

SERIPANDO THE EXEGETE

1. Nature of Biblical Exegesis

Speaking of the main topic of Cervini's conversation with him, during the waiting period at Trent, Seripando says that the Cardinal inquired of him with great interest about the methods employed by the heretics, in their Commentaries of the Bible, especially those of the Epistles of St. Paul.¹ In this connection, he adds an explanatory phrase to the word: 'Commentaries'. This explanatory phrase discloses the different aspects of a commentary. They are: 1) word interpretation ("*verborum interpretatio*"), 2) sentence explanation ("*lucida sententiarum explanatio*"), and 3) illustration of passages which are obscure, ambiguous and difficult to explain ("*obscurorum, ambiguum atque explicatu difficilium locorum illustratio*").

The same idea recurs, where Seripando shows what the heretics promise in their commentaries.² They promise two things: 1) to hand down the pure, simple and genuine sense of the divine books ("*purum ac simplicem et germanum divinorum voluminum sensum tradere*"), and 2) to interpret the word force ("*verbeorum vim interpretari*"). Seripando says that, if the heretics had done so much, they would have accomplished everything that is expected of an exegete.

Exactly the same idea is put in a nutshell, where Seripando speaks of his own work.³ He says that what he has done is to try to expose clearly the mind of Paul ("*Pauli mentem dilucide explanare conatus sum*"). Bible exegesis, therefore, according to Seripando, is nothing but a lucid explanation of the mind of the sacred author. This lucid explanation has two main functions: 1) Word Interpretation and 2) Sense Interpretation.

2. The Scope of Exegesis

Seripando distinguishes a two-fold scope: scope of the exegesis, in itself, and scope of the exegete. The scope of the exegesis is to make clear what the apostle deals with and what he looks up to.⁴ This is that which the Greeks call *σκοπόν* ("*skopon*"). "It is a vicious thing" adds Seripando: "to go astray from this scope,

or not to return to it soon." The scope of the exegete, Seripando supposes to be well known to both Catholics and Protestants. What the Protestants too wished to attain through their exegesis or explanation of the mind of the Sacred Author, was to illumine men's intellect and to move their will to embrace a holy life.⁵

Seripando holds that the scope of the exegete can be attained only through the attainment of the scope of the exegesis, in itself. Hence Seripando reasons: the heretics begin, perhaps, with the best of intentions, with the right scope of an exegete before their eyes; but they fail to attain that scope, because at some point, they neglect the scope of the exegesis itself, trying to explain themselves rather than the mind of St. Paul. If they had remained as they often promise, faithful to the scope of the exegesis, nothing could have been wanting in their work, for the illumination of the intellect and for the pious affections of the will.⁶

To ensure the attainment of his scope, the exegete has also to adapt his exposition to the condition of those for whom he is writing. Men's minds are easily influenced by circumstances, and a prejudiced mind refuses to look at things, except through its own glasses. Hence the commentator has to take all possible care to propose the truth taught by the Sacred Author, in such a way that it may be easily assimilated by the persons whom he addresses.

A special stress on this secondary scope of the exegete, i.e., to illumine not only the unprejudiced minds, but also the prejudiced minds, was but natural at the time when Seripando wrote his exegesis, a time when heresy was speedily gaining ground and even some of the best Catholics were suspected of entertaining heretical ideas. That Seripando had this scope too, before his mind, while he wrote his exegesis, is clear from the following words: "I thought that it would be the greatest and stable foundation for disputations with heretics, if I would direct Paul's words to his mind and to that which he deals with, and explain them in such a way that nothing at all might favour their (the heretics') cause or their doctrine".⁷ This two-fold end was also in the mind of Luther, when he wrote his exegesis on the Galatians. In the preface he says: "*Unum spectavi si*

¹Seripando: *Commentaria*, p. 2.

²Seripando: *Commentaria*, p. 4.

³Seripando: *Commentaria*, p. 8.

⁴Seripando: *Commentaria*, p. 8.

⁵Cfr. Footnote 2 also Seripando: *Commentaria*, p. 9.

⁶Cfr. Footnote 2.

⁷Seripando: *Commentaria*, p. 9.

consequar, ut mea opera ii qui me Apostolicas Epistelas audiorunt ennarrantem Paulum apertiore habent et feliciter me superent. Si nec id effeci, age et hoc habens perdidit laboris; conatus reliquus est quo alios ad Paulinam Theologiam volui accendere, quam nemo bonus mihi vitio dedit."⁸ Evidently, Luther and Seripando had the self-same scope, while writing their exegesis on the Epistles of St. Paul, but, in effect, while the one, exaggerating Paul's mind in some aspects, caused souls to misunderstand and disregard it in others, and thus brought about untold misery to the Christian world, the other helped souls to remain faithful to Paul's full ideal, even in moments of the most stormy temptation. The reason for this difference is to be found in the norms they followed in working out their exegesis. We will see the principal norms which served as directive, in Seripando's work, first as regards word interpretation and then, as regards sense Interpretation.

⁸LW 2 p. 449 # 27-31.

SECTION I

SERIPANDO'S WORD INTERPRETATION

Seripando is deeply conscious of his duty of interpreting St. Paul's words, with exactitude. His attention is mainly fixed on the finding out of the original words of the Apostle and the exact rendering of them into the Latin tongue. In the following chapters, we will see how he fares in this two-fold duty.

CHAPTER 1

SEARCH FOR THE ORIGINAL TEXT

1. Contemporary Interpreters: Erasmus, Cajetan, Catharinus

Contemporary interpreters of the Bible, were, as a rule, afraid to interfere with the text of Scripture, already in common use. Erasmus of Rotterdam was considered to have gone far out of the way, in his venture to amend the Greek text and to give it a new Latin interpretation (1519 second edition). When Cardinal Cajetan undertook to make a Latin version of the Epistles “*secundum Graecam veritatem*,” he took care to leave intact, the Vg. Renering, wherever possible (1531). Ambrosius Catharinus who had examined Erasmus’ text, up to its fifth edition as well as Cajetan’s version, deemed it wiser to follow the Vg. Text, in his own commentaries (1551), observing, as they occurred, the important variants and explaining their implications.

