

Teaching the Old and New Testaments to Students of Greek and Latin Simultaneously with Numerous and Fascinating Learning Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Because Old and New Testament texts in Greek and Latin are almost word for word replicas of each other inasmuch as they are both translations of preexisting texts, they can be taught simultaneously to students who know only one or both of the languages in the same classroom. Moreover, students with only one year of training can take such a class because of the syntactical simplicity of the texts and repetitive nature of the vocabulary. There are a number of outstanding learning outcomes to expect from teaching these works: critical thinking, introduction to textual criticism, canonicity, the Documentary Hypothesis, translation goals, cultural appropriation, comparative mythology, interdisciplinarity, and ancient biography.

KEYWORDS

Old Testament, New Testament, Septuagint, Vulgate, Hebrew alphabet, intertextuality, Greek-Latin taught simultaneously, comparative mythology, textual transmission, Documentary Hypothesis

INTRODUCTION

Similar to Classics departments elsewhere, at the University of Washington we have found ourselves effectively combining intermediate and advanced courses in Latin and Greek, teaching veritable one-room school houses with students at different levels. As it happens, students often come late to Greek and/or Latin and need to have enough credits at the upper-division level to complete their programs within the time allowed by the university. This course crunch became especially problematic during the summer quarter when there were some students who wanted to continue their study of Latin and Greek after one year and others with two or three years of a language who also wanted to read more. To make matters worse, there

were not enough students for two separate “stacked” courses during this quarter, and the summer school administration now insists that courses be self-sustaining. This situation prompted me to experiment with a hybrid course in the summer of 2018, which I describe in full below. In short, Greek and Latin students inhabited the same classroom, reading texts in their target language side by side. As the title of this paper reports, there were numerous and fascinating learning outcomes, whose success was confirmed by a student survey. Rather than summarize the outcomes here, I will describe the course and call out the various pedagogical benefits along the way, recapping them near the end of the paper.

Books of the Old (OT) and New (NT) Testaments offer a unique opportunity among Greek and Latin texts in that their narratives are almost word for word replicas of each other because the Greek of the Septuagint (LXX) and Jerome’s Latin Vulgate OT are translations of Hebrew or Aramaic originals, and Jerome’s NT is a close translation of the Greek texts. This allows students of either Greek or Latin or both to read the texts simultaneously. Then there is the fact that the texts are considerably easier to read than mainstream Classical authors because the underlying Hebrew/Aramaic models have a simple, paratactic structure with highly repetitive vocabulary; and, even if the canonical gospels were originally written in Greek,¹ they reflect this bare-bones style. The simplicity of the syntax readily allows for the one-room school house mentioned above with students with as little as one year of language exposure reading together with upper division students. Given that we read considerably more Greek and/or Latin than in a typical Classical language course, students gained confidence in their knowledge of forms and basic syntax and, because we read more texts, including an entire ancient book, engaging discussions emerged about a variety of topics: linguistic, literary, and cultural. Along the way we encountered issues involving the translation of individual words, the textual tradition, the name of God as represented in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, theories of translation (domestication versus foreignization), Greek and Roman nomenclature, and comparative mythology and intertextuality.

SHALOM, ΕΙΡΗΝΗ, PAX

I begin with some background for the more traditional OT/NT Greek course which I had previously taught before it was reborn last summer.² As a Classicist

1 See, e.g., Koester 1.110-13.

2 Reece covers some of the same ground here in greater detail (e.g., Latinisms and Roman presence

engaged with pagan texts, I was only casually interested in the original languages of the biblical texts; my exposure had mostly been to the old Tridentine Mass as a child. Years later, when I was an instructor in the Intensive Greek Workshop at Berkeley, two students wanted to read selections from the NT on the side; one was a Rabbi and the other an Israeli. So one afternoon we encountered John 20:21: after the resurrection Jesus appeared to the apostles and, upon entering the room, said εἰρήνη ὑμῖν: “Peace unto you.” I noted that this was not a typical greeting in Greek, but my fellow translators kindly set me straight. It is perfect Hebrew: *shalom aleichem*. Rather than promulgating an innovative and revolutionary directive, as I heard from the pulpit from time to time, Jesus said something akin to “hello!” At that moment, I realized that I would need to know Hebrew and/or Aramaic if I were going to understand the Greek of the OT and NT. Zoom ahead to the early 2000s: I took a year of Biblical Hebrew and among the passages we read was 2 Samuel 11.7, in which King David asked Uriah the Hittite about the *shalom* (שָׁלוֹם) of Joab, the people and the war. The peace of the war? The LXX translation offered a literal rendering: ἐπηρώτησεν Δαυιδ εἰς εἰρήνην Ἰωαβ καὶ εἰς εἰρήνην τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ εἰς εἰρήνην τοῦ πολέμου (“David inquired after the peace of Joab and after the peace of the people and after the peace of the war.” Translation from NETS). Jerome had a better understanding of the original text and translated as follows: *Quaesivitque David quam recte ageret Joab et populus, et quomodo administraretur bellum* (“David asked how Joab did, the people, and how the war was carried on.” Translations of Jerome are from the online *Latin Vulgate Bible*). Clearly *shalom* must mean much more than “peace.” In fact, among its meanings is “wellbeing” or “health,” which approximates “Hail!” (cf. Old Norse “Heill,” “health”).³ Both moments led me to the conclusion that reading these texts offered the potential for similar linguistic and cultural “aha” moments for students.

In time I began to teach OT and NT texts as an upper level Greek class; that is, no Latin and only students with two or more years of Greek. The texts I used were Conybeare and Stock and Aland *et al. Greek New Testament*; from time to time I also used the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine*, which includes both Greek and Latin texts on facing pages.⁴ We read the selections featuring Joseph, Samson, David and Elijah in Conybeare and Stock and the Gospel of Luke in the East, textual criticism, semiticisms) but does not explore the simultaneous teaching of the Latin Vulgate.

³ See this [word study](#) for a brief illustrated video on the various meanings of *shalom*.

⁴ N.B. There are multiple editions of each.

in the NT over the nine-week summer quarter. Eventually students with only one year of Greek were also admitted to the class and were gradually able to complete the long reading assignments in the original a couple of weeks into the course.

