

Herman J. Selderhuis (ed.)

**Calvinus sacrarum
literarum interpres**

Papers of the International Congress
on Calvin Research

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht



Herman J. Selderhuis, Calvinus sacrarum literarum interpres

Reformed Historical Theology

Edited by
Herman J. Selderhuis

in co-operation with
Emidio Campi, Irene Dingel, Wim Janse, Elsie McKee

Volume 5

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Herman J. Selderhuis (ed.)

Calvinus
sacrarum literarum interpres

Papers of the International Congress
on Calvin Research

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

to Willem van 't Spijker

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

ISBN 978-3-525-56914-6

© 2008, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen / www.v-r.de
Alle Rechte vorbehalten. Das Werk und seine Teile sind urheberrechtlich geschützt.

Jede Verwertung in anderen als den gesetzlich zugelassenen Fällen bedarf der vorherigen schriftlichen Einwilligung des Verlages. Hinweis zu § 52a UrhG: Weder das Werk noch seine Teile dürfen ohne vorherige schriftliche Einwilligung des Verlages öffentlich zugänglich gemacht werden. Dies gilt auch bei einer entsprechenden Nutzung für Lehr- und Unterrichtszwecke.

Printed in Germany.

Druck- und Bindung: ⊕ Hubert & Co, Göttingen.

Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier.

Table of Contents

Preface	7
---------------	---

Exegesis

Calvin as Bible Translator: From the Model of the Hebrew Psalter	9
PETER OPITZ	
John Calvin's Nonliteral Exegesis	27
GARY HANSEN	

Theology

Calvin's Eucharistic Theology: Three Dogma-Historical Observations	37
WIM JANSE	
Calvin's Use of <i>Doctrina</i> in His Catechisms	70
I. JOHN HESSELINK	
Christus Mediator Legis: The Foundation of Calvin's Christological Understanding of the Law	88
BYUNG-HO MOON	
"As a Son to his Father": An Overlooked Aspect of the <i>Imago Dei</i> in Calvin	108
JASON VAN VLIET	
Divine Accommodation and Divine Transcendence in John Calvin's Theology	119
ARNOLD HUIJGEN	
"Opera Trinitatis Ad Extra Sunt Indivisa" in the Theology of John Calvin	131
ARIE BAARS	
Baptism as a Means of Grace in Calvin's Theology: A Tentative Proposal	142
LYLE BIERMA	

Comparisons

Luther and Calvin – One Reformation	149
THOMAS KAUFMANN	
Calvin and à Lasco: A Comparative Study of Two Ecclesiastical Ordinances	172
AKIRA DEMURA	
Jacques Sadolet et Jean Calvin, commentateurs de l'Épître aux Romains	190
ANNIE NOBLESSE-ROCHER	

Reception

Theory in Practice: Calvin's Ecclesiology in the French Churches	209
RAYMOND MENTZER	
Calvin. Saint, Hero or the Worst of All Possible Christians?	223
IRENA BACKUS	
A "Sincere and Clear Message". Four Remonstrant Ministers Against the Falsehoods and Innovations of Calvin	244
FRANK VAN DER POL	
Transmitting the Text: Understanding the Translation Process in Calvin's <i>Déclaration</i>	257
JOY KLEINSTUBER	
Calvin's View of Augustine and the Donatist Church	271
IN-SUB AHN	
Calvin and the Reformanda Sayings	285
MICHAEL BUSH	
List of authors	301

Preface

On behalf of the Praesidium of the International Calvin Congress I am happy to present in this volume the papers of the congress that was held August 22–26, 2006, in the Theological University Apeldoorn (The Netherlands) and the John a Lasco Library in Emden (Germany). I want to express the gratitude of all participants to both hosts for their generosity and hospitality.

The quality of any congress is mainly based on the quality of the papers. In the case of the Calvin Congress, that quality is in a certain sense a given by the fact that the policy of the Praesidium is that plenary papers should be based on new research and that short papers should give scholars an opportunity to present research in progress. Because of this, the papers are divided into these two categories; each section is arranged in alphabetical order of the authors' names. Except for some corrections, the papers are given here in the form in which they were presented.

Unfortunately this Congress volume is not able to communicate on paper the excellent atmosphere among the participants and the academic quality of the discussion, but the hope is that the reader may sense some of this while reading the contributions.

Since it was also a tribute to the accomplishments of Prof. Dr. Willem van 't Spijker, widely respected Reformation-scholar and long time member of the Praesidium, to have the congress co-hosted at Apeldoorn and that in the year of his 80th birthday, this volume is dedicated to him.

The title of this volume – Calvinus sacrarum literarum interpres – refers to a title given to Calvin in one of the many letters addressed to him (CO 18, 227), a title fitting the major theme of most papers at the congress. The editorial board of the series Reformed Historical Theology has kindly accepted this volume and the publishing house Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht deserves thanks for making it such a well-formed book. Thanks also to Martijn de Groot and Henk-Jan Vazquez (both at the Theological University Apeldoorn) for assisting in the editorial process.

Herman Selderhuis
president-secretary

Apeldoorn, Winter 2007

Calvin as Bible Translator: From the Model of the Hebrew Psalter

Peter Opitz

1. On the Task

Calvin as Bible translator – can anything much be said about that? There is no recognized Calvin Bible. Volumes 56 and 57 of the *Calvini Opera* can hardly be alleged as one offhand, even if they wear the nice title “La bible française de Calvin.”¹ And what Richard Wevers published in 1994 as the “Bible of John Calvin”² is a compilation of the translated Bible texts from Calvin’s commentaries. There are translations, which in terms of authenticity and developmental setting are quite diversely estimated. On the other hand, exactly this issue presses in, that in various spheres of influence and connections Calvin consistently translated biblical texts. But with this the introductory concern mutates directly into its opposite, and it becomes absolutely necessary to clearly limit the posing of the question.

Thus the present contribution will neither be able to deal with Calvin’s translations in French³, nor with his translations of New Testament Greek⁴, but will be confined to his translation of the Hebrew Psalter in his *Psalms commentary of 1557*. In contrast to some Bible texts in other of his Old Testament commentaries, this work can accurately be reckoned as one rendered with authentic texts of Calvin’s translation. It is however less the

1 Reuss, Edouard, *La bible française de Calvin: livres des Saintes Ecriture, traduits ou révisés par le Réformateur, tirés de ses oeuvres et accompagnés de variantes d’autres versions du XVIe siècle* (Brunswick and Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke et fils, 1897). *Calvini Opera* vols. 56 und 57.

