A Textual Comparison in Chapter Eighteen of the Gospel of John from Two Latin Vulgates

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract

The Vulgate has historically been the principle Latin translation of the Bible, in use since the fourth century A.D. It was the standard translation for the Roman Catholic Church until the 1970s when it, prompted by changes called for in the Second Vatican Council, adopted a new textual standard for its liturgy, called the Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio. Despite this, the Vulgate remains a testament to fourth century biblical scholarship. Using a representative text from both the majority and minority Greek New Testament traditions, I compare the text of the Nova Vulgata with that of the older Vulgate in John 18, examining the relationship of these texts.

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Author’s Statement

The principle texts with which I worked were two Latin-language translations of the Bible. Both of the texts claim the name ‘Vulgate’ in their titles, however they come from noticeably different sources. The older form of the two texts is titled *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgata Versionem* principally edited by Robert Weber and Roger Gryson (this text will be henceforth referred to as the Weber-Gryson). The Weber-Gryson is a critical edition of Jerome’s Vulgate (4th century A.D.), replete with Medieval and inconsistent spelling. It has no punctuation in the actual Biblical text, but rather is organized into sense-lines. The edition I am working with is the fifth edition, published in 2007 by *Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft*. The more recent text its titled *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio* (Referred to henceforth as the Nova Vulgata) produced after Vatican II. It was ordered by Pope Paul VI and published by Pope John Paul II. Its punctuation follows Italian rules, and its spelling matches the standard system used in most American Classics programs. The edition I am working with is the second edition, published in 1986 and reprinted in 2005 by *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

In order to more effectively compare the two texts, I have also decided to use to different Greek texts as reference points. These texts are representative of the two strains of Greek New Testament manuscript traditions. The first of these texts is Η Καινή Διαθήκη (henceforth referred to as the Patriarchal text), a majority text. The edition I am using was most recently published in 2007 by Αποστολή Διακονία τῆς Εκκλησίας τῆς Ελλάδος. The second text, a minority text, is *The UBS Greek New Testament Reader’s Edition with Textual Notes* (henceforth referred to as the UBS text). It is the fourth revised edition, most recently published in 2001 by *Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft*. The
reason I chose to use two Greek texts in a comparison of two Latin texts is quite simple: the Latin is a translation of the Greek. Where there are discrepancies between the Latin text, I wanted to see which text was closer to the current state of the Greek textual traditions. This was, in a sense, an indirect but minor exercise comparing the texts available to Jerome and those available now.

I have included in the discussion of a very few verses the readings from the Clementine Vulgate where such inclusion could be beneficial. Most of the time, the Clementine Vulgate agreed with the Weber-Gryson. Those times where I have included the Clementine reading were to shed further light on a curious issue. I have also used the Clementine Vulgate when quoting other passages for the sake of illustration, in order to provide a more neutral voice. The edition of the Clementine Vulgate I have used here was the *Biblia Sacra juxta Vulgatum Clementinam*, edited by Michael Tweedale in 2005. It is freely available as the text for Mr. Tweedale’s VulSearch project at http://vulsearch.sourceforge.net/, along with his sources and a short explanation of his editorial decisions. I have used is the Latin-English diglot from Baronius Press.

Such an exploration as I have attempted is important for a few reasons. The first is to increase, where possible, the understanding of the differences between manuscripts available and regarded as optimal in the 4th century and those available today. The second is to provide some meager scholarship regarding the Nova Vulgata, which has not been the focus of any scholarly work of which I am aware. The third reason is more personal: I wished to test if my skill with Latin and Greek was proficient enough to be able to not only recognize a difference, but also to explain what the differences mean and imply, a skill which is distinct from pure translation.

