
• Interpretation as self-Awareness
  ▸ Understanding of salvation story
  ▸ Understanding of ones' story: Space and Time
  ▸ Imaginative use of older materials to address the new situation
  ▸ Flexibility and openness to tradition

Although we have spelt out the methodology in question, with respect to Psalm 137, we shall mostly utilize some of the linguistic and literary aspects in reading this psalm using the post-colonial awareness in the back of our minds.

4. Interpretation of Psalm 137: Cognitive Compression

4.1. Use of Metonym "Zion": Emotions as Culturally and Socially Defined

Meaning is so fundamental to language in that it must be a central focus to language and its features as we interpret biblical texts. When interpreting biblical texts, we need to pay careful attention to linguistic structures/features. We need to determine how such structures/features function in expressing meanings. The mappings between meaning and form are a key subject of linguistic study. Linguistic forms, in this view, are closely linked to the semantic structures they are designed to express.

However, of more importance in cognitive linguistics is the fact syntactical, morphological and phonological representation is basically conceptual. With regard to Psalm 137, the application of metonymic cues aim at determining how sentiments of anger and joy are conceptualized, expressed and realized.

Linguistic emotions and sentiments find their meaning in cultural and social constructions. Scholars of cognitive linguistics argue that sentiments are not simply feelings based on physiology but rather, sentiments are governed by dimensions of cognition.9) Effective reading and application of the text do not end up with analysis of language structures and linguistic features for two reasons: 1) language is not only a close system of signs that refer only to other signs (structuralism); meaning is dependent on larger context (situation and discourse); 2) Meaning is not reducible to one dimension, that is, simplified to pellets. Human language as means of communication is multi-dimensional, complex and contains nuances that must be discerned using complex and open methodologies. Apart from working with linguistic features, the reader must be aware of social and cultural constructions surrounding the text. Context is central to this hermeneutics and working with context involves first and far most the process of self-realization and self-affirmation. This in other words, is what I would like to call conscious reading by use of cognitive linguistics as well as pay close attention to the text as we have it. These include use of figures such as metonym, as well as other aspects of cognitive linguistics such as time and space and they way this Psalm twist genre and theological conventions.

    With respect to Psalm 137, we shall concentrate on the use of metonyms and other literary features that will facilitate appropriate interpretation. Metonymy is the modus operandi where a word or an expression that symbolizes an entity comes to be used of an entity closely associated with, within a given domain. The construal of a metonym is commonly based on physical or indexical association.

    Metonyms are pointers to understanding the thought pattern in this lament Psalm. The psalmist refers to Zion in verses 1 and 3. This is a cognitive compression where Zion actually refers not just to the mountain where the Temple stood but to Jerusalem as a whole. Zion stands for Jerusalem of the past where the Temple stood. In this thought pattern, the glories of the past Temple which used to stand on mount Zion are implied, where sacrifices and worship were performed in honour to Yahweh and where songs of praise were sung to

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9) See for example, Z. Kövecses, *Metaphors of Anger, Pride, and Love: A Lexical Approach to the Structure of Concepts* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1986); Also Z. Kövecses, *Emotion Concepts* (New York: Springer, 1990).

Yahweh and to the glories of His Holy City.[10] It also refers to Jerusalem that was destroyed: Jerusalem the city, and the Temple that were razed to the ground by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.E and again in 582 B.C.E. This memory brings sadness to the exiles who sat by the streams of Babylon. But this is also a New Jerusalem that is anticipated, Jerusalem of the future where the psalmist looks forward to its highest glory. Prophet Jeremiah had told them not to delude themselves in the Temple while continuing in idolatry (Jeremiah chapter 7; 26). The presence of the Temple will not guarantee their protection from Yahweh because Yahweh will destroy the Temple of Jerusalem as he did in Shiloh! In this psalm, the psalmist does not abide with such conformity. The psalmist has a role in reshaping the future of Jerusalem by vowing to remember!