2 Wevers (ed.), *Bible of John Calvin: Reconstructed from the Text of His Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Digamma, 1994).

3 See Georges Casalis/Bernard Roussel, *Olivetán, traducteur de la Bible: Actes du colloque Olivétán Noyon, mai 1985* (Paris, 1987); Olivétán. *Celui qui fit passer la Bible d’hebreu en français: études des Professeurs Dominique Barthélomy, Henri Meylan/Bernard Roussel, Textes de Calvin et d’Olivétán* (Bienne: Société Biblique Suisse, 1986). For background see B. Roussel, *Le temps des réformes et la Bible: sous la direction de Guy Bedouelle* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1989).

4 There are already some studies in this field. See especially the introductions to the individual New Testament commentaries of Calvin in the new Calvin edition (COR).

result, the translation itself, which should be thematic here, and much more the translation procedure. And this can only succeed in the present context by relinquishing a number of absorbing matters and constricting ourselves to exemplary, illustrating proofs. After a sketch of the context in which Calvin is working as translator of the Psalter, a glimpse should be taken of his translator's workshop, with the goal of determining characteristic contours of Calvin, translator of the Psalms.

2. Calvin as Translator of the Psalms⁵ in Historical Context

When one reads Calvin's Latin translation of the Psalms, as Wevers offers it, one does not get the impression that here an especially talented Latinist has seized upon the Word. Indeed, one constantly encounters expressions and turns of phrase, which permit sense to be won from them only with effort. It is as sure that this is Calvin's translation of the Psalter, as it is certain that there is no way he would have wanted this text edited and propagated as "Calvin's Translation of the Psalter." Since every one of the texts in Wever's composition of "Calvin's Bible" has, once again, its own context, this may not be simply cast off without some attention. So first, some words about background.

A consequence of the new devotion to the biblical text, famously the living nerve of the Reformation, involved not only its dissemination through translations in languages of the common people. It also entailed the achievement (so far as possible) of a text faithful to the original languages, in the language of European science: Latin. It was clear the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, represented in this respect a special challenge, but was also an object of special commitment, for in regard to it the text of the traditional Vulgate left much to be desired. The fulfillment of this task took

5 Research in this area has, until recently, been scanty, and so entrance into it must be made through the literature in which Calvin's interpretation of the Psalms is treated thematically. Some things in connection with Calvin's dealings with the Hebrew text finally become somewhat thematic in: D.L. Puckett, *John Calvin's Exegesis of the Old Testament* (Louisville: WJK, 1995); W. de Greef, *Calvijn en zijn uitleg van de Psalmen: Een onderzoek naar zijn exegetische methode* (Kampen, 2006) – with bibliography. On Calvin's translation from Hebrew, two short contributions deserve especial mention: M. Engammare, "Joannes Calvinus trium linguarum peritus?," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* LVIII (1996), 35–60; R.G. Hobbs, "Hebraica Veritas and Traditio Apostolica: Saint Paul and the Interpretation of the Psalms in the Sixteenth Century," in D.C. Steinmetz (ed.), *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 83–99.

place as a multilayered learning process.⁶ The Psalter stood in notable measure in the center of interest, though the centuries-long religious and liturgical esteem for just this book would be carried on in the Reformation under different signatures. Calvin had a share in this, and for his 1554 lecture on the Psalms, he could already return to and build upon many others. At this juncture three lines can be named.

2.1 Zürich: from Zwingli to Jud, Bibliander and Pellikan

Huldrych Zwingli can safely be reckoned as a pioneer of a *reformed* translation of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament in Latin. On April 23, 1525 Zwingli opened his series of sermons on the Psalms in Zürich's Great Cathedral, and to this end finished a unique German translation of the Psalms, which was never printed, however.⁷ At the same time the Psalms were a matter of interpretation in the *Prophezei*. In 1532, Leo Jud published Zwingli's Latin translation of the Psalter from the Hebrew, marked with short Hebrew annotations.⁸ What Zwingli evidently tried there was to do justice *both* to the *sense* of the Hebrew word, *as well as* to the contemporary humanistic Latin, and consequently to surpass the Vulgate in both directions, as it were. Hebraisms were thereby smoothed away and intricate turns shortened, but accordingly also very freely translated, and Zwingli's grasp of the *mens auctoris*, so to speak, was placed over that of the *verba*.

In 1539, at the instigation of the Old Testament scholar Konrad Pellikan in Zürich, a new, complete Latin Bible emerged, which took over the Latin translation of Erasmus for the New Testament, but for the Old Testament reprinted the Latin text Sebastian Münster formulated from the Hebrew. Heinrich Bullinger wrote a preface to it.⁹ Already four years later, in 1543, the so-called "Biblia sacrosancta" appeared, a collaborative work published by Pellikan.¹⁰ Further editions followed in 1544 and 1550. Their Old Testament portion was translated by Jud, Theodor Bibliander and Pellikan;

6 See to some extent J. Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1983).

7 In this regard see Zwingli's *Sämtliche Werke* Bd. XIII [CR 101], Zürich, 1959, 831 [Signal: Z].

8 *Enchiridion Psalmorum quos sanctae memoriae clarissimus vir Hulderichus Zvinglius ex Ebraeica veritate latinitati donavit ...* (Froschauer, 1532) (see Z XIII 469).

9 *Biblia sacra utriusque testamenti... D. Sebast. Munsteri evulgatum, et ad Hebraicam veritatem quoad fieri potuit redditum ...* (Zürich, 1539).

10 *Biblia Sacrosancta testameti Veteris et Noui, e sacra Hebraeorum lingua Graecorumque fontibus, consultis simul orthodoxis inter pretib. religiosissime translata in sermonem Latinum ...* (Zürich, 1543).