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Initial Analysis

The Vulgate is a relic of ancient Christianity, a translation from the Hebrew Old Testament, Septuagint Psalms, and Greek New Testament into the simple Latin of the general public of the 4th century A.D., and is mostly the work of Jerome, as compiler, editor, or translator. Today, three principle ‘Vulgates’ exist: the Weber-Gryson, the Nova Vulgata, and the Clementine Vulgate. The Weber-Gryson and the Nova Vulgata are nearly exact opposites in their respective purposes: the Weber-Gryson attempts to represent the ancient text of the Vulgate and in a format more similar to the manuscripts upon which it is based than either of the other to Vulgates; the Nova Vulgata, on the other hand, attempts to correct the Vulgate according to current Biblical scholarship. For this reason, the comparison of the Weber-Gryson and the Nova Vulgata presents an interesting glimpse at the comparative scholarship of the ancient Church and of the past few decades.

When comparing the texts, some mechanism needs to exist in order to concisely note at the point of differences which reading belongs to which text. To this end, the following method has been used throughout my analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[text]</th>
<th>Weber-Gryson; Patriarchal text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(text)</td>
<td>Nova Vulgata; UBS Greek text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, those differences appearing in texts which are based upon monastic tradition are placed in square brackets; those differences appearing in texts based upon modern critical scholarship of the original Greek are placed in parentheses.

The text will be placed in a three column format, with the Nova Vulgata in the leftmost column, the Weber-Gryson in the middle column, and the Greek in the rightmost column. Any differences
between the Greek texts will be noted according to the above method. Beneath this presentation will be an interlinear translation of the texts, with an English translation being the uppermost line, and the Latin and Greek texts below it, conforming to the order of the English. The interlinear format is provided in order to better appreciate and recognize the connections between the Latin and the Greek texts, aligning them at each word. The English translations are my own.

As the Nova Vulgata has been the subject of nearly no scholarship in the English language, and is what may be considered the standard translation of the largest denomination of Christianity, there is a great need for such work this. Additionally, and perhaps more interestingly, with the Nova Vulgata being a modern Latin Bible, and the Weber-Gryson being a reconstructed ancient Latin Bible, there is the opportunity to examine and compare the relative differences in Biblical scholarship. The two Greek texts chosen are texts whose principles of scholarship correspond to one or the other of the Latin texts. That is to say, the Weber-Gryson, while a critical text itself, attempts to reproduce a text which was maintained and transmitted by monastic communities, much as the Patriarchal text is the product of monastic transmission; the Nova Vulgata as the basis of its scholarship, relies upon modern critical scholarship, a representative of which is the UBS text. It should be no surprise when the Weber-Gryson and the Patriarchal texts agree over and against the Nova Vulgata and UBS texts.

While it is unreasonable to expect there to be too many textual differences, even minor ones, the few verses with any difference were surprisingly similar. When the difference between two readings was merely spelling, such a verse is not included, unless the difference occurs multiple times, as such a repeated spelling difference shows trends in the work as a whole; spelling is otherwise not included in the discussion unless it is a part of a verse which has another difference. The principle discussion is intentionally limited to the content and meaning of the verses.

The differences between the Weber-Gryson and the Nova Vulgata are largely insignificant, at least in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel of John. This means that the Biblical accounts, while differing in some details, are stable across time and manuscript traditions. Most of the differences that have any substance merely demonstrate a differing focus of the different Greek manuscript
traditions, but the denotative meaning of the passages are unchanged, as can be testified by the possibility of a common translation of the four texts with only minor variation. In the next chapter, the differences will be compared and examined, each verse in its turn; some concluding statements will follow.
Differences Examined

Verse 2

Sciebat autem et Iudas, qui tradebat eum, **locum**, quia frequenter Iesus convenerat illuc cum discipulis suis.

**Differences ExaDlined**

Verse 2

Sciebat autem et Iudas qui tradebat eum **ipsum locum** / quia frequenter Iesus conver- nerat illuc cum discipulis suis.

Differences Examined

Verse 2

But also Judas, who was betraying him, knew the [same] place, because Jesus frequently had met there with his disciples.

The entire difference between the two Latin texts is the inclusion of *ipsam* before *locum* in the critical text. This inclusion does not present any essential differences in meaning, with *ipsam* operating in a manner not unlike the modern custom of italicizing words one wishes to emphasize.