By bringing the picture of Zion/Jerusalem, the Psalmist mentally participates in broader historical, political social/religious circumstances of God of the psalmist who allowed such catastrophe to happen his own people. However, Yahweh is mentioned only once directly in the whole Psalm (v. 7), but through references to Zion/Jerusalem, God is implied throughout.

In summary, the metonym of Zion permits us to see by association events that happened in different times and space. The request of the enemy is, "sing to us one of the Songs of Zion (v. 4)." Paradoxically the Jews wonder, "How can we sing Yahweh's songs?" So the songs of Zion demanded by their tormentors are in fact the songs in the honour of the God of Israel! The broader picture is envisaged here by association. It is within this broader picture that we see the psalmist's participation in changing the destiny of his/her people: 1) Sitting and Weeping, 2) denial to abide with colonial wish, 3) By remembering Zion/Jerusalem. This actively participation is expressed in the language of pain, grief, and subversive denial on one side and on the other side by a vow to remain loyal to God and to the City of Jerusalem.

4.2. Metonym Representing Physiological Aspects

Looking into the immediate context of these phrases, we can infer that the

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10) Such Psalms would include songs that celebrate the power of Yahweh as in Ps 46, 48, 76 (also praises Jerusalem as a place where God reigns, the Enthronement Psalms like 47, 93, 95, 97, 99 among others.

psalmist is using these metonyms of compressing "right hand and "tongue" to refer to inability to sing. The psalmist makes a promise: "If I forget you O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither/fail to play harp" and "let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth" if I forget about the past and present Jerusalem, if I forget about God Yahweh. However from psychoanalytic point of view, the reference could mean more of bodily inability to function, to cease to have power, referring to paralysis or a modern term stroke.

The psalmist in fact makes a vow not to sing at all those happy songs in the moment of despair and gloom. Then to make the point clearer and to make a vow concrete, he wishes a curse upon himself/herself if he/she were to abide with the demand of their captors. So that the withering of the right hand could mean total disability, that is loosing power to perform all functions. The right hand in the Hebrew thought pattern refers to power.

As for the tongue sticking to the roof pallet, the psalmist wishes that he/she looses ability not just to sing but the inability to communicate, hence to become useless. Therefore the "right hand" and "tongue" represents the whole body. As such, it refers to the whole person. Again the broader picture is in view here

In the Hebrew world view, emotions and sentiments are conceptualized through metaphors and metonyms. The psalmist is not simply using indexical language (metonyms) to express physiological conditions; rather through such language to be able to express sentiments/emotions that were culturally and religiously given a space. Pain is given language of expression and form.[11] Since pain was given language, form and a place in the cultic life of Israel, we therefore encounter all kinds of human emotions as recorded in the Psalms of Lament: bitterness, crying, lament, happiness, and singing satirically and contrastively intertwined. Psalms represents every human emotion.

Martin Luther has this to say:

> Where does one find words of joy than in the Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving? There you will look into the hearts of all saints, as into fair and pleasant gardens, yes, as into heaven itself···. On the other hand, where do you find deeper, more sorrowful, more pitiful words of sadness than in the Psalms of lamentation. There again, you look into the hearts of

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11) See Brueggemann, "Formfulness of Grief", 263.

all saints, as into death, yes, as into hell itself. How dark and gloomy it is there, with all kinds of troubled fore-bearings about the wrath of God. So, too, they speak of fear and hope, they use such words that no painter could so depict for the fear or hope, and no cicaro or other orator so portray them. And they speak these words of God and with God, and this, I repeat, is the best thing of all. This gives the words double earnestness and life···Hence it is that the Psalter is the book of all saints and everyone, in whatever situation he may be, finds in that situation psalms and words that fit his case that suit him as if they were put there just for his sake, so that he could not put it better himself, or find or wish for anything better.[12]