In the first story we translated, that of Joseph, we read that Jacob sent his favorite son to spy on his older brothers and his reception among them was icy: *ιδόντες δὲ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι αὐτὸν ὁ πατήρ φιλεῖ ἐκ πάντων τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐμίσησαν αὐτὸν καὶ οὐκ ἐδύναντο λαλεῖν αὐτῷ οὐδὲν εἰρηνικόν* (*Gen. 37.4*; “But when his brothers saw that their father was cherishing him above all his sons, they hated him and could not speak anything peaceable to him.”). They could not speak anything *εἰρηνικόν* to him. For *εἰρηνικόν* the Hebrew text reads *shalom*. Aha! They could not even say “hello” to their brother! In this case Jerome remained closer to the original: *Videntes autem fratres eius quod a patre plus cunctis filiis amaretur, oderant eum, nec poterant ei quidquam pacifice loqui* (“And his brethren seeing that he was loved by his father, more than all his sons, hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.”). And yet, there are times when the LXX translators got it right, as when Jacob asked Joseph to see if his brothers and the sheep were doing fine: *εἰ ὑγιαίνουσιν <shalom in the Hebrew original> οἱ ἀδελφοί σου καὶ τὰ πρόβατα*; Jerome: *si cuncta prospera sint erga fratres tuos et pecora* (37.14; LXX: “if your brothers and the sheep are well”; Jerome: “if all things are well with thy brethren, and the cattle”); cf. *Gen. 41.16* where the *shalom* of Pharaoh is translated *τὸ σωτήριον Φαραώ/prospira Pharaoni* [“the safety/good fortune of Pharaoh”].⁵ These observations led to a conversation about the translators. Several possibilities for the discrepancies were offered: some of the translators may have had a very limited word base at their disposal and used the same Greek word for the same Hebrew term regardless of the context; the fact that some translations correctly communicated the appropriate sense suggests the possible intervention of different translators or versions over time; some translators may have chosen to use the same word wanting to remain faithful to the original text, which was deemed more critical than clarity. The possible answers imagined out loud were far less important than the posing of the questions in the first place. We all wondered together: what is going on here? Observing firsthand the variation among the translations of *shalom* prompted the sort of wonder that has the potential to lead to further lines of inquiry, both linguistic and cultural. Expressions of intellectual curiosity of this nature, when repeated as

⁵ For the range of translations of *shalom* in the LXX, that includes *ἀγαθός*, *ἀκρότομος*, *ἀληθινός*, *ἀναπληροῦν*, *δίκαιος*, *εἰρήνη*, *εἰρηνικός*, *ὀλόκληρος*, *πλήρης*, *σύμπα*, *τέλειος*, and *τελειοῦν*, see Muraoka 151, s.v. *שָׁלוֹם*.

happened often during the quarter, have the further potential to establish an ongoing pattern of making and questioning observations — critical thinking.

ONLINE TEXT, RESOURCES AND THE FRAGILITY OF A TEXTUAL TRADITION

As for texts, we used a website called [Polyglot Bible](#) which is not only free, but includes Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts of the OT and the Greek and Latin texts of the NT, plus the King James translations for both.⁶ Moreover, the English translation of the Hebrew texts of the OT is linked with an online edition of *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* as are the Greek texts of the NT (superscript numbers). The former allows someone with meager exposure to Hebrew, like myself, to find the primary dictionary listing for Hebrew words, which can be more than challenging in the standard dictionary, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; and for those with limited knowledge of Greek, the concordance was equally helpful when reading the NT. Even if an instructor knows no Hebrew, clicking on the English word leads one to the meanings of the word in the text plus transliteration of the root (e.g., *shalom*). The texts on the website are arranged side-by-side in columns, with the order English-Greek-Hebrew-Latin for the OT and Greek-English-Latin for the NT (see Fig. 1 below); because the *Codex Alexandrinus* (A) and *Codex Vaticanus* (B) preserve significantly different versions of the book of *Judges*, both texts are included. Dictionaries are also available online by way of the University of Chicago's website [Logeion](#) and the [Perseus Project](#). Students either used laptops or books they purchased on their own, and during class I projected the *Polyglot Bible* texts on a large screen; in the same browser I had *Logeion* open as well as online translations of the LXX and Jerome and a map of Palestine for whenever we needed to locate the setting of the action. Enlarging the text of the Polyglot Bible meant that the texts did not line up very well, which was awkward, but doable. Interestingly, because we went back and forth between translating Latin and Greek, I sometimes found myself reading the wrong language without any problem, given how close the texts are.

⁶ Biblehub.com is also a very useful site that offers numerous commentaries and interlinear texts.