2. Seripando’s *Via Media*

Seripando, however, thought it his foremost right and duty, as an exegete, to search out the genuine text, sparing neither the vulgate nor any individual codex, when evidence went against them. He studied the codices, both Greek and Latin, and gathered from them the words that should have originally come from St. Paul, according to his judgement.

3. Choice of Readings That Are Found Only in the Latin Codices

Thus, for example, while interpreting Rom. 4, 5, Seripando selects a reading which is found only in the Latin codices: “Hence it is,” says he, “that this attribution of faith to justice, is, the whole of it, of divine bounty (an idea) which is openly expressed by the Latin codices in which we read these words which are wanting in the Greek (codices): “*secundum propositum Dei*.”⁹

These words of Seripando further reveal to us that he was of the persuasion that the Greek codices actually available to him did not necessarily contain all the words that originally came from the Apostle, and that some of the Latin codices before him, could very

⁹Seripando: *Commentaria*, Rom. 4, 5, p. 64.

well be translations from Greek codices that were older than those at his disposal.

4. Choice of Readings That Are Not Found in Latin Codices

In another case, namely, Rom. 14, 6, Seripando selects a reading which is found, in no Latin Codex. The Latin Codices, together with some of the Greek Codices, like BSCA, P 46, P. O, 48, present the shorter reading: ὁ φρονῶν τὴν ἡμέραν κυρίῳ φρονεῖ (“*ho fronon ten hermeran Kyrio fronai*”) Seripando prefers to follow those Greek Codices which prolong the reading by the addition of: καὶ ὁ μὴ φρονῶν τὴν ἡμέραν κυρίῳ οὐ φρονεῖ (“*Kai ho me fronon ten hemeran Kyrio ow fronei*”).¹⁰ It may be noted that the Latin Codex (Lango-bardus), in fact, contains the longer reading; but the second part of it, is only a marginal addition.¹¹

5. The Standard Greek Text

We know besides, that Seripando used the Received Text (*Textus receptus*), as his standard, and called it: “the Greek text”. For, having quoted a reading peculiar to that text he says: “*sic habet Codex Graecus*.”¹²

6. Reasons for the Preferences

Often, Seripando does not give us the reasons which moved him to prefer one reading to another. In a few instances, however, he thinks it well to add some remarks. From these remarks, we are able to arrive at some conclusions as regards Seripando’s norms of textual criticism.

One of Seripando’s important norms is, to select that reading which expresses more fully the mind of the author. Thus in Rom 4, 5, he selects a reading which is found only in the Latin Codices, on the ground that it expresses the idea of Paul more fully (Cfr. also Rom, 4, 18: 8, 1; 14, 6a). There is a case where Seripando’s choice falls on a more difficult reading. While interpreting 1 Thess. 2, 7, he adds, in the margin νήπιος λέγο (“*nepios lego*”). Perhaps,

¹⁰Seripando: *Commentaria*, Rom. 14, 6, p. 232 # 1.

¹¹Cfr. Wordsworth White, *Novum Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Latine*, Part II. p. 135.

¹²Ms. Nap. VII A 36 1 Cor. 15, 29. Quoting the last portion of the versicle: “*ut quid et baptizantur pro mortuis?*” Seripando says “*Sic habet codex Graecus*” (C. II n. III).

Seripando thinks that the easier reading had been introduced by some scribe, in the place of the difficult one.¹³

Another norm followed by Seripando in selecting the reading is: to prefer that reading which agrees better with the context as well as with Paul's idea expressed elsewhere. It is this rule that directs Seripando in dealing with 1 Cor 15, 51.

Having translated the verse: "*omnes quidem non dormiemus, omnes autem immutabimur,*" Seripando adds: "this I accept from the various readings of this passage which contains this mystery: that not all men will die because those who will be found living at the coming of God, will not die, and that, all the same, all men are to be transformed, because the corruptible body of all, will become incorruptible etc. This reading agrees with what follows and with 1 Thess. 4, where the same mystery is dealt with."¹⁴

There is one case where Seripando gets confused, and feels himself incompetent to solve the problem. Having tried in vain to restore Rom. 16, 25-27 to their original form, he observes: "This is an obscure and long period corrupt, as I think, by the addition or the omission of a certain particle."¹⁵

Strangely enough, Seripando prefers, in some cases, an order of words, which is against the testimony of the best Codices, and which does not seem to present any special reason for its being preferred. In Rom. 3, 6 the Greek Codices as well as the Vulgate follow the order: "*judicabit Deus*" κρινῶ ὁ θεός (*Krino ho theos*) but Seripando prefers the reverse order: "*Deus judicabit.*" The same kind of reversal can be noted, in Roma 2, 1 and 5, 21.¹⁶

7. Conclusion

Although we cannot agree with Seripando in his preference for longer readings for the reason that they express the mind of the author more fully (for, any scribe could have added apt explanations so as to express the original idea more fully!), and with his seemingly arbitrary change of the word order, we

¹³Ms. Nap. VII A 36: 1Thess. 2, 7: "*sed quod ad honorem et dignitatem attinet, tanquam parvuli inter vos versati fuimus.*" In the margin Seripando adds "*nepios lego.*"

¹⁴Ms. Nap. VII A. 36 (C. XV, n. XIII).

¹⁵Seripando: *Commentaria*, Rom. 16, 25-27, p. 264.

¹⁶Seripando: *Commentaria*, Rom. 2, 1; 3, 6; 5, 21.

appreciate the tendency that is manifested everywhere: the effort to restore the sacred text to its original purity.

As to the imperfections of the method which Seripando employs, in order to arrive at the realization of his purpose, we must remember that he was never a master of textual criticism. His progress in this art was but gradual.

In his first trial, the interlinear *Glossa* on the Romans (Cod. Trivulz. 378), his readings differ from the Vg. Reading in 24 instances.¹⁷ In the Commentary on the 1 Cor. which he began after the *Glossa*, the differences are 33. In his last exegetical work, the Commentary on the Romans, the textual differences amount to 81.

Seripando himself was conscious of his imperfections, in the application of the principles of textual criticism, in certain cases; and he did make the necessary corrections. This is clear from the comparative study of the first and the second exegetical works of Seripando, on the Romans. In 14 instances, Seripando silently admits himself to have gone wrong in his choice of the reading in the *Glossa* on the Romans' since he changed them in the Commentary which followed it.