Psalms 1–102 by Jud, the final 48 Psalms by Bibliander.¹¹ The marginalia contained elaborately detailed textual elucidations. This new translation of the Hebrew Bible in Latin was the fruit of intense labor on the Old Testament, as was typical of the Zürich Reformation and would continue to be performed after Zwingli in the incipient *Schola Tigurina*.¹² It would be supported through the great productivity of the Froschauer printing office¹³, which discharged numerous printings of the Bible and attendant publications, whether it be basic hermeneutical writings in the service of the interpretation of the Bible, above all of the Old Testament¹⁴, or aids to its reconstruction, or translations of texts with short explanations. In this the concern was clearly with probing what was possible and meaningful in the tension between the greatest fidelity to the Hebrew source text on the one hand, and the greatest comprehensibility in service to the dissemination of its content on the other.¹⁵ But as they pursued this Jud and his colleagues distanced themselves more and more from Zwingli's translation, and at the same time from Zwingli's concern: indeed, Jud likewise tried as much as possible to avoid Hebraisms, but his highest priority was to follow the Hebrew text as closely as was feasible. It seems that the attempt to do justice both to the sense of the Hebrew author as well as to then-contemporary Latin was in the end given up in favor of two parallel enterprises: one Bible written in the vernacular and one in Latin, a version of utmost fidelity to the source text, yet one in which other readings of the Hebrew text could be proposed. This version, by omitting the details with regard to heritage and translator, would mete out a remarkable tradition (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). The printer Robert Estienne, who emigrated to Geneva in 1550 and plied his craft there in the service of the Reformation, had based his 1545 printing of the Bible

11 See Z XIII 835.

12 See, *Schola Tigurina: die Zürcher Hohe Schule und ihre Gelehrten um 1550. Katalog zur Ausstellung vom 25. Mai bis 10. Juni 1999 in der Zentralbibliothek*, ed. H.U. Bächtold (Zürich/Freiburg /Br.: Institut für Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, 1999).

13 J. Staedtke, "Anfänge und erste Blütezeit des Zürcher Buchdrucks," in *Reformation und Zeugnis der Kirche* (ZBRG 9; Zürich, 1978), 121–34; C. Gantet, "La religion et ses mots. La Bible latine de Zurich (1543) entre la tradition et l'innovation," *Zwingliana* 23 (1996), 143–66.

14 See for instance: Theodore Bibliander, *De ratione communi omnium linguarum et literarum commentarius* (Zürich, 1548), a writing in which Bibliander himself comprehensively deals with questions about language, its translation, etc. Ganoczy lists the work as Nr. 450, and counts Bibliander among the humanists that Calvin highly valued. What Ganoczy identified as a sign of the Geneva academy's "mentalité ouverte" (A. Ganoczy, *La Bibliothèque de l'Académie de Calvin: le catalogue de 1572 et ses enseignements* [Genève: Droz, 1969], 111) is expression of the humanistic inheritance of Calvin and the "Upper German reformation" as a whole, which was fostered in particular around the area of philology and exegesis, and which promoted the narrow exchange between Zürich, Basel, Strasbourg and Geneva in this area.

15 By way of example Konrad Pellikan published a Latin translation of the Psalter, in which every verse was followed by a few words of italicized clarification: *In Psalterium Davidis, Chuonradi Pellicani simplex et breve opusculum* (Figuri, 1532).

on it – produced in Paris, in fact – and one year later, in 1546, printed the Psalter off of it separately and in small format. For the extensive apparatus of notes, however, Estienne fell back on Vatables' annotations, which he had already employed in earlier printings.¹⁶

2.2 Strasburg: Hebrew Grammar and Martin Bucer's Psalms Commentary

Famously, the second line is very important for Calvin, biographically speaking: it has to do with the entanglements, which he was able to knot through the Basel and then of course through the Strasburg sojourn. Some point out in this regard that these stays, needless to say particularly in Strasburg, profited him with the necessary opportunity to improve his knowledge of Hebrew¹⁷, and moreover, that his conviction of the significance of a thorough engagement with the *hebraica veritas* became decidedly stronger. Whether he worked with the exceptional Hebrew textbook of Wolfgang Capito, which could easily compete with today's Hebrew teaching materials, is logical, but is not able to be proven. The copy Ganoczy identified in Geneva definitely came from the library of Vermigli¹⁸, and of course there were some good alternatives. That Calvin already appreciated Martin Bucer as a Hebraist of the highest quality is clearly documented.¹⁹ Doubtless Calvin eventually mentioned Bucer as an exemplary exegete in his preface to the 1557 Psalms commentary not only because Bucer's commentary simply served as a model, but also because Calvin was convinced of its quality.²⁰

Bucer's Psalms commentary, which Estienne published in Geneva in 1554 and highly praised²¹, was probably Calvin's most important compa-

16 *Biblia Sacra cum universalis Franc. Vatabli et variorum interpretum, annotationibus.* (Paris, 1545) [cited *Biblia Sacra*]; A. Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Estienne (Réimpression de l'édition de Paris 1843)* (Geneva, 1971), 62f, 66; Ganoczy, *La Bibliothèque de l'Académie de Calvin*, 176.

17 See Engammare, "Joannes Calvinus trium linguarum peritus?," 39f.

18 See Ganoczy, *La Bibliothèque de l'Académie de Calvin*, 308.

19 See Calvin's letter to Bucer from 12 January 1538: A.L. Herminjard, *Correspondance des Réformateurs dans les pays de langue française vol. 4* (Geneva and Paris), 347, No. 677; see also Engammare, "Joannes Calvinus trium linguarum peritus?," 41.

20 "Et priusquam enarrationem aggrederer, fratrum meorum rogatu dixeram quod verum erat, me ideo supersedere quod fidelissimus ecclesiae doctor Martinus Bucerus summa, quam in hoc opere praestitit, eruditione diligentia et fide, id saltem consequutus erat ne tantus esset operae meae usus." CO 32,13. Calvin apparently did not get to see the extensive commentary of Musculus, already completed in 1550, until after he finished his work; see *ibid.*

21 *Psalmorum libri quinque ad Hebraicam veritatem traducti, et summa fide, parique diligentia a Martino Bucero enarrati* (Geneva, 1554) [cited Bucer]; see also E. Armstrong/Robert Estienne/Royal Printer: *An Historical Study of the Elder Stephanus* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univer-

nion work in the preparation of his lectures. In an extensive preface, Bucer first of all explained the bases and principles of his interpretation and translation. He expressly pointed out therein that in regard to the Hebraic he relied upon Abraham Ibn Ezra and David Kimchi, who unlike other Rabbis rendered the text and its sense with fidelity, as long as one ignored the specific Christian themes announced in the Psalms of the reign of Christ and the righteousness of faith. He favored these because they derived their understanding inner-biblically, through comparison with other arrangements, and this usually in far greater measure than the work of other Jewish interpreters.²² The *Scripture Principle*, Scripture's self-interpretation, here became applied both to the understanding and thus to the translation of Hebrew words and expressions.