We encounter in these Psalms how anger and human sentiments are conceptualized, analyzed and expressed in a way that is unique to that particular culture. Emotions are culturally and socially defined and organized sentiments as well as socially and culturally construed. In the ancient Hebrew, pain and anger are shaped by the liturgical shape; it is also within the worship setting that pain is given language. This truth is more discernible in thanksgiving Psalms such as Psalms 18, 30, 116, 138. In these psalms, the psalmists narrate how they have been saved by God from some calamity. As a result, they bring their prayers and thanksgiving offering in the Temple. In 1 Sam 1:9ff, we read that Hannah wept bitterly in the Temple until the Priest Eli mistook her for a crazy drunken woman! The Bible gives testimony to multitude of women and men whose lives, needs, and experiences were shaped by these complaint prayers. The community in which they lived gave them space and language to express their deepest longings in the form of a lament. Moreover, these women and men found their life experiences as reflected in these Psalms of Lament.

4.3. Other Literary Features used in Conjunction with Metonym of Zion

The psalmist drives the point home by using other literary features. To have power over situation is to see the impossibility of further humiliation! The

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12) Martin Luther, *Luther Works, Vol 35, Word and Sacrament 1* (1960), 255-256.

psalmist expands this impossibility by making a vow by use of conditional clauses containing both protasis (if) and apodosis. Both אִם in verse 5b and אִם־לֹא (used twice in verse 6) refer to real conditions. Also both clauses are used in the context of oath making. When one vows not to do something then the clause used is אִם and when one vows to do something the clause used is אִם־לֹא. Therefore psalmist laments, *"If I forget you, let my right hand forget···"* would that mean that the psalmist vows to always remember Jerusalem. "If I do not remember you··· let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth···would mean that the psalmist vows to remember Jerusalem always. The point made is the same: even "over there" in the strange land, the psalmist will "live in Jerusalem." The psalmist makes this vow of allegiance to Yahweh and dissident denial by use both stylistic and linguistic features.

4.4. Cognitive Compression of Space/Location

There are complex mental spaces with reference to time and space in Psalm 137. Reference to "Babylon" is made by the use of *inclusio* in the first and last strophes respectively (vv. 1-3; 8-9). Far from home and the Temple, the psalmist is grieved by bitter memories of what happened to Zion. Interestingly, in verse 1 when reference is made to location, "Babylon" the psalmist seems to see this space (where he is presently sitting and weeping) as something remote. Through the use of two spatial particles עַל (used twice in verse 1 and 2), and another element of space שָׁם in verse 3, the psalmist sees Babylon as a place far and distant, "over there!" Even the response to this strange request in the beginning of second strophe verse 4, seems to refer to Babylon as עַל "there, the land of calamity/foreignness (אַדְמַת נֵכָר)." However, when reference is made to Jerusalem, the infinitive construct is used with time prefix (בְּ) as in אֶת־צִיּוֹן בְּזָכְרֵנוּ. The literal meaning is: "In our remembering···the Zion (Zion is the object of remembering). With regard to space, there is a mental dislocation. Physically, the psalmist is in the land of calamity and mentally "in" Jerusalem. As if the spatial markers are not sufficient to drive the point home, the psalmist uses another repetition strategy. Zion/Jerusalem is repeatedly referred (interchangeably) to in verses 1, 3, 5, and 6. This art of repetition is significant in the Hebrew poetry; it points to where emphasis is, here it is on the spatial

location of Jerusalem, the Temple and all that they entail. But the events suggest different reality, exiles are "over there" on the banks of the Babylonian rivers.

This displacement creates a conflict and explains the reason for lament in the first strophe (vv. 1-3) and bitter imprecations or curses upon himself in the second strophe (vv. 4-6), and plea for proportional retribution in the last strophe (vv. 8-9). The Psalmist wants to live in the past; albeit, the present forms the reality which he/she rejects and vows to reject by using emotive words like יְמִינִי תִּשְׁכַּח The use of תִּשְׁכַּח (Arabic *ksh* evokes emotions among the exiles who sat by the banks of Tigris and Euphrates rivers and their tributaries. In Arabic it means "lame/cripple." It is this conflict of mental placement that constitutes the lament for psalmist, vow on the part of the psalmist, and imprecations against the oppressors. This pattern unites pain and ferocity, melancholic tenderness and passion, intense love for Zion and liturgical imprecations against enemies.