The heretics too, were busy with realizing a pretended desire to restore the Bible text to its original purity. But Seripando denounces the treacherous intentions at the bottom of that desire. They did not hesitate to change the words of the Sacred author, so as to support their own opinions, alleging for their authority, the Hebrew or the Greek Codices. Seripando points out that, often, their alleged readings did not agree with Hebrew or Greek or Latin.¹⁸

7.1. Seripando and the Vulgate

Seripando retains, in his commentaries, the same attitude towards the Vulgate, which he had manifested in the Council of Trent. He maintained in the council, that although the Vg. was free from errors as to faith and morals, it still had the defects of every translation, viz., it did not in all cases represent the sacred text, in its original purity. Hence, for arriving at the genuine mind of the sacred authors, recourse to the codices, in the original languages,

¹⁷Cfr. For example, Vulgate and Cod. Trivulz. Rom. 10, 2; 11, 3; 11, 9; 11, 36; 15, 21.

¹⁸Seripando: *Commentaria*, pp. 4 f.

was a necessity. In his commentaries, even in his very first attempt at exegesis, Seripando makes it clear, that he does not follow the Vg. text, as already seen.

7.2. Jedin's Opinion

Jedin thinks that, in Seripando's exegetical works on Corinthians and Thessalonians, he had first followed the Vg. text and then revised them according to the Greek text. The foregoing pages show that such an opinion can hardly be maintained.¹⁹

Jedin is also of opinion that Seripando had adopted a stricter interpretation of the decree of the Council of Trent on the Vg. He gathers this, mainly from the efforts made by Seripando to soften the decree "*insuper*," even up to the year 1561, when the council had reached its last stage, and from the contents of a letter written by Seripando to Card. Da Mula: "from the tenor of his letter," says Jedin, "it appears that Seripando adopted the stricter interpretation, namely, that the Vg. alone and not the original text or the other translations could be used in support of a dogma."²⁰ Jedin continues: "This interpretation, coming from one who had participated in the writing of the decree, is entitled to greater consideration than the explanations of other Council member or of such theologians as had only indirect knowledge of the formation of the decree. We cannot, then, put a side this view, without further ado..."²¹

¹⁹Jedin: *Girolamo Seripando*, vol. II, p. 389 # 2.

²⁰Jedin: *Papal Legate*, p. 299 # 2. NB: About Seripando's effort to revise the decree on the Vulgate, in 1561, Jedin writes: "But when in 1561, the Council convened for the third time, it was Seripando who of his own accord tried to bring about a revision of the still unconfirmed decree." The reasons adduced by Seripando against the decree were: 1) The decree on the Vulgate, did not determine which, of the extant translations was the authentic Vulgate (The Vulgate of the Fathers, or the Vulgate of the middle ages or the translation by St. Jerome?) 2) None of the Bibles in use at the time contained all the passages quoted by the Fathers in defence of the Catholic Church against the heretics. 3. It might appear that by approving this one Latin text, the study of the original Bible languages would be prohibited. Who would study these languages, if only the Latin translation could be used publicly and officially? The present liberty of using the old translations is denied by the decree, and yet everyone knows from experience, that these various translations in determining the sense of the Bible." p. 295 # 2.

²¹Jedin: *Papal Legate*, p. 299.

Seripando's conduct after the decree of the council seems to go counter to such a conclusion. He continued, in earnest, his study of the Greek text and gave the final touches to his best work in Exegesis, the Commentary on the Romans which, as his former exegetical works, was based neither on the Vulgate nor on any single Greek text, but on the Greek text critically restored by his own self. Moreover, in his "*Quaestiones*", especially in the first questions, which he revised, after the decree "*insuper*," under the guidance of Cardinal Cervini, who was the president of the commission which formulated the decree on the Vg., Seripando argues against heretics appealing to the Hebrew codices, and quoting, sometimes, passages of St. Paul, from the Vg. but directly from the Greek (cf. *Quaest.* 3: 6.).²²

Hence the fears of Seripando, expressed in his letter to Card. Da Mula, were centred, not on the real import of the decree, as Card. Cervini and Seripando himself had understood it, but on the interpretation that might easily be given to it by those who did not take part in the council.²³

²²In the concluding words of Q. 3, we have an appeal to the Hebrew codices: "*Quae si id quod de poenitentiae operibus docemus, nudo tantum confirmaremus Ecclesiae decreto, nulla sanctorum Scripturarum auctoritate fullo, improbandum certe non esset, Deum enim a quo ligandi et solvendi potestatem ille accepit, condonandis peccatis imitaretur. Qui si Hebraeorum codicum fidem sequamur, inter caetera quae haec peculiaria, illud enumerat, quod indulgendo non indulget, quia quem aeterno non afficit crucitu, ad tempus castigat, et inultum omnino esse non patitur.*" *Commentaria*: pp 355 f. In Q. 6, Seripando shows the error committed by the Protestants in interpreting Gal. 1, 10, by quoting the very Greek words: "*anthropous peitho e ton theu*" and "*e dseto anthropois areskein.*" *Commentaria*, p. 367.

²³In fact, many Catholic theologians, not to speak of Protestants, especially, the Spanish Lee de Castro, Bartholomeo de Medina (at first), Ludovico de Tena gave the decree the interpretation which Seripando had feared would be given to it. Even the theologians of the Congregation for the Council seemed to interpret the decree in that sense. The true meaning of the decree, as understood by Seripando at the very time of the Council, can now be seen indicated in the authentic declaration of the tenor of the decree, made by Pius XII. See Encyclical, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, n. 14.

CHAPTER 2

THE LATIN RENDERING

1. *Via Media*

In rendering the sacred text into Latin, Seripando's ideal was: to expose the sacred author's mind in the most apt and in the most ordinary expressions. Could he not retain the Vg. rendering, where his text coincided with that of the Vg.? Seripando's attitude in this respect is a "via media" between that of Erasmus and Cajetan. Erasmus had too little respect for the Vg. rendering, where as Cajetan had too much of it. Seripando sought help from the Vg., Erasmus and Cajetan; but he had no hesitation to differ from any of them when their Latin rendering did not suit his ideal.