One could construct the same sentence, translated from the Nova Vulgata but made in accordance with the Weber-Gryson, one could write something like: “But also Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus frequently had met there with his disciples.”
Some interesting notes should be made. The Patriarchal and UBS Greek texts match on this verse, even to the comma. As seen above, the Greek text does not indicate the emphasis which the Weber-Gryson includes. As to why this particular reading was chosen is unknown. The Clementine Vulgate, which was intended as a unifier of the various Vulgate texts, much like the Weber-Gryson itself was, agrees here with the Nova Vulgata. Thus here, the Weber-Gryson is alone in its reading, as small as the difference may be.

**Verse 5**


They responded to him: “Jesus the Nazarene.” [Jesus] says to them, “I am.”

And Judas, who was betraying him, was standing with them.

This verse reflects a difference in both the Latin texts under investigation and the Greek texts used for comparison. It also illustrates a general tendency in the small differences between the Nova Vulgata and the Weber-Gryson. The Weber-Gryson and the Patriarchal text agree with the inclusion of Jesus’ name in the questioned place, but the Nova Vulgata and the UBS text have no such inclusion. While the inclusion can be considered merely a note of clarification in the narrative, a function which should not be discounted, there are possible theological consequences for such an inclusion.
The phrase “I am” is significant because this is the name which God tells Moses in the Book of Exodus. In Latin, this verse reads: “Dixit Deus ad Moysen: Ego sum qui sum.” (Ex 3:14a). In Latin, the *ego*, the I, is technically unnecessary, as the pronoun is functionally included in the verb itself. Pronouns are thus often used for emphasis. The Gospel of John makes the most ‘I am’ statements of the New Testament, linking Jesus to the God of Moses. For example: “Dixit eis Jesus: Amen, amen dico vobis, antequam Abraham fieret, ego sum”2 (Jn 8:58). While the text does not suggest that the use of *ego sum* should be taken as a theological statement, the inclusion of Jesus’ name gives Jesus’ words the same format as the theological statements mentioned above, that is, the name of someone claiming divinity, a verb of speaking, the hearers of the statement as the indirect object, and the use of both pronoun and verb. Such a format seems like it could be a reference to or an invocation of the theological “I am” statements.

**Verse 8**

Respondit Jesus: «Dixi vobis: *Ego sum! Si ergo me quaeritis, sinite hos abire».

Jesus answered: “I have said [that] I am. If therefore you are looking for me, permit these to depart.”

The Nova Vulgata departs here from both the Weber-Gryson and the Greek texts. While the

1God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” Latin from Clementine Vulgate.
2Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen I say to you (pl.), before Abraham was made, I am.” ibid.
lack of *quia* does not change the meaning or implications of the verse at all, it does change the grammar. The line in the Weber-Gryson and the Greek is an example of indirect discourse, with Jesus reporting what he had previously said. Without the *quia*, instead of reporting what had been previously said, Jesus is quoting himself. The Nova Vulgata here has changed the construction of the sentence.

**Verse 9**

That the word might be fulfilled which he said, [that] ("*)those you have given to me, I have lost not any from among them. ("*)

The same essential analysis which was used for verse 8 can be repeated for verse 9. However, here, the editors of the Nova Vulgata specifically used quotation marks instead of *quia*, making the preference for direct discourse more apparent.

**The name Caiaphas in verses 13, 14, 24, and 28**

It is curious how the name Caiaphas is rendered as *Caiphas* in the Nova Vulgata. If it were not for the fact that Καϊφάς is consistently spelled without the second ‘α,’ such an oddity could have been
considered a printing error. Neither the Patriarchal nor the UBS Greek text would indicate such a spelling. However, the Clementine Vulgate, the predecessor of the Nova Vulgata, reads *Caiphas* as well, indicating that at this point, the Nova Vulgata retains the Clementine reading.

**Verse 14**

Erat autem Caiphas, qui consilium dederat Iudaes: «*Expedit* unum hominem mori pro populo».

But it was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the Jews [that] ("it is expedient that one man die for the people.

That which was said about verse 9 may be repeated here verbatim.