4.5. Cognitive Compression of Time

Another feature of mental involvement in Psalm 137 and in most Psalms of lament is with regard to time aspect. A thorough and careful look at the psalm indicates the wholistic and broader time reference: past, present and future. The immediate and distance past (vv. 1-4, 7) becomes the basis for understanding the present. "Remembrance" (and its contrast "forget") is central to this time element. Recollection of past events gives meaning to the present situation of misery and sadness and a reason for bitter retribution and future hope in verses 5 -7 and 8-9. The memories of the past (v. 1) arouse a specific action of negative response, yet appropriate response from the exiles, "they hung their musical instruments on the trees!" The past defines the present action; in this case denial to participate in happy songs in the physical land of Babylon. The past also frames the future anticipation: calling God to "remember" or to "act (v. 7)." Correspondingly, the psalmists see their role in the shaping of that future: through vow of allegiance and imprecatory liturgy. The psalmist/s will sing a different song, a lament! Retributive justice will be part of the lament and part of the reshaping of the psalmist/s future.

4.6. Psalm 137 and the Broader Lament Genre in the OT

Psalm 137 is considered as one of the Lament Psalms in the Psalter. Lament genre is pervasive in the OT. They constitute more than one third of the OT literature.[13] Psalms of lament in the Psalter (and in Lamentations) constitute only a portion of the laments contained in the OT. The Old Testament shows from the very beginning the elements of lament as in Gen 25:22; 27:46; Judges 15:18; and 21:2. Prophetic books contain both national and individual laments (e.g., the laments of the nation in Jeremiah 14-15; Isa 63-64; and the laments of individual in Jer 11-2. The lament is important structural element in the prophetic literature such as Jeremiah and Trito-Isaiah, where we find both individual and national laments (see Jer 11; 12 and Jer 14-15 and Isa 63-64).

Though Psalms 137 can be categorized as a national lament[14], it also shared other features with the imprecatory Psalms such as Pss 69, and 109. This category is the most difficult literature to be interpreted and to be appropriated by Christians. As such, they do not entirely find their way into the lectionaries and usual readings in many churches.

4.7. Twisting of Literary Conventions in Psalm 137

Scholars are of the opinion that there is a movement from Lament to praise in the Psalms of lament. Taking Psalm 13 as a model of lament, they identify the following pattern: 1) a complaint to God, 2) prayer for help, and 3) an expression of confidence. However, this is questionable since some Psalms do not portray such movement. Psalm 88 for example does not end up with praise or even promise to praise. It is the most somber Psalms of the OT. The royal lament of Psalm 89 ends with an expression of grief and not confidence. We read in verses 49-51.[15]

> *"Lord, where is your unfailing love?*
> *You promised it to David with a faithful pledge;*

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13) See William Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses* (1993), 293.

14) The most discernible Psalms of communal lament among others include Pss 12, 44, 58, 60, 74, 79 and 80.

15) Verse 52 is not part of this Psalm, it is the doxology added to end book III of the Psalter. Each book of the Psalter ends with doxology.

Remember/consider Lord how your servants are disgraced,
I carry in my heart the insults of so many people
Your enemies have mocked me, O lord
They mock the one you anointed as king" (NLT).

Psalm 137 also does not end with praise, but on curses or at least, asking for blessing upon that one who repays the psalmist's enemies. In the conventional OT understanding, *macarism* (Greek for life of blessedness/happiness) is a life that is enjoyed by one who is righteous, the one who has a close relationship with Yahweh. Contrastively, *macarism* is invoked here upon the one who repays Edom and upon the one who shall destroy Babylon and her future descendants. The psalmist, who in this case is the oppressed (hence "righteous"), invokes curses upon himself/herself; curses that were normally meant for the enemies. As it is evidently seen, the psalmist is not only twisting genre/literary conventions but challenging theological understanding as well. Like Job (or the character in the book of Job), the psalmist demonstrate theological defiance, by questioning what was normative at the time!