2. *The Gradual Progress*

This is clear from all his exegetical works. As we proceed from his earlier to his later works, we notice a gradual increase in the number of instances where in this attitude is manifested. Thus, in his very first attempt at interpretation, the interlinear *Glossa* on the Romans, his Latin rendering differs from that of the Vg., in 20 instances.²⁴ In his Commentary on the 1 Cor. we come across 54 instances of that nature; and in his last work, the Commentary on the Romans, the number of such instances, rises up to 94.

For a study of the exact nature of these differences, we will fix our attention exclusively on his last work, the Commentary on the Romans. The 94 instances wherein Seripando's Latin rendering differs from that of the Vg., can be grouped under two main classes: more apt expressions and more ordinary expressions.

2.1. *More Apt Expressions*

In 50 instances, Seripando leaves off the Vg. renderings and substitutes them by more apt expressions. The greater aptitude of these expressions, as far as we have been able to judge, consists, in 46 of these instances, in their greater conformity with the Greek words used by the apostle. Thus, for example, in Rom. 1, 4 Seripando renders, τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ (*tou horisthentos huiou*

²⁴Cfr. The Vulgate and Cod. Trivulz. 378 on Rom. 3, 25; 3, 28; 5, 1; 5, 12; 6, 1; 6, 3; 6, 5; 6, 6; 6, 8; 6, 16; 9, 22; 10, 14; 12, 18; 13, 5; 14, 19; 15, 14; 15, 26.

theou), by 'qui definitus est Filius Dei' against the Vg. Rendering: 'qui praedestinatus est Filius Dei';²⁵ in Rom 1, 29 ἀδικία (*adikia*) rendered by: 'injustitia' against the Vg. 'iniquitas', in Rom. 11, 34 νοῦν κυρίου (*noun Kyrion*) is, for Seripando, 'mentem Domini' while for the Vg. it is: 'sensum Domini'; ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ (*en te diakonia*) of Rom 12,7, is rendered into 'in administratione' by Seripando, against the Vg. rendering: 'in Administrando'. Substitutions of a like nature, can be observed in Rom. 1, 29; 2, 14; 2, 8; 3, 9; 3, 10; 4, 3b; 4, 5b; 4, 6; 4, 9; 4, 20; 4, 21; 4, 23; 4, 24; 5, 13; 5, 15; 5, 17; 6, 1b; 6, 5; 9, 7; 9, 22; 12, 1; 12, 2a; 12, 2b; 12, 7;

²⁵Cajetan's rendering is: 'definitus' Erasmus, following the majority of the Greek Fathers, rendered the phrase by: "declaratus." Lagrange objects to this rendering, saying that we can find no instance in the Koine literature, where *horixein* means 'to declare'. Cornely, however, defends the rendering 'declaratus', by the authority of St. Chrysostom who uses *horizein* to mean 'to manifest', 'to judge as such', 'to recognize'. But Lagrange says that the fourth century literature cannot give us sufficient ground to fix the meaning of a word in the Koine literature of the first century.

Seripando sticks to 'definitus'. All the same, he would not have objected to the rendering 'declaratus'. For, in his explanation of the term 'definitus', he uses the word 'declaratus': "By the operation of the Holy Ghost, He (Christ) was pointed out (*demonstratus*) and declared (*declaratus*) Son of God, first of all to John Baptist who said: "I saw the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven", then to the Apostles to whom, as Christ Himself had promised, He (the Holy Ghost) rendered testimony about Christ; finally to the whole world through the Apostles, when "all were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in various tongues, as the Holy Spirit suggested to them to speak."

In his *version* Seripando sticks to "definitus," because, he too, as Lagrange, might have thought that "declaratus" would not be strictly speaking, a legitimate expression for *horistentos*, since the Koine literature did not seem to have extended the meaning of *horixein* as far as 'to declare'. However, he had no scruples to explain "definitus" by "declaratus," because "definitus," "demonstratus" and "declaratus" express the same main idea with different shades which fit in with our context. 'Definire' properly consists in individualizing one from the rest; 'demonstrare' consists, also in pointing out the individual to others; 'declarare' adds greater solemnity to 'demonstrare'. Thus, while sticking to the meaning which is more conformable to the Greek root in his version, Seripando extends it, in his explanation, to some shades, as required by the context.

12, 10; 14, 4; 14, 11; 15, 14; 15, 24a; 15, 24b; 15, 24c; 15, 25; 15, 26; 16, 1; 16, 5; 16, 8; 16, 15; 16, 18; 16, 23.²⁶

²⁶Since longer explanation, in each case, seems to exceed the scope of our work, we content ourselves with adducing a comparative table of the renderings of the groups we are dealing with.

Romans	The Greek Text	Vg. Rendering	Seripando's Rendering
1, 29	ἀδικία	<i>Iniquitas</i>	<i>injustitia</i>
2, 8	ὀργή καὶ θυμός.	<i>ira et indignation</i>	<i>furor et ira</i>
2, 14	οὗτοι	<i>Ejusmodi</i>	<i>hi</i>
3, 9	οὐ πάντως.	<i>Nesquam</i>	<i>non omnino</i>
3, 10	οὐδὲ εἷς,	<i>non est quisquam</i>	<i>ne unus quidem</i>
4, 20	εἰς δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν	<i>in repromissione</i>	<i>in promissione</i>
4, 21	ὃ ἐπήγγελαν	<i>quaecumque promisit</i>	<i>id quod promisit</i>
5, 15	εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς	<i>in plures</i>	<i>in multos</i>
5, 17	τῆς δωρεᾶς	<i>donationis et justitiae</i>	<i>doni justitiae</i>
6, 1b	ἐπιμένωμεν	<i>Permanebimus</i>	<i>manebimus</i>
6, 5	σύμφυτοι γεγονάμεν	<i>complantati facti sumus</i>	<i>Insiti facti sumus</i>
9, 7	ὅτι	<i>Quia</i>	<i>qui</i>
9, 22	κατηρτισμένα	<i>Apta</i>	<i>aptata</i>
12, 1	διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρῶν τοῦ θεοῦ	<i>per misericordiam Dei</i>	<i>per miserationes Dei</i>
12, 2	μεταμορφουσθε	<i>Reformemini</i>	<i>transformemini</i>
12, 2	ἀνακαινώσει τῇ	<i>Novitate</i>	<i>renovatione</i>
12, 7	ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ	<i>in ministrando</i>	<i>in administratione</i>
12, 10	τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ	<i>in caritate fraternitatis</i>	<i>in caritate fraterna</i>
14, 4c	στήσαι αὐτόν.	<i>statuere illum</i>	<i>stabilire illum</i>
14, 11b	κάμψει	<i>Flectetur</i>	<i>flectet</i>
15, 14	ἀγαθωσύνης,	<i>Dilectione</i>	<i>bonitate</i>
15, 14	[τῆς] γνώσεως	<i>Scientia</i>	<i>cognitione</i>