**Verse 18**

Stabant autem servi et ministri, *qui prunas fecerant*, quia frigus erat, et *calefaciebant se*; erat autem cum eis et Petrus stans et calefaciens se.

Stabant autem servi et ministri *ad prunas* quia frigus erat et *calefiebant* / erat autem cum eis et Petrus stans et calefiebant se.

εἰστήκεισαν δὲ οἱ δούλοι καὶ οἱ ὑπηρέται ἀνθρακίων πεποιηκότες, ὅτι ψύχος ἦν, καὶ ἐθερμαίνοντο· ἦν δὲ μετ᾽ αὐτῶν ὁ Πέτρος ἔστως καὶ θερμαίνομενος.
But the slaves and ministers (who had made) [at] the live coals were standing, autem servi et ministri (qui fecerant) [ad] prunas stabant.

because it was cold, and (were making themselves warm;) [were being warmed;] quia erat frigus et (calefaciebant se) [calefiebant]

and also, Peter was with them, standing and warming himself. et autem Petrus erat cum eis stans et calefaciens se.

For the purpose of comparing the Latin and Greek texts, the Patriarchal text was used. The only difference between the UBS and Patriarchal texts is a καὶ before ὁ Πέτρος in the UBS text and μετ’ αὐτῶν coming after ὁ Πέτρος rather than before. The word order of the Patriarchal text more closely corresponds to the Latin, thus its preference here.

This verse has perhaps the most variation in renderings of all the verses in this chapter. The first difference presents two different images of the scene. The Nova Vulgata, being in line with both texts of the Greek, does not explicitly state where the slaves and ministers were standing. Rather, the Nova Vulgata explains who made the coals to glow and for what reason. This is a different image than that which is portrayed by the Weber-Gryson text. In this text, the slaves and ministers were standing around the live coals and for what reason, but there is no explicit mention of who made the coals to glow. There is no record in the apparatus of the Weber-Gryson of a historical reading in the Vulgate tradition which would correspond to the Nova Vulgata’s reading. Thus, it can be assumed that the translators and editors of the Nova Vulgata chose to more strictly adhere here to the Greek than to the Latin predecessors.

In the second difference, the pattern of adherence is slightly more complicated. The Greek text has no reflexive pronoun, although the verb is in the middle voice, indicating a reflexive action. Latin, like English, does not have a middle voice. The Weber-Gryson has the middle voice rendered
into a passive voice. It notes in its apparatus the reading present in the both the Nova Vulgata and its predecessor. The Nova Vulgata renders the middle voice into an active verb with a reflexive pronoun. This reading is perhaps more accurate to the sense of the Greek voice.

**Verse 24**

*Misit ergo* eum Annas ligatum ad Caiapham pontificem. | *Et misit* eum Annas ligatum ad Caiaphan pontificem | *Ἀπέστειλεν* (οὖν) αὐτὸν ὁ Ἄννας δεδεμένον πρὸς Καίαφαν τὸν ἄρχιερα.

[And] (So) Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.  
[et] (ergo) Annas misit eum ligatum ad Cai[apham] pontificem

— οὖν ὁ Ἄννας ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν δεδεμένον πρὸς Καίαφαν τὸν ἄρχιερά

The difference between the Weber-Gryson and the Nova Vulgata here is more in the implication of connection rather than in meaning. The Weber-Gryson simply connects verse 24 with verse 23. The Nova Vulgata, however, implies in its use of the word *ergo* a connection by cause, that is, verse 24 is seen as a result of verse 23.

Other than this, the Weber-Gryson uses a Greek accusative in *ad Caiaphan*, rather than a more Latinate *ad Caiapham*.

**Verse 29**

Exivit ergo Pilatus ad eos foras et *dicit*: «Quam accusatio-nem *affertis* adversus hominem hunc?» | exivit ergo Pilatus ad eos foras et *dixit* / quam accusatio-nem *adfertis* adversus hominem hunc | ἔξηλθεν οὖν ὁ Πιλάτος ἐξω πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ (φησίν) [ἐ]πε, Τίνα κατηγοριάν φέρετε κατά τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου;
So Pilate went out to them (says:) [said:] what accusation do you find against this man?