<p>4 And when his brethren²⁵¹ saw⁷²⁰⁰ that³⁵⁸⁸ their father¹ loved¹⁵⁷ him more than all^{4480 3605} his brethren,²⁵¹ they hated⁸¹³⁰ him, and could³²⁰¹ not³⁸⁰⁸ speak¹⁶⁹⁶ peaceably⁷⁹⁶⁵ unto him.</p>	<p>5 ἐνυπνιασθεὶς δὲ Ἰωσήφ ἐνύπνιον ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτὸ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ</p>	<p>מְכַלְאֲהֵיו וַיִּשְׁנֶאֱוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יִכְלוּ דַבְּרוּ לְשָׁלֵם:</p>	<p>nec poterant ei quidquam pacifice loqui.</p>
<p>5 And Joseph³¹³⁰ dreamed²⁴⁹² a dream,²⁴⁷² and he told⁵⁰⁴⁶ it his brethren:²⁵¹ and they hated⁸¹³⁰ him yet⁵⁷⁵⁰ the more.³²⁵⁴</p>	<p>6 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ἀκούσατε τοῦ ἐνυπνίου τούτου οὗ ἐνυπνιασθήν</p>	<p>וַיְהִי לָם יוֹסֵף וַיִּגְדַּל לָהֶם וַיֹּסִיפוּ עַד שֶׁנָּא אֹתוֹ:</p>	<p>5 Accidit quoque ut visum somnium referret fratribus suis: quæ causa majoris odii seminarium fuit.</p>
<p>6 And he said⁵⁵⁹ unto⁴¹³ them, Hear,⁸⁰⁸⁵ I pray you,⁴⁹⁹⁴ this²⁰⁸⁸ dream²⁴⁷² which⁸³⁴ I have dreamed.²⁴⁹²</p>	<p>7 ὧμην ἡμᾶς δεσμεύειν δράγματα ἐν μέσῳ τῷ πεδίῳ καὶ ἀνέστη τὸ ἐμὸν δράγμα καὶ ὠρθώθη περιστραφέντα δὲ τὰ δράγματα ὑμῶν προσεκύνησαν τὸ ἐμὸν δράγμα</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמַעוּ נָא הֲלֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתִּי:</p>	<p>6 Dixitque ad eos: Audite somnium meum quod vidi:</p>
<p>7 For, behold,²⁰⁰⁹ we⁵⁸⁷ were binding⁴⁸¹ sheaves⁴⁸⁵ in⁸⁴³² the field,⁷⁷⁰⁴ and, lo,²⁰⁰⁹ my sheaf⁴⁸⁵ arose,⁶⁹⁶⁵ and also¹⁵⁷¹ stood upright,⁵³²⁴ and, behold,²⁰⁰⁹ your sheaves⁴⁸⁵ stood round about,⁵⁴³⁷ and made obeisance⁷⁸¹² to my sheaf.⁴⁸⁵</p>	<p>8 εἶπαν δὲ αὐτῷ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ μὴ βασιλεύων βασιλεύσεις ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἢ κυριεύων κυριεύσεις ἡμῶν καὶ προσέθεντο ἔτι μισεῖν αὐτὸν ἕνεκεν τῶν ἐνυπνίων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕνεκεν τῶν ῥημάτων αὐτοῦ</p>	<p>וַיְהִי אֲנַחְנוּ מְאֻלְמִים וְלִמְעֵי בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהַנְּהִי קָמָה אֲלֵמַתִּי וְגַם נִצְבָּה וְהִנֵּה תִסְבִּינָה אֲלֵמַתֶּיכֶם וְתִשְׁתַּחֲוֶינָ לְאֵלֵמַתִּי:</p>	<p>7 putabam nos ligare manipulos in agro: et quasi consurgere manipulum meum, et stare, vestrosque manipulos circumstantes adorare manipulum meum.</p>
<p>8 And his brethren²⁵¹ said⁵⁵⁹ to him, Shalt thou indeed reign⁴⁴²⁷ over⁵⁹²¹ us? or⁵¹⁸ shalt thou indeed have dominion^{4910 4910} over us? And they hated⁸¹³⁰ him yet⁵⁷⁵⁰ the more³²⁵⁴ for⁵⁹²¹ his dreams,²⁴⁷² and for⁵⁹²¹ his words.¹⁶⁹⁷</p>	<p>9 εἶδεν δὲ ἐνύπνιον ἕτερον καὶ διηγήσατο αὐτὸ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν ἰδοὺ ἐνυπνιασάμην ἐνύπνιον ἕτερον ὡσπερ ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη καὶ ἕνδεκα ἀστέρες προσεκύνουν με</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֲהִיֹּ הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אִם-מִשׁוֹל תִּמְשַׁל בָּנוּ וַיֹּסִיפוּ עַד שֶׁנָּא אֹתוֹ עַל-חֲלַמְתֵּיו וְעַל-דַּבְּרָיו:</p>	<p>8 Responderunt fratres ejus: Numquid rex noster eris? aut subjiciemur ditioni tuæ? Hæc ergo causa somniorum atque sermonum, invidiae et odii fomitem ministravit.</p>
<p>9 And he dreamed²⁴⁹² yet⁵⁷⁵⁰ another³¹² dream,²⁴⁷² and told⁵⁶⁰⁸ it his brethren,²⁵¹ and said,⁵⁵⁹ Behold,²⁰⁰⁹ I have dreamed²⁴⁹² a dream²⁴⁷² more;⁵⁷⁵⁰ and, behold,²⁰⁰⁹ the sun⁸¹²¹ and the moon³³⁹⁴ and the eleven^{259 6240} stars³⁵⁵⁶ made obeisance⁷⁸¹² to me.</p>	<p>10 καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτῷ ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ τί τὸ ἐνύπνιον τοῦτο ὃ ἐνυπνιασθήσῃς ἄρά γε ἔλθόντες ἐλευσόμεθα ἐγώ τε καὶ ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου προσκυνήσασσι ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν</p>	<p>וַיִּחַלְם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַלֶּוֹם אֲחֵר וַיִּסְפֹּר אֹתוֹ לְאֶחָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה חֲלַמְתִּי הַלֶּוֹם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עֶשְׂרִים כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי:</p>	<p>9 Aliud quoque vidit somnium, quod narrans fratribus, ait: Vidi per somnium, quasi solem, et lunam, et stellas undecim adorare me.</p>
	<p>11 ἐξήλωσαν δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ ὃ δὲ πατήρ αὐτοῦ διετίρησεν τὸ ῥῆμα</p>	<p>וַיִּחַלְם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עֶשְׂרִים כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי:</p>	<p>10 Quod cum patri suo, et fratribus retulisset, increpavit eum pater suus, et dixit: Quid sibi vult hoc somnium quod vidisti? num ego et mater tua, et fratres tui adorabimus te super terram?</p>
	<p>12 ἐπορεύθησαν δὲ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ βόσκειν τὰ</p>	<p>וַיִּסְפֹּר אֶל-אַבְרָהָם</p>	<p>11 Invidebant ei igitur</p>

Fig. 1: Layout of the Polyglot Bible

A decisive advantage of the *Polyglot Bible* is that the texts were not always aligned from a different perspective: that of the readings themselves. That is, on a number of occasions we encountered significant differences between the Greek and

Latin translations. For instance, when Elijah revived the widow of Zarephath's son the LXX reads καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν τῷ παιδαρίῳ τρις καὶ ἐπεκαλέσατο τὸν κύριον καὶ εἶπεν κύριε ὁ θεός μου ἐπιστραφήτω δὴ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ παιδαρίου τούτου εἰς αὐτόν. καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως καὶ ἀνεβόησεν τὸ παιδάριον (3 Kings 17.21-22; "And he breathed on the lad three times and called on the Lord and said, O Lord my God, let this lad's life come into him again. And it thus happened, and the lad cried out."). Jerome's translation reproduces the Masoretic version (on which, see below): *Et expandit se, atque mensus est super puerum tribus vicibus, et clamavit ad Dominum, et ait: Domine Deus meus, revertatur, obsecro, anima pueri huius in viscera ejus. Et exaudivit Dominus vocem Eliae: et reversa est anima pueri intra eum, et revixit* (1 Kings 17.21-22, "And he stretched, and measured himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord, my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech thee, return into his body. And the Lord heard the voice of Elias: and the soul of the child returned into him, and he revived."). As can be observed, in the LXX Elijah breathed on the child, while in Jerome's translation, the prophet lay upon him. A number of differences, major and minor, that we encountered throughout the quarter exerted a profound impression on the students as they came to witness first-hand the fragility of a textual tradition. This particular instance just cited furthermore prompted discussion of the possibility that the LXX translators were looking at a different original that might even be older than the extant Hebrew text; as an ironic twist of fate, the earliest MSS of the LXX are several hundred years older than the earliest extant MSS of the canonical Hebrew OT, called the Masoretic Text (MT), after Jewish editors known as Masoretes. While we are accustomed to dealing with variants among Classical authors, the stakes are much higher when dealing with texts that billions of people have looked, and continue to look, to as "gospel." The upshot was to call even greater attention to textual criticism in an intermediate-advanced language course than is typically the case.⁷ One further discovery emerged: dealing with all three texts of the OT brought up the issue of the different biblical canons that exist among Jews, Catholics, and Protestants (note the different numbering of the texts cited above; this issue also emerged in the different numbering of the Psalms

⁷ For a succinct overview of the manuscript traditions for both the OT and NT, see Metzger and Coogan 486-90 (s.v., Manuscripts) and 739-40 (s.v., Textual Criticism). Metzger offers an expansive discussion of the NT tradition.

in the Hebrew and LXX texts).⁸ The larger issue to emerge from this discovery was the thorny problem of who has the authority to identify texts as canonical.⁹