In one instance however (Rom. 16, 20) Seripando seems to fall short of his ideal; because, there, he leaves off the Vg. rendering (*velociter*) which is obviously, more in conformity with the Greek equivalent ἐν τάχει (*en tachei*), and substitutes it by one (*'brevis'*), which is less in conformity with the Greek word.

In three instances, Seripando seems to have left off the Vg. renderings in order to substitute them by expressions, which indicate better, the special shade of the meaning, intended by the apostle. Thus δοξάζω (*doxadso*) which is rendered by *'honorificabo'* by the Vg., in Rom 11,13b, is translated into *'illustro'* by Seripando. Although *'honorificare'* and *'illustrare'* signify the same thing substantially, *'honorificare'* directly signifies to create in others, the esteem for a thing which is, in itself, honourable, whereas *'illustrare'* is to make a thing worthy of being noticed. What Paul intends, is to illustrate his ministry, i.e., to carry it out in such a way, that it may be noticed by the Jews and that it may consequently create jealousy in them. In Rom. 14, 13 and 14, 21 too, Seripando's renderings seem

15, 24	ὡς ἂν πορεύωμαι	<i>cum proficisci coepero</i>	<i>cum proficiscar</i>
15, 24	ἐλπίζω γὰρ διαπορευόμενος θεάσασθαι ὑμᾶς	<i>spero quod praeteriens videam vos</i>	<i>spero enim praeteriens videre vos</i>
15, 24	καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι	<i>et a vobis deducar</i>	<i>et a vobis deduci</i>
15, 25	Νυνὶ δὲ	<i>nunc igitur</i>	<i>nunc autem</i>
15, 26	κοινωνίαν τινὰ	<i>collectionem aliquam</i>	<i>communicationem aliquam</i>
16, 1	οὖσαν [καὶ] διακονοῦν τῆς ἐκκλησίας	<i>quae est in ministerio ecclesiae</i>	<i>quae est ministra ecclesiae</i>
16, 5b	τὸν ἀγαπητόν μου	<i>dilectum mihi</i>	<i>dilectum meum</i>
16, 8	τὸν ἀγαπητόν μου	<i>dilectum mihi</i>	<i>dilectum meum</i>
16, 5b	ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀσίας	<i>primitivus Asiae</i>	<i>primitiae Asiae</i>
16, 15b	Ὀλυμπᾶν	<i>Olympiadem</i>	<i>Olympiam</i>
16, 18	οἱ τοιοῦτοι	<i>Hujuscemodi</i>	<i>hujusmodi</i>
16, 23	ὁ οἰκονόμος	<i>Arcarius</i>	<i>oeconomus</i>

to bring out better, the exact shade of the meaning intended by Paul.²⁷

In an ambiguous case (Rom. 3, 25: ἱλαστήριον (*hilasterion*), Seripando leaves off the Vg. rendering ('*Propitiatio*') and uses a rendering which had, by then, become almost traditional among the exegetes, and which seemed to fit in well with the context (viz., '*Propitiator*').²⁸

2.2. More Ordinary Expressions

This group comprises 43 instances. All these renderings are intended to express the Apostle's word force, in a language which is more idiomatic, clearer and simpler than that of the Vg.

Thus, for example, the conjunction ὅτι, *hoti* ('*declarativum*') has been rendered by '*quod*' instead of the Vg.

²⁷The words, *proskomma* (Rom. 14, 13) *proskoptei* (Rom. 14, 21) have created great difficulty to interpreters. The problem is to distinguish exactly *proskomma* from *skandalon*. Erasmus, Cajetan, Godet, Cornely, Lagrange and others think that *proskomma* signifies something which inflicts a slight offence and *skandalon* something which causes a serious offence. Thus the Vg. Erasmus and Cajetan and others, render *proskomma* by *offendiculum*." Seripando differs from all, and with a certain intuition of the Apostle's mind, renders it by "error." The context seems to suggest Seripando's interpretation. The whole passage is dealing with error in judgement and the consequent scandals created in those who are weaker in faith, through the careless behaviour and talk of those who are stronger in faith. Each one is to be judged by God according to his conscience. Hence the Apostle seriously admonishes the faithful not to give occasions that may create erroneous conscience in their brethren, and thus become stumbling blocks to them. The versicle 14, 13 is the conclusion of the passage. This is how Seripando explains it: "Let us not therefore judge each other, but mark ye, rather this: place not an error or a scandal to a brother ... let us absolutely abstain from judgement, which if we cannot attain, let this be the norm of your judgement, that you may judge those to be acting wickedly who are the authors of *error of fall* to their brethren."

²⁸As Cornely says, although the word *hilasterion* in itself would hardly mean *propitiator* (*hilastes*), traditionally it has assumed that sense, among many interpreters. The context gives ready approbation to this interpretation, since *hilasterion* is referred to Christ the Redeemer. Cajetan follows Vg. And suggests that '*Propitiator*' would fit in better with the context. Erasmus rendered it by '*reconciliator*' the LXX has used *hilasterion* to mean the Hebrew '*kipert*' 'the propitiatory'. Some exegetes, taking this hint, rendered it here by '*propitiatory*'. Cfr. J. M. Bover: in *Biblica* (1939) 158-160. J. Huby: *Epître aux Romains*: pp. 153 sq.