2.3 From Paris to Geneva: Robertus Stephanus (Estienne)

Yet a third line, already touched upon, is to be drawn out here. It is closely tied up with the name of Robert Estienne. The Parisian printing specialist for foreign language texts, in particular Greek and Hebrew, in fact possessed the royal license, but came increasingly under pressure as a Humanist inclined to Protestantism. His printings of the Bible would ultimately be condemned as heretical by the Sorbonne, especially the explanatory remarks contained in the edition from 1545.²³

sity Press, 1954), 233f. On Bucer: R.G. Hobbs, "Martin Bucer on Psalm 22: A Study in the Application of Rabbinic Exegesis by a Christian Hebraist," in O. Fatio/P. Franekel (eds.), *Histoire de l'exégèse au XVI^e siècle: textes du colloque international tenu à Genève en 1976* (Geneva: Droz, 1978), 144–63.

22 "Habent tamen inter alios, duos, Abrahamum filium Ezra, et Davidem Kimhi, qui germanam vocum proprietatem, et dictorum ordinem genuinum, exceptis iis locis, ubi urgentur vaticiniis de spirituali regno Christi, ac interna, solidaque iustitia, quae fide constat servatoris, magno studio persecuti sunt, nihil fere dicentes, absque autoritate consonantium locorum, quos etiam praeter aliorum Ebraeorum more, magna proprietatis observatione citant. Ab his fateor in gloriam Dei, cuius donum est, quicquid utile me in enarratione Psalmorum, plurimum esse adiutum, quod et passim indicavi," *ibid.*, Praefatio.

23 See Estienne's apologia: *Ad censuras theologorum Parisiensium, quibus Biblia a Roberto Stephano typographo Regio excusa calumniose notarunt, eiusdem Roberti Stephani responsio* (Geneva: Stephanus, 1552). The translator of the Bible from 1545 is there referred to as "incertus author." In the fall of 1547, the Parisian faculty of theology published an extensive "catalogus errorum," which replicated Estienne's writing and made reference to it. The reproach states that the 1545 Bible deviates from the Vulgate on over 600 points, and often renders a new meaning. Thus the annotations are "suspecta, falsa, erronea, scandalosa, facientia conspirantibus haeresibus, Lutherana, impia, blasphema, et haeretica" (*ibid.* 115). Estienne's answer is characteristic of the Reformed-humanistic devotion to the hebraica veritas, and at the same time demonstrates his engagement with the subject matter, "Quod sensu et verbis nova translatio a veteri dissidet, quid periculi obsecro? Aut fas esse negent, ex Hebraica lingua Biblia transferre, aut diversitatem, de

So he resigned himself finally to emigration, namely, flight to Geneva and subsequent judgment as heretic and Calvinist. Estienne's specialty (notwithstanding the well-known introduction of verse numbering), which he brought from France, was multicolumn printing. Specifically, he printed together two Latin translations and an imprinted apparatus of notes underneath: the inner column, the Vulgate text in small type, the outer and in larger print, the Latin text of the "Tralatio nova" ("new translation"). In 1545 and 1546 Estienne included the anonymous Zürich translation as his "Tralatio nova."²⁴ Ten years later, contemporaneously with the printing of Calvin's Psalms commentary, Estienne's great Bible of 1556/57 appeared, now presenting the translation of Pagninus as Latin "nova"-text for the Old Testament.²⁵ Whether replacing the indexed text of the Zürich "Biblia sacrosancta" through the translation of something actively Waldensian- and Protestant-contending was caused by philological or political grounds (at any rate not without numerous corrections), must remain open. In any case, with respect to the New Testament this Bible contained for the first time the translation of the Greek text through Theodore Beza.²⁶ It possessed, particularly for the Old Testament, an extraordinary apparatus of notes, which recorded grammatical comments and variant translations of Hebrew expressions, but also frequently touched on theological issues. At the beginning Estienne points to Pagninus and Vatable, the latter the most significant French-speaking Hebraists of the time and student of Lefèvre d'Estaples, as basic sources for his text and the explanatory comments.²⁷ In addition, however, he explicitly mentions the usage of other sources and therefore indicates an editorial activity which exceeds a mere printing job.²⁸ Estienne

qua queruntur, admittant. Quid enim? An erit nova translatio, quae nihil a vulgari differet? ... Unum crimen allegant, mutari sexcenties verba, et interdum quoque sensum. Hoc quid aliud est, quam Typographum damnare, qui duplici translatione edita, plus lucis scripturae addere conatus sit?" (ibid. 116).

24 See Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Estienne*, 63.66. See also Armstrong, Robert Estienne: Royal Printer, 77f.

25 Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Estienne*, 87.

26 *Biblia sacra latina, juxta veterem et S. Pagnini Veteris Testamenti, Theod. Bezae Novi Tralationem cum notis Fr. Vatabli, etc.* (Geneva, 1556/1557); appended is a listing with "Hebraea, Chaldaea, Graeca, Latina Nomina;" see also, Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Estienne*, 87.

27 See D. Barthélemy, "Origine et reynonnement de la 'Bible de Vatable'," in I. Backus and F. Higman (eds.), *Théorie et pratique de l'exégèse: Actes du troisième colloque international sur l'histoire de l'exégèse biblique au XVI^e siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1990), 385–401.

28 Consider already the title of the Psalter – again appearing as a separate printing: *Liber Psalmorum Davidis. Tralatio duplex, Vetus et Nova / Haec posterior, Sanctis Pagnini, partim ab ipso Pagnino recognita, partim ex Francisci Vatabli Hebraicarum literarum professoris quondam Regii eruditissimis praelectionibus emendata et expolita. Adiectae sunt annotationes cum ex aliorum tralatione, tum vero ex Commentariis Hebraeorum ab ipso Vatablo diligenter excusis: quae commentarii vice lectoribus esse poterunt* (Geneva [appeared 1557]); see also Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Estienne*, 87.

seems to hint here at his earlier printings of the Bible, but also at the exegete Calvin; in this respect his utilization of Calvin's Genesis commentary of 1554 has been demonstrated.²⁹ The relationship between Estienne's remarks on the Psalms in the Bible of 1556/57 and Calvin's almost simultaneously-appearing commentary is, however, probably characterized more adequately as a mutual exchange than as a mere one-way communication.