THE NAME OF GOD

On the first day of class, I presented the Hebrew alphabet so that students could at least observe firsthand some of the common words, like *shalom*, but I focused primarily on names, which led to consideration of the Documentary Hypothesis, attributed to Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), that identifies four sources of the Torah: J (in which God's name is Yahweh/Jehova and is associated with the southern kingdom of Judah), E (in which God's name is Elohim and is linked to the northern kingdom of Israel), D (a separate source found in Deuteronomy), and P (a later tradition associated with priestly sources).¹⁰ The story of Joseph provides an outstanding example of a biblical account that combines both J and E. I would point out that translation of the name of God in the Septuagint suggests that already by the third century BCE Jews avoided saying Yahweh; instead of a transliteration of the name, as found in some of the magic papyri (e.g., the heptagram Ιαωουηε), we find Κύριος in Greek (a rendering of *Adonai*, "My Lord" used by Jews instead of pronouncing the name of God); this was later translated into Latin as *Dominus*.¹¹ Elohim, on the other hand, is translated as Θεός in Greek, *Deus* in Latin. So at *Gen.* 39.1-23, where Joseph lives and works in the house of Potiphar, we find the tetragrammaton YHWH (יהוה), Yahweh, used as the name of God (Κύριος in Greek, *Dominus* in Latin). In the following episode where Joseph is in jail and interprets the dreams of the Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker (*Gen.* 41.1-23), the name of God is Elohim (אֱלֹהִים, Θεός in Greek, *Deus* in Latin).

What makes this all the more interesting is that the episodes are clearly doublets: at Potiphar's house, Joseph is a slave (virtual prisoner) who is given control of his master's house, just as he is given control of the prison by its master, both

⁸ For a useful online discussion, see [Biblical canon](#).

⁹ See Metzger and Coogan 1993: 98-104 (s.v., Canon) and on the OT in particular, see Coogan and Chapman 3-13. Ossandón Widow offers a detailed examination of the controversies around the formation of the 24-book Hebrew canon; for the NT, see Martin 15-33.

¹⁰ On the Documentary Hypothesis, see Metzger and Coogan 1993: 580-81 (s.v., Pentateuch, with references to related articles) and Coogan and Chapman 45-54.

¹¹ Howard, however, notes that some pre-Christian Greek texts do in fact reproduce the name of God and suggests that sometime between the emergence of the Christian movement and the earliest Christian copies of the LXX κύριος replaced the tetragrammaton.

circumstances arising from Joseph's excellence as a manager. Apparently, the later redactors did not want to do away with either of the traditional stories from the J and E sources and decided to blend them, even though the resulting narrative was redundant. Further evidence of inclusive editing can be found throughout the account (see Fig. 2). At *Gen. 37.22*, Reuben persuades his brothers not to kill Joseph but at *Gen. 37.26* Judah argues against killing him after they had already agreed not to do so; at *Gen. 37.29* Reuben looks for Joseph in the pit where they originally threw him but they had just sold him; at *Gen. 42.37* Reuben offers to return to Egypt while at *Gen. 43.3-10* Judah makes a similar offer; at *Gen. 37.25* the people to whom they sell Joseph are called Ishmaelites but at *Gen. 37.28* they are Midianites. It is likely that Judah's interventions, inasmuch as he was the eponym of the southern kingdom, belonged to the J tradition, while Reuben, Jacob's (aka Israel's) oldest son, belonged to the E tradition associated with the northern kingdom.¹²

E Tradition (Northern Kingdom)	J Tradition (Southern Kingdom)
Reuben persuades his brothers not to kill Joseph (<i>Gen. 37.22</i>)	Judah argues against killing Joseph (<i>Gen. 37.26</i>)
Reuben recommends throwing Joseph into a pit (37.22)	Judah recommends selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites (37.27)
Midianite traders pull Joseph from the pit (37.28)	Joseph bought by the Ishmaelites at the slave rate of 20 shekels (37.28)
Reuben looks for Joseph in the pit and is surprised when he is not there (37.29)	
Reuben offers to return to Egypt (<i>Gen. 42.37</i>)	Judah offers to return to Egypt (<i>Gen. 43.3-10</i>)

Fig. 2: Two versions of the Joseph story, E and J

Regardless of the current status of the Documentary Hypothesis,¹³ close readings of this story, with a focus on the Hebrew names for God and the various narrative inconcinnities, allowed the students to see firsthand why this hypothesis was

¹² See the discussion of the two traditions at Conybeare and Stock 100-07. The fact that Judah and Reuben are both said to try to persuade their brothers not to kill Joseph and both offer to return to Egypt underscores the blending of the two different traditions.

¹³ See, for example Carr, who concludes: "Thus, while a few are attempting a return to source criticism as it was before tradition history, the bulk of contemporary Pentateuchal scholarship ultimately has followed Rendtorff in undertaking a tradition-historical reinvestigation of the formation of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch – reconstructing the formation of the Pentateuch from its smaller units to its broader extent . . ." (466).

postulated. Even without knowing any Hebrew, whenever you see Κύριος/*Dominus* for the name of God you can be confident that it translates Yahweh; when you see Θεός/*Deus*, the original text reads Elohim.

Moreover, God is sometimes referred to as *Yahweh ha* (the) *Elohim* (e.g., 1 *Kings* 17.37), a blend of both titles for God. This in turn is translated into Greek as Κύριος ὁ Θεός and in Latin as *Dominus Deus*. Thus, when we turn to the NT and find Κύριος ὁ Θεός or *Dominus Deus* (Luke 1.15, 32, 68 etc), we can be confident that behind this phrase lies the Hebrew expression *Yahweh ha Elohim*, regardless of whether or not there is a specific text alluded to. What can be a bit confusing, however, is the fact that the Hebrew word for a human master, *adon* (whence Adonis) is also translated as κύριος. So at *Gen.* 39.2-3 we read καὶ ἦν Κύριος μετὰ Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἦν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτυγχάνων καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ Αἰγυπτίῳ. ἤδει δὲ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ ὅτι Κύριος μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ὅσα ἂν ποιῇ Κύριος εὐδοοῖ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ (cf. Jerome: *Fuitque Dominus cum eo, et erat vir in cunctis prospere agens: habitavitque in domo domini sui, qui optime noverat Dominum esse cum eo, et omnia, quae gerebat, ab eo dirigi in manu illius*; LXX: “And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man, and he was in the house with his Egyptian lord. And his lord knew that the Lord was with him, and the Lord was prospering whatever he did.” Jerome: “And the Lord was with him, and he was a prosperous man in all things: and he dwelt in his master’s house: Who knew very well that the Lord was with him, and made all that he did to prosper in his hand). The term Κύριος/κύριος, then, can offer some curious problems. For instance, when Jesus is referred to as Χριστὸς Κυρίου/*Christus Domini* at *Luke* 2.11, this would appear to mean the “Anointed of Yahweh.” But there is a variant reading: Χριστὸς Κύριος/*Christus Dominus*. Anointed Yahweh? Anointed Master (i.e., *adon*)? As we saw, both Κύριος and *Dominus* can refer to either. The different readings suggest that there was some confusion on this matter already in antiquity. In any event, the take-away for students was that textual variants might well reveal early controversies, and in this case a significant one: the person of Jesus. In fact, for years when I heard the Mass in Latin I imagined that the frequent refrain *Dominus vobiscum* (“The Lord be with you”) referred to Jesus, but in the OT it can refer to Yahweh, as at 1 *Sam.* 17.37. Comparison of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts prompts many questions and leads to the realization that multifaceted critical analysis is required in order to attempt to understand problematic words or phrases, situations students will encounter if they continue studying Classics at advanced levels.