4.8. Theological Aspects in Psalm 137

Remembrance

The Prophet Jeremiah was the key prophet in prophesizing the fall of Judah and Jerusalem, a prophecy that brought him much sorrow and grief. In one of the messages he assured Judeans that exile was real, and so they have to be mentally prepared even to stay in that land and to seek its prosperity. He says in chapter 29: 4-7

"*The <u>Lord</u> Almighty, the God of Israel, sends this message to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem:* [5] "*Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food you produce.* [6] *Marry, and have children. Then find spouses for them, and have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away!* [7] *And work for the peace and prosperity of Babylon. Pray to the <u>Lord</u> for that city where you are held captive, for if Babylon has peace, so will you.*"

Although exiles were aware of this, in their mental faculty and given the covenant history of their relationship with Yahweh, they resisted such surrender through remembrance. Since Psalm 137 speaks frequently of "remembering" it is crucial to have a swift look at this aspect in the OT.

5. Remembering as Both a Divine and Human Prerogatives

5.1. Remembering as God's Attribute: Creator/Liberator God

The story of salvation starts by God remembering the oppression of his people. This is especially true of Priestly documents such as the Exodus narrative. In Exo 2:24 and 6:5 the writer demonstrates that the deliverance started with God *remembering* the people oppressed by the Egyptians. The writer puts this in the mouths of both the narrator and God, "And God heard their groaning, and God *remembered* the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (2:24). When God commissioned Moses to undertake the task of bringing out the people from Egypt, God declared, "*Moreover I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold in bondage and I have **remembered** my covenant*" (6:5). In these and other passages of the OT, remembering is made within the covenant oath. This is very significant, since God who makes the oath is faithful and true to that which is being promised from one generation to another.

After the golden calf incident in the wilderness God punished the Israelites but Moses intervened on their behalf pleading that God might *remember* the covenant made to their ancestors and spare the people. As a result, God changed the plan of destruction (Exo 32:13, 14). The same motif is seen in the Ark story where God makes a promise not to destroy again the earth by flood, "I will *remember* my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh ⋯ (Gen 9:10). In these and other passages of the OT, remembering is made within the covenant oath.[16]

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16) See also Exodus 2:24; 6:5; Deut 15:15; Lev 26:42; Pss 106:45 among many others.

5.2. Remembering as Constructive Engagement of Yahweh

In Exodus 3:7-8 the J Writer also implies that God remembered Israel in their oppression in Egypt. Here, "remembering" does not mean God just 'kept in mind" the children of Israel, but that God's remembering resulted into action of deliverance, actions of intervention, and the action of giving Israel a new life and new hope through the gift of land. The Creator God is the one who remembered and saved Israel from slavery in Egypt. One should not misinterpret this assertion as meaning that God forgets at times and then remembers again like a human being. The assertion explicate the fact that Israel's history of salvation and their testimony to the saving deeds show that Yahweh who is the Creator and liberator of Israel is also the initiator of the covenant and promises. This testimony does not confine Yahweh to Israel as a nation alone; rather, it extends Yahweh's deeds to the world as the initiator and controller of events. Thus, Walter Brueggemann makes this assertion, "Israel's characteristic grammar in speaking of Yahweh, governed by active verbs, regularly insisted that Yahweh is a major player in Israel's life and in the life of the world. Yahweh's characteristic presentation in Israel's rhetoric is that Yahweh acts powerfully, decisively, and transformatively."[17]

God becomes a major participant in that history where both the oppressed and the oppressor will eventually affirm the Lordship of Yahweh; through the historical events, they will know who controls history (cf. Exo 7:5; 9:16, 35). When both Israel and Egypt remember what Yahweh had done in history, they would know what kind of God Yahweh is to them and what Yahweh is to the whole world.

5.3. Remembering as Time Dimensional: Past, Present and the Future Tied Together

God's remembering acts were time dimensional and transcended the past, present and the future. God, who transcends time, remembered the promises of the past; God saw their present affliction/condition and engaged in the activity to give them hope and a future.