The principle difference between the Weber-Gryson and the Nova Vulgata in this verse is the tense of the verb dico, which is conjugated as a present tense in the Nova Vulgata and as a perfect tense in the Weber-Gryson. The rendering of dicit in the Latin is new with the Nova Vulgata, the Weber-Gryson not accounting for such a rendering in the manuscript tradition and the Clementine Vulgate reading dixit. Here, the Nova Vulgata displays a partiality to the UBS Greek text, which reads φησίν, a present-tense verb corresponding to dicit. The Weber-Gryson text is closer to the Patriarchal text, as dicit is a translation of εἴπε.

As a minor note, affertis and adfertis are the same word. It is a combination of the Latin words ad, meaning “to,” and fero, meaning “carry.” Thus, adfertis, as used in the Weber-Gryson is an uncontracted verb, showing both the verbal and prepositional components. The form affertis is more correct according to Classical rules.

Verse 31

Dixit ergo eis Pilatus: «Accipite eum vos et secundum legem vestram iudicate eum!». Dixerunt ei Iudaei: «Nobis non licet interficere quemquam». dixit ergo eis Pilatus / accipite eum vos et secundum legem vestram iudicate eum / dixerunt ergo ei Iudaei / nobis non licet interficere quemquam / εἴπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· λάβετε αὐτὸν ἡμεῖς καὶ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἡμῶν κρίνατε αὐτόν. εἴπον [οὖν] αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα·
Therefore, Pilate said to them: “you all take him and judge him according to your law.” [Therefore] the Jews said to him “Permitted it is not for us to kill anyone.”

Much like other differences seen here, the *ergo* is a direct rendering from some Greek text similar to the Patriarchal text, and the lack of said *ergo* marks the Nova Vulgata as more reliant upon modern critical Greek texts, like the UBS text. As the Weber-Gryson attempts to represent the originally intended readings for the Vulgate, it is possible to assume that the *ergo* was retained in both the Weber-Gryson and the Patriarchal text due to the lack of punctuation in the older manuscripts, meaning an increased reliance upon words denoting continuity such as *ergo* in Latin or ὦν in Greek.

**Verse 37**

*Due to the length of verse 37, and the great similarity between the Weber-Gryson and the Nova Vulgate on the latter two-thirds of this verse, only the first third will be here discussed and reproduced.*

Thus Pilate said to him, “Are you therefore a king?” Jesus responded:

"You say that a king am I.”

This verse has a minor inclusion of *ego* in the Weber-Gryson and Patriarchal texts. This inclusion, since it does not affect the meaning, can be considered to have two functions: the first is as emphasis and the second as balance. The emphatic function has been explained previously. However, the balancing function is more interesting. There is no doubt as to the reading of *tu dicis* at the beginning of Jesus’ response. *Tu* is needed for clarity as much as *ego* is, that is to say, not at all. The *tu* is thus also emphatic. However, the inclusion of *ego* gives Jesus’ response a framed structure: a pronoun and a verb beginning the response and a verb and pronoun concluding it.

**Verse 40**

Clamaverunt *ergo rursum* dicentes: «Non hunc sed Barabbam!». Erat autem Barabbas latro. 

Clamaverunt *rursum omnes* dicentes / non hunc sed Barabbam / erat autem Barabbas latro. 

(Then) [they all] shouted back, saying, “Not this one but Barabbas.” But (ergo) [omnes] clamaverunt rursum dicentes non hunc sed Barabbam autem oũν [πάντες] ἐκραύγασαν πάλιν λέγοντες μη τούτον, ἀλλὰ τὸν Βαραββᾶν. ἂν δὲ ὁ Βαραββᾶς λῃστής.

Barabbas was a bandit. Barabbas erat latro ὁ Βαραββᾶς ἂν λῃστής.
As an interesting initial note, the disparate readings between the Nova Vulgata and the Weber-Gryson are both found in the Clementine Vulgate: “Clamaverunt ergo rursum omnes, dicentes…”3 (In 18:40a).