LITERARY STYLE: DOMESTICATION VERSUS FOREIGNIZATION

Another benefit of reading the Greek and Latin texts side by side is that one can observe Jerome giving his translation a more polished and Latinate style within the limits of staying faithful to the original text. For instance, at *Judges* 14.2-4 LXX reads: καὶ ἀνέβη καὶ ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν γυναῖκα ἐόρακα ἐν Θαμναθα ἀπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων Φυλιστιμ καὶ νῦν λάβετε αὐτὴν ἐμοὶ εἰς γυναῖκα. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ μὴ οὐκ εἰσιν θυγατέρες τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου καὶ ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ μου γυνή ὅτι σὺ πορεύῃ λαβεῖν γυναῖκα ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων τῶν ἀπεριτμητῶν καὶ εἶπεν Σαμψων πρὸς τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ ταύτην λαβέ μοι ὅτι αὕτη εὐθεῖα ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς μου. καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν ὅτι παρὰ κυρίου ἐστίν ὅτι ἐκδίκησιν αὐτὸς ζητεῖ ἐκ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων καὶ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι κυριεύοντες ἐν Ἰσραὴλ (“And he came up and told his father and his mother and said, ‘I have seen a woman at Thamnatha of the daughters of the Philistim, and now get her for me for a wife.’ And his father and his mother said to him, ‘Are there no daughters of your brothers and a woman out of all my people, that you will go to take a wife from the uncircumcised allophyles?’ And Samson said to his father, ‘Get this one for me, because he is straightforward in my sight.’ And his father and his mother did not know that it was from the Lord, for he himself was seeking vengeance from the allophyles. And at that time the allophyles were dominant in Israel.”). Jerome’s text reads: *Ascendit, et nuntiavit patri suo et matri suae, dicens: Vidi mulierem in Thamnatha de filiabus Philisthinorum quam quaeso ut mihi accipiatis uxorem. Cui dixerunt pater et mater sua: Numquid non est mulier in filiabus fratrum tuorum, et in omni populo meo, quia vis accipere uxorem de Philisthiim, qui incircumcisi sunt? Dixitque Samson ad patrem suum: Hanc mihi accipe: quia placuit oculis meis. Parentes autem eius nesciebant quod res a Domino fieret, et quaereret occasionem contra Philisthiim: eo enim tempore Philisthiim dominabantur Israēli*; “He came up, and told his father and his mother, saying: I saw a woman in Thamnatha of the daughters of the Philistines: I beseech you, take her for me to wife. And his father and mother said to him: Is there no woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou wilt take a wife of the Philistines, who are uncircumcised? And Samson said to his father: Take this woman for me; for she hath pleased my eyes. Now his parents knew not that the thing was done by the Lord, and that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel”).

Instead of repeating a finite form in parataxis (καὶ εἶπεν), Jerome switches to a participle (*dicens*), avoiding the repetitive syntax. Similarly, instead of continuing the paratactic sentence (καὶ νῦν λάβετε μοι αὐτήν εἰς γυναῖκα), Jerome introduces a relative clause (*quam quaeso ut mihi accipiat uxorem*). Instead of the third person singular with a plural subject (καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ), Jerome uses the third person plural, but also makes the connection with the previous sentence by way of a relative pronoun, as is typical in Classical Latin (*Cui dixerunt pater et mater sua*). LXX repeats for the third time the phrase καὶ ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ, which would appear to be too repetitive for Jerome, who changes it to *parentes autem eius*, avoiding both the Hebrew and Greek repetitions (*variatio*). Similar to the Hebrew text, however, he remains consistent in using the term *Philisthim* as opposed to the Greek use of ἀλλόφυλοι (“foreigners”) for the Philistines. In sum, by comparing Jerome’s translations to the Greek, one can sense that he was trying to make the biblical text sound more like real Latin, contrary to the slavish translation of the LXX which tended to give an exact rendering of Hebrew vocabulary and syntax.

Friedrich Schleiermacher in an 1813 lecture entitled *Über die Verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens* identified two types of translation: domestication, in which the translator strives to make the text sound as if written by a native speaker, and foreignization, in which the translator endeavors to foreground the distinctive nature of the original, underscoring its foreignness.¹⁴ Both approaches to translation can be seen in the comparison of the Greek (the latter) and Latin (the former) renditions. While I am not familiar with the relatively new discipline of Translation Studies, comparison of the approaches taken by LXX translators and Jerome might provide those with knowledge of this field an avenue for introducing the variety of issues it examines (e.g., Post-Colonial translation, Visibility of the translator, etc.).¹⁵

GREEK AND ROMAN NOMENCLATURE

It is also possible to observe how NT Greek represented Roman names and political terms. Δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου ἀπογράφεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην = *edictum a Caesare Augusto ut describeretur universus orbis* (Luke 2.1); ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου = *praeside Syriae Quirino* (Luke 2.2;

¹⁴ As noted by Bassnett 16-17. I owe reference to this book to John Gruber-Miller.

¹⁵ Bassnett’s book offers a useful introduction to the various topics included in the area of Translation Studies. Another book recommended by John Gruber-Miller is Venuti, which includes essays on the teaching of translation from various cultural and literary perspectives.

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world ... while Quirinus was governor of Syria;” translations of the NT are from NIV); ἐν ἔτει δὲ πεντεκαίδεκάτῳ τῆς ἡγεμονίας Τιβερίου Καίσαρος, ἡγεμονεύοντος Ποντίου Πιλάτου τῆς Ἰουδαίας, καὶ τετρααρχοῦντος τῆς Γαλιλαίας Ἡρώδου, Φιλίππου δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ τετρααρχοῦντος τῆς Ἰτουραίας καὶ Τραχωνίτιδος χώρας, καὶ Λυσανίου τῆς Ἀβιληνῆς τετρααρχοῦντος, ἐπὶ ἀρχιερέως Ἄννα καὶ Καϊάφα, ἐγένετο ῥῆμα θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. = *Anno autem quintodecimo imperii Tiberii Caesaris, procurante Pontio Pilato Judaeam, tetrarcha autem Galilaeae Herode, Philippo autem fratre ejus tetrarcha Ituraeae, et Trachonitidis regionis, et Lysania Abilinae tetrarcha, sub principibus sacerdotum Anna et Caipha: factum est verbum Domini super Joannem, Zachariae filium, in deserto.* (Luke 3.1-2; “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene — during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.”); βουλευτής for *decurio* (Luke 23.50).