For that Estienne's competencies and his interests in view of the Hebrew text spanned far beyond the preparation of manuscripts for print, is obvious and already intimated through the works printed by him. Besides Hebrew textbooks, I am above all here referring to his vast, illustrative listings of all persons, peoples, and place names of the Hebrew Bible, which would be constantly reprinted³⁰, but also to his devoting himself to the *Hebraisms* of the Old Testament, to *Phrases Hebraicae*.³¹ For our context, especially important is his edition of Pagninus' Latin adaptation of David Kimchi's, "Kozer-Ozar leshon hakodesh," 1548.³² It is an expansive Hebrew dictionary, in which the roots themselves of Hebrew concepts in their various significances can be looked up, with indication of biblical applications in which they can be found and grammatical comments on declension, conjugation, and tense.

3. Fundamentals of Calvin's Translation Work

The three lines now sketched, which in a sense meet in Calvin's study, are uniform simplifications in view of the many-braided tie in which Calvin's translation of the Hebrew Psalter is set forth, in preparation of his lectures at *our little school* in Geneva. They can suggest only by way of example the wide spectrum of relationships in which Calvin's work stands and which give it life, even if Calvin himself scarcely draws attention to them. Both Calvin's comments on variant translations of the Hebrew text as well as

29 See J.L. Thompson, "Calvin's Exegetical Legacy: His Reception and Transmission of Text and Tradition," in D.L. Foxgrover (ed.), *The Legacy of John Calvin: Calvin Studies Society Papers 1999* (Grand Rapids, 2000), 31–56, esp. 42–47.

30 *Hebraea, Chaldaea, Graeca et Latina nomina virorum, mulierum, populorum, idolorum, urbium, fluviorum, montium, caeterorumque locorum quae in Bibliis leguntur, restituta cum latina interpretatione* (Paris: Ex officina R. Stephani, 1537).

31 *Phrases Hebraicae* (Geneva, 1558); cf. Armstrong, Robert Estienne: Royal Printer, 233.

32 Santes Pagninus: *Kozer-Ozar leshon ha-kodesh; Hoc est, Thesaurus Linguae Sanctae sive Lexicon hebraicum ... ex R. David Kimchi "Sepher ha-sharashim", Sancte Pagnino Lucensi auctore. Contractior et emendatior* (Paris: Ex officina R. Stephani, 1548). The lexicon would be published many times. Ganoczy identifies a prototype printed in Lyon in 1529; *La Bibliothèque de l'Académie de Calvin*, 161.

synoptic comparisons, which at this stage cannot be promulgated, make it clear, however, that we already have come across to central technical aids, which Calvin consulted again and again, both because he needed them and because of restricted time at his disposal.

Our time is restricted as well, so instead of pursuing further the question of other possible means Calvin could have used for his work we should try to cast a glance at Calvin's translation work as such.

In the preface he penned to his 1557 Psalms commentary Calvin notifies that this work grew out of exegetical lectures.³³ The reading of his commentary makes this unmistakably plain: In his translations, for example, this can be seen in the manner in which he explains individual Hebrew words and then justifies his own translation. Therein, he places special attention on areas and concepts, which are unclear and as a result have been variously translated. The thoroughgoing use of expressions like "quidam", "alii", and so on, points to the existence of a broader interpretive discourse. Expressions such as "varie exponitur interpretes" or "varie torqueant interpretes" for example occur in the Psalms commentary more than thirty times.³⁴ But the interlocutors are hardly ever named. One gets the impression that with his translation and interpretation Calvin is navigating through a discussion, which is not made explicit or comes through only in outline, perhaps because there was not enough time really to present positions he rejected, or perhaps because awareness of this discussion was presupposed – and may have been orally communicated in lecture. And at the same time, Calvin seems at his utmost to be measured in his commentary and in his remarks on the justification of his translation, only naming what is finally relevant for setting up his translation, and therewith his explanation; an effort at "brevitas"³⁵ also in the Psalms commentary. Calvin greatly differentiates himself here from the commentary of Bucer, but also Musculus, which in each case cite a multitude of meanings and interpretations, and for all of these name authors and sources, such that one does not always have the impression that the rich material gathered together is really processed in commentary, or even pertinent for translation and clarification.

That in his Latin translation of the Psalter Calvin also mastered his Latin, even down to the finest nuances, is not to be overlooked. But just as little to be overlooked is the fact that it was not at all his intention to present the Psalter in an elegant or poetical form of Latin, but to translate the Hebrew wording as literal as possible with chosen Latin expressions, including

33 See CO 31,13.

34 Cf. Ps 9:1, 7; 10:3, 17; 11:7; 14:5; 15:4; 17:4, 13; 19:2; 26:1; 27:8; 34:21; 36:2; 37:16, 26; 42:6; 45:1; 48:7; 49:14; 56:6; 59:10; 68:7; 73:10; 77:11; 93:3; 94:15; 132:18; 137:3; 139:18.

35 See Calvin's preface to the commentary on Romans; COR II Opera Exegetica, vol. XIII, 3–6.

mood, tense, conjugation, etc. He therefore accepted Hebraisms. For in translating, he works at and underscores the *hebraica veritas*. Hence he could characterize his own Latin translation as somewhat “barbaric”, but intentionally so, because only in this way can the Hebrew sayings be made clear.³⁶

3.1 Calvin’s Procedure

When Calvin makes a decision for one alternative among various translations, or rejects them all and introduces his own, this happens not infrequently without supplementary substantiation; sometimes just with a naked, unaccompanied value judgment, but often with, at least short, arguments. Hence, the following criteria are guiding.

3.1.1 *Semantics*

Calvin³⁷ places great value on the clear accounting of words, which is to say, on semantics. Naturally, the Humanists’ work on the biblical texts is carried forward here, as it was exemplarily done in Calvin’s *De Clementia* commentary. Accordingly, the first thing that takes place in the commentaries is establishing the meaning of words in their composition, mood, conjugation, and declension. Calvin often begins with lexical variants – no differently than is the case in Bucer and Musculus, although there in much greater detail. Is an “aschaer” intended relatively or expletively (Ps. 8:1/2)³⁸, does “ki” in the present context mean “for in that case” (sed) or “because” (quia)³⁹ (Ps. 8:3/4), is the verb “araz” in the current usage transitive or intransitive (Ps. 10:18); which is to be preferred with regard to the verb “kanaan” here, the base meaning “order” (dirigere) or “buttress” (stabilire)⁴⁰ (Ps. 10:17), ought the preterit to be translated as future in this instance, or is it here to be understood in the conjunctive sense, although in the interest of exactness Calvin uses the Latin perfect in translation (Ps. 17:3), and so forth?