The lack of *ergo* in the Webber-Gryson is odd, although its apparatus ascribes such an inclusion only to the Clementine Vulgate. It is unsurprising when the Weber-Gryson agrees with the Patriarchal text over the UBS text, as the historic Vulgate was subjected to similar pressures of historical transmission due to both being maintained from within monastic communities. The reason of the editors of the Weber-Gryson is undoubtedly that the *ergo* is not native to that verse of the Latin, but something that worked its way in by happy accident at a later date.

As for the inclusion of *omnes*, the typical pattern of agreement is seen: the Weber-Gryson and the Patriarchal texts agree, whereas the Nova Vulgata and the UBS texts agree. The use of *omnes* merely specifies who was doing the shouting. Like many additions from the Weber-Gryson and Patriarchal texts, the function seems to be purely clarificatory, with no tangible impact on the structure or integrity of the sentence or verse, let alone the passage as a whole.

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3Thus they all shouted again, saying...ibid.
Concluding Analysis

An appreciation for the complexity of the Vulgate manuscript tradition can be obtained by a quick perusal of the footnote apparatus of the Weber-Gryson, which documents a number of variant readings from various manuscripts. The Vulgate being a relatively ancient translation of the Christian Scriptures, it can be assumed that different texts were available at its conception than are available now, and vice-versa. This makes the Vulgate a particularly interesting subject for study, and the Nova Vulgata, being a product of modern scholarship, allows for a comparison unavailable in other languages.

The differences between the Weber-Gryson and the Nova Vulgata are, admittedly, sparse and minor in the chapter discussed here. A comparison of certain passages or books of the Old Testament would probably reveal more differences than the Gospel of John, especially the Psalms, as the typical Vulgate Psalter was translated from the Greek Septuagint, whereas the Nova Vulgata, like most modern Bibles, derives its Psalms from the Hebrew. However, the differences in John 18 are still there, indicating that, from this brief sample, there are many more differences which have not been examined, in the Gospel of John and in the rest of the Bible.

It is telling that the verse with the greatest difference in renderings, verse 18, also had no difference in the Greek texts in the places where the Latin texts diverged. This illustrates either a manuscript no longer either prominent or extant, or a dynamic rather than formal rendering. If the latter, then any determination of what an original text may have been from its translation is questionable, and a poor use of time as well. Rather, what is more interesting in the question of the probability of the dynamic nature of the older Vulgate in some places is a discussion of historical
translation philosophies.

All this begs the question: why is such an investigation important? As has been said before, the Nova Vulgata and the old Vulgate, represented by the Weber-Gryson, being both in Latin, allows for a comparison of sources and scholarship unafforded by other languages. Such a comparison is not in and of itself important, but may well lend itself to further study in Western Patristics, that is, where there are significant differences in modern Bibles with the Vulgate—assuming in those places the Nova Vulgata reads as most modern Bibles—used by Western theologians after the 4th century, the particular implications and possible doctrines developed by these theologians which seem peculiar today may be understood with a greater clarity. A discussion of the particular preferences in translation should be included in such an exploration, as translation philosophy greatly determines how a text will be read in the target language and will do much to establish a standard of translation from the original to the target language.

This investigation discovered nothing grand or of great importance. Both the Weber-Gryson and the Nova Vulgata in the passage discussed are fine and accurate translations. The comparison of these texts, while here has found nothing of import, is still important for the sake of a greater understanding of the thinking of the early Western Church. If history and Christian theology are considered worthy subjects of research, then such an investigation as this, even if not with the same texts used here, needs be undertaken at a much larger scale. The benefit of using Latin is merely for the sake of a common idiom, to reduce the observation of false commonalities possible when translating from two different languages. What foundations of Western theology and culture were based on the ancient Vulgate, foundations which would not have become established if modern scholarship had been then? Such a question, on the border between actual and rhetorical, is the question which such an investigation as this may well help answer.
Bibliography