NT texts thus provide opportunities to introduce students to the ways in which Greeks articulated the reality of Roman conquest and colonialism in their own language, revealing what names and terms were transliterated and which ones were translated, which might be compared with other literary, historical, and epigraphical texts by instructors familiar with this material.¹⁶

THE OT AND NT AS LITERATURE: COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY AND INTERTEXTUALITY

To move from language to literature, a benefit from reading OT texts, apart from their importance in world literature and religion in general, lies in observing their presentation of different kinds of traditional heroes with whom we can compare Greek parallels. From the stories we read, we observed that Joseph is an intelligent manager (like Jason in Apollonius’ *Argonautica*) who is skilled at interpreting dreams; Samson is a Herculean, jaw-bone wielding, strong man who, like his Greek counterpart, dies because of a woman; David’s slaying of Goliath in a duel of champions recalls scenes from the *Iliad* and the pretty boy slinger and seducer of wives brings Paris to mind in particular; Elijah is a shaman who performs miracles

¹⁶ McLean 339-44 provides a handy chart of Greek terms for Roman offices and office holders, some of which can be found among the NT works.

and, like the prophet Amphiaraus, is mysteriously assumed into the afterlife. But the comparison between Hebrew and Greek heroes also underscores what is unique about the OT heroes: their complete reliance upon one God, a God who, different from the Greek pantheon, will brook no other. A close reading of Hebrew figures as cultural heroes encourages discussions of comparative mythology and religion.

The birth narrative and fate of Samson (*Judges* 13.1-24; text from Conybeare and Stock, *Codex Vaticanus*) provide an important model for Luke's account of the life of John the Baptist, whose story unfolds with all of the hallmarks of classic intertextuality; for this discussion I will focus on the Greek text which shows strong evidence of engaging the LXX translation.¹⁷ An angel appears to the unnamed wife of Manoe, announcing that she, who was barren, will give birth to a son, and, like her coming child, should not drink alcoholic beverages or eat unclean food; for her son will be a Nazir (ναζείρ, transliteration of נָזִיר, which means "consecrated"), which is later glossed as ἅγιος (*Judges* 13.7), from the moment of conception (ἀπο τῆς κοιλίας, *Judges* 13.5) and for all of his life. The son is also famously instructed not to cut his hair, an injunction whose failure to keep will lead to his death, thanks to Delilah. In the first two instances referring to the alcoholic beverages to be avoided, the text reads οἶνον καὶ μέθυσμα (*Judges* 13.4, 7), but in the third we read οἶνον καὶ σίκερα μέθυσμα (*Judges* 13.14). Σίκερα is an adaptation of the Hebrew שֵׁכָר (shekar, "intoxicating drink"), which μέθυσμα glosses. Manoe asks to meet the angel, which he does, and he invites the divine messenger to have food, which offer he rejects; when asked to give his name, the angel refuses, citing it as θαυμαστόν ("full of wonder"). Samson is born and, in his youth, grows strong, blessed by Yahweh: καὶ ἠδρύνθη τὸ παιδάριον καὶ εὐλόγησεν αὐτὸ Κύριος (*Judges* 14.24). One final point: when Samson is about to do something amazing, like kill a lion (*Judges* 14.6), rob 30 men of their clothes (*Judges* 15.3), or kill a thousand men (*Judges* 15.14), the spirit of Yahweh leaps upon him: καὶ ἤλατο ἐπ' αὐτὸν πνεῦμα Κυρίου.

After an introduction that resembles the opening of an ancient history written by an Atticizing writer, Luke jarringly reorients the narrative proper to biblical style with the tell-tale ἐγένετο ("it happened").¹⁸ The opening scene finds the priest Zachariah, whose wife Elizabeth is barren, in the temple. An angel of Yahweh appeared

¹⁷ This discussion is based on years of teaching and reflecting on the birth narratives of Samson and John the Baptist. I have at present set it aside for a possible future research project.

¹⁸ See the discussion on καὶ ἐγένετο at Reiling and for the peculiarities of Septuagental Greek style in general, see Conybeare and Stock 25-97, which is closely linked to the notes in the texts that form the core of the book.

to him (ὄφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ἄγγελος Κυρίου [Luke 1.11]; cf. καὶ ὄφθη ἄγγελος Κυρίου πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα [Judges 13.3]), announcing that his wife would bear a child who would not drink alcoholic beverages (καὶ οἶνον καὶ σίκερα) and would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου πλησθήσεται ἔτι ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ [Luke 1.15]). Without being asked, the angel announces his name, Gabriel (Luke 1.19). John is born and he too grows and is made strong by the spirit (sc. of God): τὸ δὲ παιδίον ἠύξανεν καὶ ἐκραταιοῦτο πνεύματι (1.80), wording that recalls Judges 14.24 underlined above. The word of God comes upon John as part of his development: ἐγένετο ῥῆμα θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ (Luke 3.2), similar to the spirit of God coming upon Samson, recalling Judges 15.14 mentioned above. While other OT barren women bore great leaders (e.g., Sarah and Hannah), the details specific to Samson's birth narrative demonstrate that Luke had his eye on the birth of Samson.

With Greek and Roman intertextual composition in mind, we find in Luke striking examples of *oppositio in imitando* (see Fig. 3):

- Angel appears to unnamed barren wife ≠ angel appears to husband of named barren wife;
- Angel refuses to give name ≠ angel offers name unasked;
- Samson's breaking of most of the rules regarding his Nazirate (rules listed at *Numbers* 6.1-21) ≠ John's strict adherence to his spiritual calling;
- Samson is a solitary figure who never functions as a "judge" (a Semitic term for leader) ≠ John has disciples and eagerly expresses his judgment on contemporaries (3.1-17).

On the other hand, both individuals grew up filled with, and both act when inspired by, the Holy Spirit and both perished because of the machinations of women. Different from Matthew (14.1-12) and Mark (6.14-29), Luke only notes that John was beheaded (9.7-9), without mentioning anything about the role that Herodias (named in passing at 3.19) and Salome played in his death.

<i>Judges</i>	<i>Luke</i>
Angel appears to unnamed barren wife	Angel appears to husband of named barren wife
Angel refuses to give his name	Angel offers his name unasked
Samson breaks most of the rules of Nazirite	John remains devoted to his spiritual calling
Samson is a solitary “judge”	John, judging Herod, has disciples
Samson is filled with the Holy Spirit	John is filled with the Holy Spirit
Samson dies because of a woman	John dies because of woman
Samson’s death involves his hair	John’s death involves his head

Fig. 3: Comparison of Samson and John the Baptist

Because of the elaborate engagement with the story of Samson, did Luke feel he did not need to repeat what readers would recall from Matthew and Mark as the fate of his model would suffice to hint at John’s death at the hands of women? Might we also see as operative the fact that the deaths of both figures involved their heads? In sum, the comparison of these texts provides a good parallel for the kind of intertextual narratives we observe in Greek and Roman literature.¹⁹ This and other examples explored during the quarter drew the students not only into Luke’s highly self-conscious gospel,²⁰ but also raised questions about the author’s goals: is the gospel a historical biography as advertised at the outset (*Luke* 1.1-4) or actually literary fiction? Would literate readers recognize the OT models and understand that Luke was creating out of whole cloth a Septuagintal pastiche? Were they supposed to? Who was the intended audience? These questions in turn prompted consideration of the difference between ancient and modern approaches to, and understanding of, biography as a genre.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

As can be seen from the previous discussion, in addition to covering much more reading in Latin or Greek than a typical stacked Greek or Latin 300/400 level course, the texts read led to a number of desirable learning outcomes:

¹⁹ For studies that examine intertextuality and intercommunication among OT, NT, and Greek literature, see MacDonald (2000 and 2001) and more recently Loudon.