36 “crasse quidem et barbatae ... sed mihi perinde fuit modo prophetarum mentem certo tenerent lectores,” on Ps 119:29 (CO 32,226).

37 What is here said about the translation of the Psalter does essentially confirm Puckett’s observations about Calvin’s entire Old Testament exegesis; see Puckett, *John Calvin’s Exegesis of the Old Testament*, 56–81. I restrict myself in the following pages to a few, illustrating examples.

38 The number before the slash corresponds to the verse in modern Protestant translations, after to the Hebrew text.

39 In the English edition of Calvin’s commentary, “for” and “because” are considered; ultimately “when” is chosen as means of connecting this verse with the next.

40 In the English edition of Calvin’s commentary, “to direct” and “to establish” are used.

3.1.2 Hebrew Grammarians

The “Hebrew Grammarians” played a key roll in the crucial task of determining the meaning of a word, both in terms of its form and with respect to, above all, its root and semantic range. In that regard are meant, although only rarely explicitly mentioned, Abraham Ibn Ezra and (chiefly) David Kimchi. Calvin is exceedingly reserved with his criticism of these two rabbinic teachers. Where they agree in their translation, this material does not come under question. For the most part, it is the interpretation they construct upon their translation of a given passage that comes under criticism. *If* Calvin criticizes the “Hebrew expositors”, then often because he decides for a variant where they themselves differ in their interpretation.

Like the Hebrew commentators, Calvin can return to the etymology of a word.⁴¹ This path is ready-to-hand, because the determination of a Hebrew expression must in fact be traced back to its stem and root.

Therefore the knowledge that the Hebrew language affords very much more interpretive room to play than is the case with Latin stands permanently in the background of Calvin’s translation.⁴² Regarding the grammatical form of an expression, Calvin sometimes seems to proceed almost somewhat pedantically, especially concerning tense. Although he knows that the use of tense in Hebrew is not of a simple correspondence to that in Latin and indeed must be translated according to a different perspective, Calvin tends to translate the perfect as the Latin preterit, and imperfect as Latin present, even when the subsequent interpretation does not allow such a firm handling of the tense.

3.1.3 Inner-biblical Word Use

An extraordinarily important translation aid for Calvin is the other occurrences and other uses of expressions encountered in the Bible. Since by these, one can confirm an exact sense, or get an awareness for breadth of significance. This principle, to which Bucer in the preface to his Psalms commentary had already pointed, becomes applied by Calvin especially with reference to parallels within the Psalter.⁴³ It is the philological side of the principle that Scripture interprets itself, which Calvin applies here, not without consideration of the different kinds of biblical texts.

41 For example, in Ps 3:2 (CO 31,53f); in Ps 144:13 (CO 31,411); and so forth.

42 For instance, “Verbum hoc praeteriti temporis continuum actum designat, ideoque praesens tempus complectitur. Si particula ׀ hoc loco est causalis, sensum erit ... nisi forte magis placeat mutare tempus verbi ...,” on Ps 17:6 (CO 31,162); etc.

43 For instance, “atque huic sententiae ex opposito respondet quod alibi videbimus Ps 35:3 ...,” on Ps 3:3 (CO 31,53); “sicuti et Psalmo 107:32 ...,” on Ps 138:1 (CO 32,372) etc.

3.1.4 Context

An ever-present factor, and often the decisive one in Calvin's translation, is context. Countless times he justifies his translation with the call to this, be it the historical-personal context of the supplicant, or above all the streams of thought and overall aim of the speech, which run through the Psalm.⁴⁴ Even the Psalms are read by Calvin in their rhetorical dimension. The line of thought and argumentation of the whole Psalm determines the meaning of single expressions, words and images. An expression, which is indeed justified in a given context from the lexicon, but in the context thus-construed makes no sense, Calvin does not let stand, and this in distinction from the Vulgate and even sometimes Pagninus. One everywhere encounters Calvin's decision for such a translation variant, which integrates itself in the structure and flow of speech, and which is the least "forced" (coactus) translation.⁴⁵ While most of the here-enumerated characteristics of Calvin's translation work are likewise to be found in other translators from the guild in which he is to be counted, the weight that the speech context takes on for Calvin can be regarded as his "proprium."

3.2 Two Examples

Two arbitrarily chosen examples should illustrate Calvin's rigorous attempt at the *hebraica veritas* – which are also representative of the resources he uses.

3.2.1 Psalm 55:22/23

Ps 55:22/23⁴⁶ says:

הַשִּׁלְךְ : עַל־יְהוָה יְהִינָה יְהִיבְךָ

The Vulgate (according to LXX) reads, "iacta super dominum curam tuam."⁴⁷ "Cast your cares" or "your sorrows" "on the Lord".

Calvin admits that this rendering is well and piously meant, but it does not correspond to the Hebrew wording. The Hebrew word "jahav" (יָהַב) means, "to give", and as a substantive a "gift". Expressions like "care", "worry" or "burden", that is, "curam tuam" or "onus tuum", cannot be justified by the Hebrew grammar, even if the majority of Hebrew gramma-

44 For example, "Coactum est, ac refelli poterit ex contextu ..." on Ps 37:1 (CO 31,366).

45 For example, "quod melius contextui congruere visum est elegi," on Ps 31:10 (CO 31,306); "quod ego libenter recipio, quia cum toto contextu optime convenit," on Ps 46:1 (CO 31,460).