We might as well go back to Exodus 3:7-8 where God's acts of deliverance

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17) Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, (1997) 137.

started with God remembering them. It does not mean God had forgotten them, but that God was up to something on behalf of the oppressed Israel. Again, God's remembering acts were time dimensional and transcended the past, present and the future. God remembered the promises of the past; God saw their present affliction/condition in Egypt. If we bracket out the question of chronological placement and the historicity of the OT literature, we find out that the attribute that "God remembers" comes early in Israel's testimony. In fact, it begins the important section of Israel's core testimony, "Yahweh saved/delivered and brought them out of Egypt. The remembering of God precedes the deliverance and the bringing of the Israelites out of Egypt. This is to say that God's remembering is an integral part of the salvation history. It is in the act of remembering that God showed willingness to reconstruct and re-orient Israel's lives. God's declaration, "*I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings.*" These decisive words precede God's final intention, "*and I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land…*" (Exo 3:7-8). In other words, borrowing Brueggemann's 'phraseology[18]' the lament/complaint from suffering shows the life of disorientation and God's intervention in such situation and a granting of life contrary to that is a new orientation. Consequently, when God remembers the people it implies that God is reconstructing the history/life of that people. When God enters into peoples' lives, the lives of the people will never remain the same; lives are change, transformed or in other words, reconstructed.

5.4. Remembrance as Response to God's Gracious Deeds

In both the narrative and liturgical/poetic literature of the OT, Israel is shown to be obliged to respond to God's gracious deeds. One of the ways was to remember. This does not simply mean to retain some information, recollect or keep in mind what was said and/or done. Remembrance means reliving God's gracious deeds especially in the context of the worship life. As recipients of divine promises, the children of Israel were to respond to God's gifts of grace.

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18) Brueggemann views serene life as "orientation", troubled/suffering life as 'disorientation", and a shift to new life after suffering as "new orientation."

God the initiator and doer expect a response. Israel responded to God by celebrating the divine acts through the worship life especially during their three great annual festivals.

In celebrating the events, the whole life of the person is involved in reliving the message. Key to the remembering and celebrating the message is the participation of the community. Liturgy and worship are never done on individual basis; it is a communal (community) event and thus requires community involvement. Also central to worship is the fact that liturgy and narrative are always integrated. Remembering in a narrative form is a testimony of the marvelous things that God has done. Israel narrates from one generation to another the story of God's undeserved mercy to them. In this way, all generations are made to participate in that story. In other words, every generation is made to share the experiences of deliverance and the gift of the land. That is to say, remembering is not simply mental recollection of the past events, done to past generation and finding its implications for the present. Remembering means reliving past experiences as present experiences and reality; this implies ultimately connecting the past, present and the future. This is also seen in the poetic parts of the OT (e.g. Psalms 77, 78, etc.). Through worship life, Israel celebrates God's wonders in bringing about impossibilities on behalf of the oppressed, and to reverse the expected order of things/systems in the society (the mighty/oppressors are brought down and the oppressed/lowly are lifted up).

5.5. Lament Within the Broader Theological Framework

Old Testament lament is structured by the larger theological concepts and contexts of both the narrative and poetic material. One significant theological motif that is recurrent in the Psalter and that finds larger biblical expression is the understanding of humankind. The Lament genre like other parts of the Old Testament, understands humanity's transitorines and failure. The significance of lament is rooted in the fact that the **human being of whom the OT speaks is finite**. A human being is not idealized or spiritualized. Already in the first chapters of the Hebrew Bible human limitations are portrayed as part of the existence as in Genesis 1-11. Suffering is therefore, understood within this

theological truth. The Psalms of Lament and the Psalms of Creation and hope (8; 139; 90) express this truth, at the same time, affirm the divine exchangeability. And just as it is a part of human nature that a human being can pour out his/her heart in lamentation, so it is a part of divine nature that God is concerned about this cry of distress.