'*quia*', in 13 instances, in the Epistle to the Romans.²⁹ However, Seripando is not consistent in the use of '*quod*' for ὅτι, *hoti* '*declarativum*'. There are 50 instances of ὅτι, *hoti* '*declarativum*', in the Romans, and yet, only in 13 instances, Seripando employs the special attention to be idiomatic in rendering it into Latin. It is interesting to note that Seripando's attention in this respect completely ceases, after the 8th Chapter. Even in the first 8 Chapters, his attention is not extended to all the cases. It fails in the following verses: Rom. 1, 8; 2, 3; 3, 2; 3, 8; 3, 10; 4, 17; 5, 3; 5, 8; 6, 9; 6, 16; 6, 17; 7, 14; 7, 16; 7, 21; 8, 16; 8, 18; 8, 21; 8, 22; 8, 28; 8, 36.

The conjunction '*kai*' has been rendered by '*sed*', in Rom 10, 21, and by '*sicut*' in Rom. 11, 9 against the Vg. '*et*'. The preposition δία (*dia*) in Rom. 2, 24 is rendered by '*propter*' against the Vg. '*per*'. In Rom. 6, 9 Seripando renders ἐξ '*ex*' by '*a*' ("*qui resurrexit a mortuis*") whereas the Vg. renders it by '*ex*'. In Rom. 12, 18: τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν (*to ex hymon* is rendered by '*quod in vobis est*,' by Seripando, whereas the Vg. renders the same by "*quod ex vobis est*".) Εἰς (*Eis*) in Rom. 6, 19 is equivalent to '*ad*' for Seripando, while, for the Vg., it is equivalent to '*in*'. Κατά (*kata*) of Rom. 2, 7, is rendered by Seripando into '*per*' against the Vg. '*secundum*', παρά (*para*) of Rom. 4, 18, into '*praeter*' against the Vg. '*contra*' and παρά (*para*) of Rom. 14, 5, into '*ad*' against the Vg. '*inter*'. Seripando's version of οὐκείν *ouketi* Rom. 6, 9, is '*non amplius*', while that of the Vg. is '*jam non*'; Seripando renders εφ' ὅσον (*ef hoson*) of Rom. 11,13 by '*quatenus*' while the Vg. renders the same by '*quamdiu*'. Εἰς ἀλλήλους *Eis allelous* in Rom. 14, 19 gets the rendering '*invicem*' in Seripando's Commentary against the Vg. '*in invicem*'; το γενέσθου αὐτοῦ (*to genesthu autu*) in Rom. 4, 18, receives the rendering: '*quod fieret pater multarum gentium*' from Seripando, against the Vg. rendering: "*ut fieret pater multarum gentium*". The phrase εἰς τὸ παραζηῶσαι αὐτοὺς (*eis to paradseosai autos*) of Rom. 11, 11, is rendered by Seripando into: '*ut ad aemulationem eos provocet*', while the Vg. has the same, rendered into: '*ut illos aemulentur*."

²⁹Cfr. Rom. 1, 13; 1, 32; 2, 4; 3, 19; 4, 9; 4, 21; 4, 23; 6, 3; 6, 6; 6, 8; 7, 1; 7, 18; 8, 38.

For the sake of greater clarity and simplicity, Seripando has receded, 12 times from the Vg. rendering, and produced his own:

Romans	The Greek Text	Vg. Rendering	Seripando's Rendering
1, 4, 16	δύναμις	<i>Virtus</i>	<i>Potential</i>
1, 30	Ἀπειθείς	<i>Inobedientes</i>	<i>non obedientes</i>
2, 8a	ἀπειθοῦσι	... <i>qui non acquiescunt</i>	... <i>qui non obediunt.</i>
2, 8b	πειθομένοις	... <i>credunt</i>	... <i>obediunt</i>
5, 19	διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς	... <i>obeditionem</i>	... <i>obedientiam</i>
6, 9	ἐγερθείς	<i>resurgens ex mortuis</i>	<i>qui resurrexit a mortuis</i>
6, 16	οὐκ οἶδατε	<i>nescitis?</i>	<i>an nescitis?</i>
10, 14	εἰς ὃν	<i>in quem</i>	<i>eum in quem</i>
13, 4	ἐάν δε το κακὸν ποιῆς	<i>si autem malum feceris</i>	<i>si autem male feceris</i>
13, 5	δίο	<i>ideo</i>	<i>Ideoque</i>
15, 26	Ἡυδόκησαν γὰρ μακεδονία καὶ Ἀχαία	<i>probaverunt enim Macedonia et Achaia</i>	<i>placuit enim Macedoniae et Achaiae</i>

The rendering of ὥστε (*hoste*) into 'ut' against the Vg. 'ita ut' (Rom. 7, 6) does not seem to bring greater clarity or simplicity. All the same, Seripando prefers in this case, 'ut' against 'ita ut'.

For the sake of clarity, in the Latin rendering, Seripando, at times, changes the word order followed by the Greek text and the Vg. The following table shows the instances where such changes occur.

	The Vg. and Cajetan	Seripando
Rom. 1,4	<i>qui praedestinatus est Filius Dei in virtute secundum spiritum sanctificationis.</i>	<i>qui secundum spiritum santificationis, definitus est Filius Dei, in potentia.</i>
Rom. 1,5	<i>per quem accepimus gratiam et apostolatam ad oboedientiam fidei in</i>	<i>per quem accepimus gratiam et apostolatam pro nomine ejus, in</i>

	<i>omnibus gentibus, pro nomine e jus.</i>	<i>omnibus gentibus, ad oboedientiam fidei.</i>
Rom. 1,9-10	<i>quod sine intermissione memoriam vestry facis, semper in orationibus meis.</i>	<i>quod in orationibus meis, semper, sine intermissione, memoriam vestri facis.</i>
Rom. 1, 20	<i>Invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur.</i>	<i>Invisibilia enim ipsius, conspiciuntur a creatura mundi intellecta per ea quae facta sunt.</i>

The remaining changes in the word order do not show any special reason for the alteration. They are, however, very few, in number, and do not call for any special attention.³⁰