46 See Pucket, John Calvin's Exegesis of the Old Testament, 62.

47 The Vulgate reflecting the Hebrew: "proiice super dominum caritatem tuam."

rians translate with “burden” / “onus.” They did so, Calvin suspects, because they could not make sense of the phrase otherwise. But one does not encounter the verb “jahav” in the Bible in the sense of “onerare”, laying a burden on someone, nor does the substantive “jahav” occur there in the sense of “burden”. Instead, Calvin translates, “Proiice super Jehova tuum dare.”⁴⁸ But what could this mean in the context of this verse? Calvin’s respect both for the speech context of Psalm 55 and for the lexical possibilities of an expression within the frames of biblical Hebrew, leads him to embrace another, in fact more complicated, interpretation which bears a “fruitful sense” as well: If we understand the “tuum dare” or “dare nostrum” passively (i.e. from our perspective), in the sense of all the “gifts” that we expect God to give us for our vital needs, it produces a “useful” meaning: namely, that we are invited not to concern ourselves about what we need but to leave this all to God’s providence. Such interpretation corresponds entirely with the context, as the verse in fact continues with, “he (God) will provide for you,” or as Calvin translates more closely to the Hebrew wording, “he himself will feed (or, pasture) you.” “et ipse te pascet.”

Whether this translation of Calvin’s is far from being “forced” can seriously be asked. However, Calvin’s meticulous concern for the grammatical and lexical possibilities leaves him no choice, apart from relinquishing a meaningful translation. But from where did he get the requisite knowledge for this translation, and which Hebrew grammarians did he consult? All he needed for this was Pagninus’ “Thesaurus Linguae sanctae”, which Estienne printed in Geneva in 1548. Therein Pagninus quotes David Kimchi who has translated the verb נָתַן with “to give”, and points to Ps. 55:23 for an example of its use in this sense.⁴⁹ In addition, Pagninus informs the reader about Kimchi’s criticism on many Hebrew interpreters who had translated the word with “onus” or “pondus”.⁵⁰

Obviously Calvin relies very heavily on Pagnini’s report about Kimchi’s translation of Ps 55:22/23, even as far as the “useful sense” is concerned, but not without an independent look at the biblical text.

48 CO 31,544.

49 “Proiice super domini נָתַן, acsi dicat, quod dedit tibi usque ad hunc diem, ait R.D. in li. ra. Proiice super illum quod opus habes, et ipse educabit te, quemadmodum hactenus fecit. Vel est (ait idem) nomen: acsi dicat: dona tua proiice super eum, quia ipse donabit illa tibi, teque nutriet.” See Pagninus, 421 (on נָתַן).

50 See Pagninus, 421 (on נָתַן). (In Münster the basic meaning “dedit” is indeed given at first, but then it is translated in connection with the meaning “onus, pondus” (נָתַן) in reference to Ps 55; Dictionarium Hebraicum iam ultimo ab authore Sebastiano Munstero recognitum ... [Froben (Basileae), 1548]).

3.2.3 *Psalm 28/29:1*⁵¹

How should it be understood, and translated, when there is talk in Ps. 28/29:1 of “bne elim” (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים), who are summoned to give God the glory? The entire verse reads:

הָבוּ לַיהוָה בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעַז

The Vulgate (LXX) translated, “adferte Domino filii Dei, adferte Domino filios arietum.” Calvin first of all refuses the expression “sons of rams / Aries” (filios arietum):⁵² according to Calvin it is known that the Septuagint⁵³ was confused by the similarity of expressions.⁵⁴ By contrast the Hebraist interpreters were agreed as to the tenor. Nevertheless, in their interpretations they forsook the “genuinus sensus” and gave themselves over to pure fantasies: some identified the “filii Dei” with the stars, others with the angels, and still others with the fathers. Against these Calvin insisted on the simplest sense, which lay near to the author’s direction of thought: in the context of the invocation to praise God it is God’s arrogant enemies, the princes of the world, who are being addressed. According to Calvin’s interpretation, David wants to break their pride and summon them to humility before the superior power of God, because the entire 29th Psalm in fact speaks of this power. Calvin thus tries to remain as closely as possible to the Hebrew text, but this within the total context of the Psalm, and to this end suffers the not-exactly-fluid Latin formulation “filii fortium.” “Afferte Iehova, filii fortium, afferte Iehovae gloriam eius.” Hence he at once avoids translating the Hebrew word “elim” with “gods,” and thereby the expression, “sons of the gods.” Instead, with “filii fortium” the sons of the mighty are mentioned here, always inclined to abusing their power.

This is a characteristic example of Calvin’s translation work in the Psalms, because it is at the same time a clue to his theological penchant: to him, what the Psalter presents is essentially a matter of the glory of God and its recognition among humankind, its reflection in their social, day-to-day

51 Psalm 28:1 in the Septuagint, 29:1 in the Masoretic Text.

52 CO 31, 286f.

53 Psalm 28/29:1: Ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ υἱοὶ θεοῦ Ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ υἱοὺς κριῶν Ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ δόξαν καὶ τιμῆν.

54 The LXX expands the phrase “sons of אֱלֹהִים” into two, parallel expressions of supernatural and super-powerful existences, treating the first as a nominative / vocative (υἱοὶ θεοῦ) and the second as an accusative (υἱοὺς κριῶν). Calvin claims that this duplication is a mistake owing to the translators’ uncertainty vis-à-vis the phrase’s meaning and the similarity between אֱלֹהִים and the word for “ram,” אֵיִל, which can also signify loftiness and power. (The Hebrew אֵיִל generally refers to “God” or “the gods,” but appears in contexts of strength; so, e.g., in Ps. 36:6/7 אֵיִל הַרְרֵי הַבְּרָכָה could read, “like the mountains of God,” or just, “like the mighty mountains.”) To avoid the LXX’s alleged mistake Calvin chose a single, “sons of the mighty.”

living⁵⁵, both in the life of the faithful and of the congregation. Consequently, the Psalm does not inform us about angelic hierarchies but address the arrogance of political powerful peope.

Where does Calvin get his knowledge concerning semantics and existing interpretive variants? He finds it to hand in Bucer's interpretation. In Bucer, simple consonantality is adduced for confusing similar Hebrew words (אלים בני / בני אילים) and referenced for the Septuagint's mistake.⁵⁶ In addition Abraham Ibn Ezra is named, who wanted to translate the expression with "stars." Bucer himself reckoned that with "filii elohim" are intended all who are near to God, i.e. the angels and the blessed fathers. But he then pleads in respect of this phrase that here to be understood foremost are the earthly holders of power. Calvin does exactly the same, though more deterministically, and therefore relies not only upon Bucer's description, but aligns himself also with his evaluation. Yet his translation tries to stay nearer to the Hebrew wording. Bucer clearly allows for more interpretation: "Date Autophyi, qui virtute praestantis, date Autophyi decus et potentiae laudem."⁵⁷

Even if the entire collection of works used by Calvin during his translation efforts are not firmly established, some things point to a relatively restricted number of critical aids, which still connect Calvin with Paris humanists, Basel, Strasburg, and Zürich.