Another theological concept that frames the lament of the nation as well as that of an individual is the concept of **oppression and suffering of God's people**. It is in the suffering of Israel that God's involvement and participation in national life was perceived more clearly than in any other event. The language of the suffering and cry of the oppressed in Exodus and in other historical traditions of Israel (wilderness and exile) give voice to the present plight of the nation. There is a striking similarity between the distressful cry of the oppressed in those traditions and the cries of the nation and individuals in the Psalms of Lament. The theological significance of the national lament lies in its immediate relationship to the activity of God as saviour. Salvation is experienced as a hearing of the call of distress (see Psalms 44, 74, 77, 79. Complaints are appeal to God to be compassionate to those who suffer. All the multifarious forms of human affliction, oppression, anxiety, pain, and peril are given voice in those traditions. The cries of affliction are directed to God of the covenant, who is addressed as the only court that can alter their plight. The individual and community in the Psalms of Lament operate within this broader theological framework. It is within this framework that the Psalms of Lament find more elaborate and fixed structure than the earlier forms of laments.

5.6. Lament and Suffering

The structure indicates what is essential to a psalm of lament, cries of help directed to God for an answer. Even the transitions within the Psalms serve this purpose. The theological significance of the laments of Israel lies first of all in the fact that it gives voice to suffering. The lament is the language of suffering; in it suffering is given the dignity of language: It will not stay silent! The function of the lament is to lay out one's own inner suffering before the one who alleviates suffering, heals wounds and dries tears. Human suffering, no matter what it is, is not something which only affects the sufferer alone and that which

one must overcome alone; suffering is something to be brought to God. The true function of the lament is supplication; it is means by which suffering comes before the one who can take it away.

5.7. Lament is about justice: That is a song of life

As we have seen, Psalm 137 ends with a wish: Infanticide! This as we have said earlier, is one of the areas which, makes the interpretation of this psalm difficult. But it all sums up in the questions of suffering and social justice, and in this case, retributive justice.

For Pleins, issues of suffering and social justice are the main agenda of the Psalms, and these issues can be brought forward whatever entry or methodological approach one uses. He comments:

> We can immerse ourselves at the beginnings of the tradition to wrestle with the sociopolitical context and questions of the text. We can locate ourselves at another stage of the tradition and meditate on these texts as documents imparting spiritual instruction. Or we can place ourselves in yet another stage of tradition to be moved by the psalms to sing songs of tragedy and trust, lament and praise. However, no matter what our port of entry, the issues of suffering, social justice and worship continually confront us in our engagement of the texts. These questions are critical to our continued appropriation of the psalms as living documents in church and synagogue today.[19]

Of course this approach has already placed the issues of social justice and suffering at the center. In other words, Pleins looks at these psalms using an eye of a liberation theologian, and in these psalms he intends to find the ways these psalms grapple with the contemporary issues of oppression and liberation.[20]

Justice in the OT is more of a religious concept than just a system of impartial decision as in the Western law. Justice includes first and far most protecting, restoring, helping righteousness, which helps those who have had their right taken from them in communal relationship to regain it."[21] Justice and

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19) David Pleins, *Songs of Tragedy, Hope and Justice* (1993), 4.
20) Pleins, 5.

righteousness were often taken together. Therefore, justice was the core of Israel's relationship with the covenant God. In this case justice finds clarity and clear meaning when viewed together with and in the light of its covenantal relationship. Lament is, therefore, both a political and religious cry for justice. Lament addresses God and community to hear hurt and pain: e.g. Bob Marley addressed the issues of injustice and oppression through songs of liberation, even rephrasing Psalms 137.