3. Conclusion

Seripando's word interpretation, is, indeed, well planned, and, as a rule, well worked out. His efforts are directed towards rendering the Apostle's words into the most apt and the most ordinary expressions, as is clear from the instances, where his renderings differ from those of the Vg. It is true that Seripando does not touch all the cases where amelioration of the Vg. rendering is desirable. Thus he leaves off many instances where *hoti* would be better rendered by 'quod', not to speak of other more important instances like the rendering of ἐγερθείς (*egertheis*) in Rom 6,9 which, although obviously has the passive sense, is rendered by Seripando into "resurgens" (in active voice).³¹

The instances in which Seripando seems to miss his mark, show only that, in the age, in which he wrote his exegesis, he lacked many of the helps which we have now, such as an increased number of critical editions, both the Greek text and of the Latin versions, perfect grammars and exhaustive Lexicons. Seripando's own words show that he had no pretensions as to his mastery in this art. He

³⁰Cfr. E.g. Rom. 3, 6: *krinei ho theos* Vg. Eras. Cajet.: "judicabit Deus"; Seripa.: "Deus judicabit." Rom. 5, 21 *ebasileusen he hamartia*: Vg. Eras. Cajet.: "regnavit peccatum"; Serip.: "peccatum regnavit."

³¹Cfr. Cornely: Rom. 6, 9: "resurgens (*melius: resuscitatus*; Gk: *egertheis*)" p. 324. Lagrange: Rom. 6, 9: "Les corrections de WW. Surgens a mortuis pour resurgens ex mortuis (Vg. Clem.) ne suffisent pas a rendre le texte grec. Il faudrait: suscitatus ex mortuius, p. 148.

modestly says in the Preface: “I have tried to explain clearly the mind of Paul with the utmost brevity and clarity that I could muster, seeking words, which I hardly know if I really found out, that are the most ordinary and the most apt.”³² But this is not all. Seripando’s determination to bring home to his readers, the full force of the Apostles’ words in all possible clarity, urged him to contrive further means to facilitate the understanding of his word interpretation. We devote the next chapter for a study of these special means he has employed in his commentaries.

³²Seripando: *Commentaria*, p. 8.

CHAPTER 3

HELPS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE LATIN RENDERING

To make his Latin rendering easily intelligible to all, Seripando makes use of different methods. Sometimes he contents himself with some marginal note; sometimes he employs the Greek word itself in his translation and explanation, at other times he gives special explanations regarding the real import of the Greek word in question.

1. Marginal Notes

In most cases, Seripando thinks that the mere placing of the Greek equivalent in the margin is enough to instruct the reader of the real import of the Latin expression, employed in the version. Thus 30 out of the 31 marginal notes that we come across, in Seripando’s commentary on the Romans, consist of the mere Greek equivalents. For example, we find in the margin of the commentary on Rom 1, 19 (*quod notum est Dei*). The Greek phrase: τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (*to gnoston tou theou*). Other instances of the kind, may be seen in connection with Rom. 1, 20; 1, 23; 1, 24; 1, 25a; 1, 26b; 1, 29; 1, 30; 1, 32; 2, 1; 2, 2; 2, 4; 2, 8; 2, 17; 2, 24; 2, 26; 3, 3; 3, 4; 3, 9a; 3, 9b; 3, 10; 3, 19a; 3, 19b; 4, 2; 4, 3; 4, 4; 4, 8; 4, 12; 4, 16; 5, 1; 5, 2; 2 Cor. 1, 4; 1 Thess. 2, 17; 3, 1; 3, 6; 4, 6; 4, 10; 4, 11a; 4, 11b; 4, 11c; 4, 11d; 4, 12; 5, 2; 5, 14; 2 Thess. 1, 5; 1, 6; 1, 9; 1, 11; 2, 3; 2, 11a; 2, 11b; 2, 13; 3, 2; 3, 3; 3, 6.

In some cases, Seripando adds to the Greek word in the margin, its exact literal meaning, so as to show how the expression he has used in the translation, is really equivalent to the Greek word. The Romans has no instance of this kind, whereas the only instance of a marginal note with a Greek word in the Gal. pertains to this category. In Gal. 4, 16, Seripando accompanies his reading: “*Ergo inimicus factus sum verum dicens*”; by the following marginal note: ἀληθέλεγων (*alethelegon*): *qui vera dicebam*. The same type may be found in 2 Cor. 1, 10; 1, 12; 5, 13; 2 Thess. 2, 7.

Three Epistles contain marginal notes which adduce, besides, some further explanation, regarding the Greek text: Romans has one instance of this kind. In Rom. 4, 11, the translation: “*ut imputetur et illis ad justitiam*”, has the following marginal note: εἰς τὸ

λογισθῆναι καὶ αὐτοῖς τὴν δικαιοσύνην (*eis to logisthenai kai autois dikaiosunen*): *subaudi* εἰς τὴν δικαιοσύνην (*eis ten dikaiosunen*). Similar notes occur in 2 Cor. 11, 28; 1 Thess. 2, 7, and 3, 3.

2. Greek Words Employed to Bring Out the Word Force

Sometimes, Seripando seems to be at a loss to get an apt word in Latin, to render the Greek word with its exact force. This seems to have happened because he could not afford to have sufficient time. In his inedited Commentaries on 2 Cor. And 1 Thess., we have 16 instances where Seripando, simply quotes the Greek words and gives his paraphrase on them. Thus, while handling 2 Cor. 4, 17, Seripando writes: καθ' ὑπερβολήν εἰς ὑπερβολήν (*kath huperbolen eis huperbolen*): *super modum excellenter aeternum* etc." The other instances of this kind occur in 2 Cor. 11, 2; 11, 28a; 11, 28b; 12, 7; 12, 10; 12, 20a; 12, 20b; 12, 20c; 12, 20d; 12, 20e; 12, 20f; 13, 9b; 13, 11a; 13, 11b; 1 Thess. 5, 1.

At other times Seripando renders into Latin, as much of the passage as he can without much ado, and simply incorporates into his version those Greek words whose exact rendering calls for greater thought or further research, from his part. Thus, he renders 2 Cor. 13, 5b, in the following way: "*nisi ἀδόκιμοι estis*". In 1 Cor. 10, 22 he renders a part like this: "*Ἄν παραζηλοῦμεν*". Likewise, in 1 Cor. 10, 21, we have: "*Hoc εἰδωλυθυτόν est*."