3.3 On the Theological Dimension of Calvin's Translation Work

The last example makes it clear that translation problems always go together with establishing a (possible or to-be-excluded) "sense," and thereby refer to a theological dimension. It is not otherwise with Calvin.

3.3.1 *Ps. 119:112*

So Psalm 119:112 in the Vulgate (LXX) is translated as follows: "inclinavi cor meum ad faciendas iustificationes in aeternum propter retributionem;" Hebrew (for the final clause): לְעוֹלָם עָקֵב.

55 On Calvin's theology of the Psalms see, conclusively, H.J. Selderhuis, *Gott in der Mitte: Calvins Theologie der Psalmen* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlag Anst., 2004; English edition: *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms*, Grand Rapids 2007); on the relationship between God's providence (Gottesbezug) and day-to-day living (Lebensvollzug): E. Busch, *Gotteserkenntnis und Menschlichkeit: Einsichten in die Theologie Johannes Calvins* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2005).

56 Bucer, 152f (what the modern *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensis*, by the way, presently confirms).

57 Bucer, *ibid.*

That Calvin could not be happy with this translation is obvious. The key word is the Hebrew עָקֵב, which can be translated in Latin as “mercedes” or “ad finem usque.” Calvin decided for the second possibility. However, immediately before this already stands “in eternity.” Calvin thus explains the material doubling as repetition in different words for the sake of highlighting: “Dictio עָקֵב exegetice meo iudicio addita est ad לעולם.” Calvin’s translation therefore runs, “Inclinavi cor meum ad facienda edicta tua in perpetuum in finem.” That is not necessarily elegant Latin. In this formulation Calvin goes his own way, but in material consensus both with Leo Jud in the *Biblia sacrosancta*, and within reach of Bucer, as well as analogically near to the annotations of the *Bibla sacra* of 1556/57.⁵⁸

3.3.2 *The Horizon*

In comparing Calvin to other exegetes – one thinks to some extent of the implicitness with which Pagninus bound the search after the *hebraica veritas* with the search after the *mystical* sense of the text – one must with Calvin look very minutely in order to find such theologically motivated translations. His translations as a rule are carried out in a much more markedly literal fashion, as are also his clarifications of textual meanings, and indeed are scarcely overloaded theologically. This really has to do with the broader hermeneutical horizon in which Calvin reads (even) the Psalms: the contemplation of the one people (*Bundes*), which the Bible witnesses and the room allowed within a historically fulfilled relationship with God (to be understood of course in an early modern sense) for a great diversity of individual and social lives.⁵⁹ With this the Psalms contain the possibility, in an unfamiliar oriental speech- and conceptual tradition, of being a witness of the relationship between God and his people of God at an earlier age, and as such of serving as mirror and standard for a contemporary Christian

58 Jud translated: “Adiecit animum meum decretis tuis, ut exequar illa in finem usque, et adeo aeternum;” *Biblia sacrosancta*. Bucer: “Inclinavi cor meum, ad faciendum cerimonias tuas, in seculum et absque fine.” The *Biblia sacra*, finally, translated “Inclinavi cor meum ad faciendum statuta tua in seculum et usque in aeternum.” In the respective comments it is explained: “Et usque in aeternum עָקֵב et usque in finem. sub. vitae meae. i. quamdiu vivam;” *Biblia Sacra*. The possibility of translating with “merces” does not come up there once. Naturally, however, the material consensus of “protestant” translations is not coincidental. The rendering does not just become recorded a little later in lists of the classic, talked about, theologically controversial Bible verses. Its translation remains controversial until today – although no longer along confessional borders – as a glance at modern translations of the Bible and commentaries teaches.

59 See P. Opitz, *Calvins theologische Hermeneutik* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1994); idem, “The Exegetical and Hermeneutical Work of John Oecolampadius, Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin,” in M. Saebø/M. Fishbane/J. L. Ska (eds.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation* (HBOT), vol. II, *From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, B Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 106–159.

people of God. Associated with Calvin's conviction of God's self-accommodative speaking into a particular time, and with his humanistic knowledge concerning language in its manifold modes and possibilities, a broader realm opened itself to him in which to bear out the *hebraica veritas* with its related complexities. The biblical Hebrew language is a language, which is *true*, without consisting of timeless-concordant combinations of ideas or bearing a *mystical* sense. Its grammar, its semantic ranges, its metaphors and imagery, and its respective historical-situational mooring esteem it worthy of taking into account. Hence the best philologists and Hebraists of the time are here consulted, whether they come from the rabbinic-Judaic, Catholic-Hebraistic, or Protestant-Hebraistic camp. Concurrently, Calvin can likewise find a *useful truth* in the text, without being forced to extract it unmotivated from its historical context, a common method of traditional "Christological" or "eschatological" overinterpretation of individual words and phrases. With turns of phrase, which on linguistic grounds defy a clear-cut solution, Calvin can sometimes cede the decision even to the reader.

4. Conclusion

Calvin's translations of the Bible are not to be judged apart from their various contexts. His translation of the Psalms as part of his lectures at the Genevan "school" stands in the context of the humanistic-Reformed tendency to come as close as possible to the tenor of the source language, with the contemporary language of scholars.

When one compares Calvin's translation with those translations he thoroughly consulted (Vulgate, Septuagint, Münster, Jud/Bibliander, Pagnini, Bucer), Calvin proves himself to be an independent translator of the Hebrew, who at the same time stays in constant contact with other formulations without deciding uncritically for one of these, as is to be expected of an exegetical lecture.

If Calvin's Hebrew hardly suffices to make it profitable to conduct a separate study of the Bomberg Bible, he was however in the situation to develop his own, substantiated judgment based on his knowledge of Hebrew and on the aids available to him. In essence, he relied upon the information that the variants and annotations of the above-named printings of the Bible and Bucer's commentary gave to him. His confidence in the reliability of Abraham Ibn Ezra and Kimchi is certainly above all to be traced back to Bucer, as is a great deal of his awareness of different translation suggestions, to which Bucer extensively referred in his commentary. Kimchi's