5.8. Language and Experience

Psalms of Lament are songs of defiance/resistance over suffering and/or death: The main part of lament/complaint reveals this reality. The Psalms of lament exhibit a sense of a real power of spoken word from a human point of view. The power to concretize, give force, meaning and effectiveness to what would otherwise remain nebulous realities of life and inner longings. Psalms give possibilities and prowessness for us to search our own hearts that might have been deaf to realities of life. They challenge and extricate our euphemistic speech, reorienting our words to concur with those realities. Our Christian faith has created euphoria, a sense of wellbeing that, on one hand, narrows and deflects our understanding of life as straight, one-sided dimensional adventure. But on the other hand, it has made Christians to "experience" permanent spiritual numbness to pain and suffering that people face from day to day. Christian faith by its teachings has made the harsh realities temporal, deluding its believers to masochism, in hope of that otherworldly and permanent life. Christians are left to live in quasi de facto circumstances. As a result, faith and worship becomes less authentic and lethargic. This brings us back to the fundamental question: "How can we sing the Lord's Song at Home?"

6. Conclusion

Historical Critical Approach as approach to interpretation of Scriptures claims almost total objectivity. This methodology of course has been very insightful in

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21) Interpreter's Bible Dictionary, R-Z, pg. 81.

unveiling the meaning of texts; notwithstanding with a lot criticisms lately. However, it is my assertion that total objectivity in the reading of biblical texts is unattainable. As interpreters, human agenda seems to be part of our hermeneutical processes, whether consciously or unconsciously. Since context is fundamental in understanding the message, deliberate subjectivity is often required in the reconstruction of the biblical message in order to address our contemporary issues concretely. As interpreters, we have to be aware of our port of entry which includes first and far most, one's context. An interpreter who is aware of context is able to reconstruct the meaning of biblical texts effectively. We can only understand our context in relation to the larger context including the biblical context! We can only reconstruct our own history when our own experiences dialogue with that of the biblical text. We can see our reality and who we are in the light of the biblical message. We can wrestle with our history in the light of the history of God's relationship with his people.

Biblical texts express this history of relationship in both prose and poetic language. Therefore, the process of interpretation must include analysis of how language communicates that reality. Language in the Bible is shaped by cultural and social contexts and is informed by the wider traditions of Israel's relationship with Yahweh. In Psalm 137, we have seen that the experience of suffering is expressed in the poetic language of lament. Even within this broader genre, the psalmist was at liberty to use metonym of compression as the appropriate device to express totality of space and time as well as totality of suffering and plea for justice.

Imprecatory Psalms invoke curses as a language of power in the seemingly defeated person/s. The Psalmists turn their attention to God, who was believed to be the source of power and blessing. It is Yahweh who can avenge the enemies. In Psalm 137, the psalmist invokes curses upon himself/herself for failure to seek the happiness of Zion/Jerusalem. Curses function here not only as an oath to allegiance but as performative speech which decisively intends to shape and re-orient the way things should be.

Christians cannot sing in "captivity" the Lord's song. We must realize that each situation calls for appropriate song. As Christians we can sing the Lord's Song when we allow both individual and communal suffering to be expressed as we do for thanksgiving mood. We need to see the following biblical truths in

expressing pain: 1) pain expressed in language of lament is directed to God. God is a safe place where one feels secure to honestly communicate the inner longings of the heart. Lament and petitions function structurally and theologically as a device to make the community and the protagonists in the psalms to bring out life extremities to God as Bruegemann remarks:

> Israel characteristically met the hurtful dimensions of existence head-on, of course viewing them as faith crises, times of wondering about God and his fidelity, but also a faith opportunities, times to articulate again their expectations and assumptions, times to reformulate their position vis-à-vis the world of hurt and the God of faithfulness.[22]

The language of lament in the OT was shaped by the religious traditions of Israel. It was in worship that pain was given space and language. That is why we find that lament and the language of lament very pervasive in the Bible. Both individual and communal lament was shaped by these rich traditions of Israel. It was also the language used by our Lord Jesus Christ in times of sad and despondency circumstances. The cry for help is the core of OT theology. In Exodus 3:7-9, we are told that God came down because of human pain and suffering.

We can sing the Lord's song when we allow the psalmists experiences to shape and inform our own experiences and give language to express our own experience. We can be comfortable with the language of lament through effective interpretation as well as appropriation of these texts in our worship and devotional life as a whole.

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22) Brueggemann,"From Hurt to Joy, From Death to Life", 3.

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