Some Greek expressions are according to Seripando so typically Pauline, that he leaves them intact and employs them as such, freely, in the course of his explanations. Thus he writes on Rom. 11, 36: "*homines animales et ea quae sunt Spiritus Dei non percipientes, το ἀδύνατον importune flagitantes*." In the same way εὐταξία occurs in the explanation of Rom. 13, 2 and ὁμοιοτέχνοι in that of Rom. 16, 3.

In Gal., the following words are used, with the same freedom: δοκοῦντες (2, 9); ἀνοήτοι (3, 1); μεσίτην (3, 19); χρεστεύεται (5, 23); and μακροθυμεῖ (5, 22). The 2 Cor. has ἀδόκιμοι repeated four times, in the course of the explanation of 13, 6 – 13, 9. In 1 Thess. we have three instances of the kind: ἐν βαρεῖ (2,9); θεοδιδάκτοι (4,9); and ἀδύνατα (5,24).

3. Special Explanations of the Greek Words

Sometimes, Seripando doubts the aptitude of his Latin rendering to bring out the full force of the Greek equivalent used by the Apostle. In such cases, he adduces special explanations of the words concerned. Thus, for example, in 1 Thess. 2, 3 he says: "*Est enim Graece πλάνη quod verbum non illius est solum qui decipitur sed et decipientis*" (37); in Rom. 14, 5: "*Certa ergo fides, certa que persuasio et illa animi plenissima securitas quam πληροφορίαν Graecorum sanctissimi, sapientissimique Patres appellarunt, in utrisque erat*"; in Gal. 1, 10: "*Utitur autem verbo πείθω quoniam suasores qui appellantur, quibus suadere aliquid volunt, iis primum blandiri, seseque insinuare atque illorum auribus magnam sui sermonis partem dare consueverunt*". Other instances of this kind, may be seen in Rom. 8, 29; 10, 1; 12, 1; 14, 1; Gal. 2, 14; 1 Thess. 2, 3; 2 Thess. 2, 4; and 2, 7.

4. Conclusion

Seripando's earnestness of purpose, in the word interpretation, is perceptible all throughout his exegetical works. He tries to render the words of the Apostle in as apt and as ordinary words as possible. But often, he finds that his Latin does not supply him with exact expressions for some words used by St. Paul. In these cases Seripando does not content himself with rendering the words by some, more or less equivalent Latin expressions. As an exegete, he considers himself bound to do more. He employs all the methods that can be used, in order to make the full meaning, clear to his readers. Thus, sometimes, he quotes the Greek original, sometimes he shows the literal meaning of the Greek word so as to show with what right he has used the Latin expression in his rendering; at other times he makes the Greek word so clear and familiar to the reader as to use it freely, in his explanations, in the place of its Latin equivalent. Well could Seripando write in his preface: "I have *tried* to explain clearly the mind of Paul."

We have examined, in this section, the way Seripando has worked out his task of word interpretation. With the observations we have made at the end of each chapter, in mind, we may, now, cast a glance on the attitude of Seripando, regarding the decree of the council of Trent on the Vulgate.

Now we know whence Seripando got the inspiration to fight in the council of Trent, for the encouragement of the study of the

original texts, and their translations into the vernacular. He had himself studied the Vg. text, comparing it with the Greek original, and had found that, in many cases, it did not represent the original text with exactitude, and that, in many cases, its renderings were far from being exact.

A conviction born of such a study, could not but create anxiety in Seripando, at the thought of the slightest discouragement that might be apparent in the decrees of the Council, as regards the study of the original texts and new translations.

Seripando knew that the Council, in proposing the Vg. as the authentic text, did not, in fact, prohibit the study of the original text or the preparation of new translations.³³ All the same, he feared a misinterpretation that could be put on the decree by those who did not know the spirit in which it was drawn up. To avoid such a danger, Seripando tried to have the wording of the decree mitigated, even to the last stage of the council. He did not succeed in this effort.³⁴

Yet Seripando left a lasting message to posterity in his Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles. These Commentaries especially the one on the Rom., which he perfected after the decree "*Insuper*," contain a word interpretation, the study of which can leave, in us, no misgivings as to the real import of that decree. Seripando, a respected member of the committee appointed to draw up the decree on the Vg., in his commentary on the Romans, dedicated to Cardinal Cervini, who was the president of the same committee, did not think himself bound to follow the Vg. version. On the other hand he explicitly followed the Greek text, not exclusively one of the many existing texts, but the one critically restored by his own study of codices both Greek and Latin, a text which differed from the text followed by the Vg., in 81 instances giving it his own Latin rendering, which too differed from that of the Vg., in 94 instances.

Six years ago, Father Voste spoke of the progress that we have made, in the use of the Bible text, in the course of four centuries, after the council of Trent: "To day, a professor of Sacred Scripture, well prepared for his grave office, must explain the books of the Bible, according to the original text; this is the foremost requisite of

³³Ms. Nap. VII. A 36, 1 Thess. 2, 3 (c. II, n. II).

³⁴Cfr. Jedin: *Papal Legate*: pp. 283-300.

scientific exegesis which scrutinizes and illustrates the literal sense truly intended by the sacred writer and the Holy Ghost, the sense directly expressed in the original text."³⁵

But even before the lapse of four centuries after the Council of Trent, we find a man who was a Father of that very Council and one of its Presiding Legates, a member of the committee which drew up the decree on the Vg., and esteemed friend and trusted counsellor of the President of that Committee, we mean Seripando, who bequeathed to us his commentaries of Pauline Epistles, in which he shows us the so-called four-centuries long progress, crystallized in advance, in which he proclaims, with silent eloquence, that the decree of the council, on the Vg., by no means, stood in the way of the fulfilment of an exegetes primary duty: the study of the original text, the restoring of it into its original purity, and the rendering of it into the exegete's language, in as apt and as ordinary words as possible.

Seripando's exegetical works, thus, provide us with a precious document for the right understanding of the spirit in which the decree on the Vg. was drawn up, and consequently, for the true interpretation of the decree itself.

³⁵G. M. Voste: "*La Volgata al Concilio di Trento*": in *La Bibbia e il Concilio di Trento*: Rome, 1947, p. 19.