²⁰ The students suggested that the story of Joseph may lie behind the parable of the Prodigal Son in the presence of a jealous brother and a fancy article of clothing — clear evidence that they were beginning to read Luke like educated Greeks and Romans.

- “Aha” moments that prompted further inquiry promoting a habit of critical thinking.
- Introduction to textual criticism.
- Introduction to the issue of canonicity, particularly among different religious traditions.
- Introduction to the Documentary Hypothesis and firsthand observation of texts that gave rise to the theory.
- The need to analyze words with multiple meanings from both their context and traditional usage.
- Observation of different goals in translation.
- Observation of how colonialism impacts the language of a conquered people.
- Discussion of comparative mythology and intertextuality.
- Discussion of the goals of ancient versus modern biography.

What is more, these outcomes emerged organically from the texts themselves, genuine student curiosity, and a little prodding from the instructor. Because there were students reading Greek, Latin, or both, we used the CLAS/GRK/LAT 405 rubric which happens to be our undergraduate seminar. What started out as a catch-all language class turned out after all to be a seminar exposing some of the many different directions that research in ancient literature can take. I see the course as fully complementary to a Classics education at any point — a good introduction to advanced undergraduate study and a useful segue to graduate school. I would be remiss if I did not mention that it was also a lot of fun to teach and that I will definitely teach this course again.

EXAMINATIONS

In the past, as a straight-up Greek reading class, my tests were standard fare: translation, explanation of forms and grammar, followed by essays. Because it was

clear to me that the students were translating with facility during class time, I decided not to give this form of exam, apart from the fact that I would need to create two separate exams in Greek and Latin, but instead focused on the students' assimilation and processing of the material based on readings, handouts, and class discussions. Exams were completed at home and presented orally during the time the exams were scheduled to be taken. Of particular note is the fact that auditors in the class, Access Students who qualify for this status by being "Washington State residents 60 and older," chose to show up on the days of both the midterm and final because they wanted to hear the matriculating students report on what they learned. The fact that they wanted to observe and participate in the discussion, which the students were likewise looking forward to, showed me that this was a productive approach. One student reported that, when it was his turn to speak, he changed his mind on some of the things he had written as a result of hearing other students' presentations. Instead of merely recording answers during the time of the exam, through the sharing of their ideas the students continued to think about and critique their own responses, even beyond class time. There was no conclusion, there were no conclusions, rather open-ended beginnings.

For the midterm, students were asked to reread all of the passages in English and write moderate paragraph-length essays (ca. 150-200 words). As this is the first time I wrote an exam like this, I am certain that the prompts could be better conceived and articulated, but they will provide an example of what the class grappled with. Students were required to answer all prompts; reference to Greek or Latin texts was optional.

Prompts for the Midterm:

Joseph

1. Identify evidence of the J and E traditions present in the story of Joseph (see last page of the syllabus and discussions in class). What does the presence of at least two originally separate traditions tell us about the nature of biblical narrative?
2. Describe the characteristics that set Joseph apart from other heroic figures seen in the OT. Can you compare him with any Greco-Roman hero or heroes? Any insights to draw from the comparison?
3. Is Joseph justified in tormenting his brothers and father? However you answer this, how does his behavior fit in with salvation history?

Samson

1. In what ways does Samson transgress against the requirements of the Nazir (see class handout)? Does the narrator have a problem with this? If so, where is it found? If not, how are we to understand this aspect of his behavior that flies in the face of his commitment?

2. What is the most telling doublet in the story of Samson's life and what does this tell us about the extant narrative in particular and about OT practices when dealing with multiple versions in general?

3. Describe the characteristics that set Samson apart from other heroic figures seen in the OT. Can you compare him with any Greco-Roman hero or heroes? Any insights to draw from the comparison?

4. Samson's story is included in the book of Judges. Is there any indication in the narrative that he functioned as a "judge" as opposed to a brutal killer of Hebrew enemies? How do we make sense of his killing so many people in his life time and at his death within salvation history?

David

1. How is David's slaying of Goliath both a folktale motif and a reflection of the larger narrative of salvation history? Can they coexist?

2. Describe the characteristics that set David apart from other heroic figures seen in the OT. Can you compare him with any Greco-Roman hero or heroes? Any insights to draw from the comparison?

Elijah

1. Identify several triplets within the narrative. What do these suggest about the origin of Elijah's extant biographical account?

2. Describe the characteristics that set Elijah apart from other heroic figures seen in the OT. Can you compare him with any Greco-Roman hero or heroes? Any insights to draw from the comparison?

3. Ahab repents of his treatment of Nabouth and God forgives him and re-directs his punishment onto his son. What universal anxiety does this reflect (as discussed in class) and how does this affect our view about the justice of the God of the OT?

4. Elijah slaughtered the 850 priests of Baal following the competitive sacrifice. How does the narrative view this action? That is, does it in any way problematize

the slaughter? If not, what does that tell us about the views of the narrator and audience?

Your question

Pose a question of particular interest to you and provide a preliminary answer.

The final exam, also take-home, required some original research on the part of the students, as the questions will make clear.

Prompts for the Final:

The gospels clearly incorporate passages from the OT, both directly as quotations and indirectly as imitations (intertextuality). Based on our readings, class discussions and your own research:

- Compare three quotations of OT texts in Luke; are there any significant differences between his text and the originals? Looking at the larger context of the passages quoted, suggest why Luke cited these texts, keeping in mind that some of the citations can be a pastiche of lines from one or several different texts. To identify quotations, you can find italicized words set apart in printed texts, look for words stating that the lines are being quoted (e.g., “as it was written” or “as it was said”), or consult reference works such as *Bible Cross References* (<https://www.openbible.info/labs/cross-references/>). Not every hit on this website will be appropriate. No need to look at citations from or to other NT texts; the focus is on Luke’s use of the OT.
- Identify five places in Luke where it is clear that he has woven an OT episode into his narrative (e.g., birth of Samson); what does comparison of the texts suggest to you about the author’s intentions? Are there indications that Luke consciously changed or inverted the model texts? And if so, what do you make of the changes?
- Finally, what is your overall impression of Luke’s book when reading the narrative of Jesus’ (Yeshua’s) life colored by the direct and

indirect references to the OT texts? If the readers were expected to get the references, what does this tell us about the target audience?

I found the student essays in both exams very satisfying because they had the time to reflect on the questions, assisted by their notes and the texts, and as a result they provided more evidence of having assimilated the material than they would have if asked to write essays in class. As noted above, the time normally allocated for students to prove their mastery of the material actually extended the opportunity for deeper understanding of the texts.

STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE COURSE

After the course, I asked students to complete a brief survey. Because this was sent out after the quarter when I contemplated writing this paper, many of the students had already left town and I only received 7 of 14 responses. The questions and summaries of the answers I received are listed below; I report specific answers where appropriate:

1. How did you find reading this course's texts online, both at home and in class?

Although, as noted above, the multiple texts often did not line up in class, especially when magnified, respondents found it useful to have access to all of the texts and the other online resources; they also liked the fact that they were free. Some students purchased other books or printed out the texts to supplement the course's e-texts or as substitutes, preferring a hard copy.

2. Did you make use of the online dictionaries, and if so, were they helpful?

Only one of the respondents did not use Logeion or any online dictionaries. Several preferred the dictionary resources at Perseus. By and large the online dictionaries were seen as helpful.

3. Did you find it distracting or in any way unhelpful that passages were translated outside of your target language? More specifically, were you able to follow in your ancient language while another student was translating in the other?

All respondents reported that they were not only able to follow translations in their target language, but several reported enjoying hearing the discussions about the differences between the Greek and Latin texts, especially regarding conflicting translations and changes in the Latin translation to suit Roman stylistic tastes.

4. What surprised you in a class in which two languages were being studied simultaneously?

- I think I was most surprised by how fluidly the class went.
- The most interesting point was the choice of vocabulary selected by St. Jerome in his translations as well as his grammar.
- For one, I am keen on picking up Latin now, because I see how helpful it can be to look at the two side by side. That is surprising because I had little interest in learning Latin prior to this class.
- The Greek and Latin interpretations of certain OT Hebrew passages were different.
- I was surprised at how smoothly the class went from the very beginning, with everyone involved, regardless of their language choice, and how little difference it seemed to make to any of the students that one was studying Greek, another Latin.
- That so many people were interested in spending 2 afternoons a week studying them, in summer quarter, no less.
- I was surprised by how lively the class dynamic became, especially in that perfect space of the classroom door on the way out. So many different backgrounds, such disparate immediate academic goals, but I felt like we were able to communicate really clearly, generously, and excitably with one another because the course was able to offer so much to each interest.

5. Was it useful to be introduced to the Hebrew alphabet?

Respondents were enthusiastic about this part of the class, especially as they could see for themselves some of the names of important people and places. One student has signed up for Hebrew in the Fall.

6. What issues came up of greatest interest to you as a result of our reading the texts in this fashion?

- I really enjoyed hearing the differing perspectives of everyone in the class during various discussions, especially over the minor differences in translation and what they might mean.
- It was particularly interesting to me to see the repetition of stories in the Old Testament, reflecting the different traditions. Understanding the traditional ways in which oral story-telling was written down was very helpful in beginning to understand why the same story line would be repeated with small variations.
- [The ancient writers] were sitting between worlds, languages, and traditions, much like we did by engaging their work in their languages and doing the work of understanding them in their own world.
- I became interested in whether meaning is affected in translations into different languages because of the way vocabulary and culture affect concepts.
- For me, the single issue that sparked the greatest specific interest was the variations in the translations of the original Old Testament or New, particularly in light of how closely the language is parsed by so many.
- I enjoyed seeing the linguistic comparisons, as well as the historical context. It was also interesting to hear from students who had never read the Bible before.
- The Hebrew Greek, and its adaptation into a distinct and interesting style in Luke's gospel; tracing Jesus' transition from Hebraic Rav to divinity through the choices reflected across every language; comparing what surprised me in this course with what surprised my peers.

7. What question would you like to see asked in this questionnaire and how would you answer it?

- What most influenced your understanding of the text? / Was there anything you had hoped to translate? I think the midterm and the final (as well as the resulting discussions) aided me most in my understanding and appreciation of the text.
- How does a class in a public university deal with religious texts when those texts are at the heart of current religious traditions? I could see it was a bit of a dance, with some fancy footwork, to discuss the doctrinal points made in the text without seeming to promote one or the other religious point of view.
- How will you read ancient texts differently in light of this class? I now have a “connections antenna” up at all times. What can I compare X phrase with? What does Y event remind me of? What material could the author of Z have been pulling from? Intertextual questions will be in my mind from now on.
- Was your concept of the Divine changed in any way by your comparison of passages from OT and Luke?” That might be too personal for some people, and unanswerable for others (like dividing by zero). My answer is that my view was not changed, but I gained insight into how others, particularly Christians, might view God.
- Is there anything further you would like to say about the class or how it was conducted? *My answer:* The atmosphere of the class was, I thought, remarkable in its open, even relaxed tone. The students appeared always at ease and willing to share their thoughts or questions with you and with each other.
- What is keeping Classics majors from studying in Rome and Greece, and what can be done about it?
- How did your background (both academic and personal) influence your experience of the course? I was most impressed throughout the course by how deftly it responded to and nurtured the insights students shared from previous Biblical education or exposure. This

made the course really successfully multidisciplinary and multi-generational without sacrificing the hardcore Greek and Latin training our lengthy readings enforced. Even as our progress through the texts was kept firmly on track, we furrowed the ground for these awesome organic discussions. Semantics took lively turns into insights on theology, transmission history, topography, and regional politics. For my part, I was a stranger to the New Testament, and reading the Old Testament in the university context was a bit of revelation. This course really shook my sense of the Bible as a monolithic archive of history and values, and it was a singular pleasure to come to know how others, from their own backgrounds, shared the same surprise at the fluidity of the Biblical “canon.” Appreciating the depth and multiformity of the Bible’s persistence in our world would be far more difficult in a course that did not encourage and enable its students to be so generously open and curious with one another.

FINAL THOUGHTS

For all of the reasons mentioned above, I find that teaching OT and NT texts in both Latin and Greek simultaneously to multiple audiences—second year and advanced students, students in Greek and Latin, current and former students—allows for reading more texts in class and at deeper levels. Moreover, reading Luke after the OT texts leads naturally to intertextual interpretations which will serve the students well if or when they turn or return to Hellenistic and Roman authors. Understanding more of the texts relatively quickly prompts students to ask the kind of questions that can readily create a habit of critical thinking that looks beyond grammar and syntax to a number of issues of importance to Classical Studies.

I would add one last point. I made it clear to the students that I am not a biblical scholar. I can read Greek and Latin and know enough Hebrew to be able to make some basic observations such as the ones mentioned above. Knowing this was actually a benefit for the class as they could not count on me for definitive answers to some of the more technical or murky questions, only reasoned opinions, which modeled the positing of reasoned open-ended opinions and put some of the onus on them for coming up with possible solutions to the problems raised. I wanted the students to think about these various issues on their own, both at home and in class. As

a result, participants in the class felt free to express first, second and third thoughts, free to hypothesize, free to wonder aloud or to themselves, free to think freely about some of the most influential and controversial texts in world history. And they did. The best thing I did was to gently and unobtrusively move myself out of their way.²¹

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