

On modifications of verse numbering in the Book of Revelation's translation*

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Abstract

This paper examines modifications of verse numbering that were made to the Lutheran translation of the Book of Revelation (or Revelation of John, New Testament, Edition 1545) in two important revision Editions of the 17th century. The focus is on the revised Edition of the Wittenberg Faculty (1661) and the first Stader Bible (1690). Other Bible Editions are used for philological comparison, that is an Edition of the tradition of the Vulgate of Hieronymus (originated in the 4th century/⁴1994) and the bilingual translation (Greek/Latin) of Erasmus of Rotterdam (1519). In the revised Editions of the 17th century, Luther's original translation of 1545 following mainly Erasmus' Edition 1519 is modified by verse numbering and expanded due to the Catholic tradition or rather to the Vulgate tradition in order to correct inconsistencies and discrepancies between the Protestant and the Catholic tradition.

1 Introduction

Erasmus's ambition in translating the New Testament into Latin was to make theology more scientific by using philological methods. The sharp criticism directed against his independent translation, which differed from the Latin Vulgate, was countered by him, stating that he intended to 'interpret the original Greek text more correctly' (original quote "den griechischen Urtext richtiger zu interpretieren") (Newald 1947: 203).¹ De Jonge states that Erasmus pursued the aim to empower theologians who had a certain lack of Hebrew and Greek language skills when revising and translating the Vulgate, referring also to Greek manuscripts:

In the first place he had produced his work for the benefit of theologians, especially those who had neither the time nor opportunity to learn Greek and Hebrew (Erasmus 1516a, 164, ll. 17–23). It was to assist them in their study of the Bible that he had undertaken the labour of a new translation. [...] Thus, the *Novum Instrumentum* is not a Bible for general use, but a kind of study Bible. This allowed Erasmus to claim repeatedly that his translation was not intended to supersede the Vulgate, but to be used *alongside* it, to understand the Vulgate better:

* I would like to thank the reviewers for their time and very helpful comments, Uwe Baumann and Howard Jones for having sent me their interesting papers.

¹ German and Latin quotations in this article were translated by the author into English and are enclosed in single quotation marks. Cf. for further perspectives on Erasmus's translations Baumann (2021), Gieseke (2018), De Jonge (2016), Frech (1995), Rabil (1993).

‘Those who are satisfied with the Vulgate can keep their translation; I do not condemn it nor do I amend it. In fact the Vulgate is not damaged by my translation, but only made clearer, purer, and more correct. Let the Vulgate be read in universities and schools, let it be sung in churches and cited in sermons. No one forbids this. I venture to promise that everyone who reads this translation of mine at home will better understand his Vulgate. (Erasmus 1516a, 167, ll. 1–7)’.
 (De Jonge 2016: 31f.)

Luther first addressed Erasmus in a letter dated 28 March 1519, paying tribute to him there and stating a common spiritual foundation. Erasmus responded to this letter immediately on March 30 with a short letter in which he promised Luther that he would send him the new Edition of his New Testament soon.

Erasmus, on his part, wrote a three-year later to Duke George of Saxony (September 3, 1522):

‘Luther, this cannot be denied, started the very best thing and, to the most lively applause of the whole world, began to stand up for Christ, who had been almost put to death. If only he had conducted such an important project more seriously and calmly, more temperate in mood and language! And yet, had he not done so much good in his writings, or had he not botched his good by intolerably bad things!’²

(Erasmus cited after Newald 1947: 235)³

Bible translations make it particularly clear that translations are to be understood as interpretations of the respective translator. In the following years, Luther produced modified Editions in teamwork⁴ – and in doing so looked very likely into the German translations of his Catholic competitors, which were based on the Latin Vulgate - the results of a comparison between Luther’s translations and the Catholic translations support this assumption (cf. Tummuseit 2009: 417–436).

Against this background, the examination of the genesis of the Lutheran tradition becomes an exciting examination of individuals and institutions of the (early) modern era, which were under considerable competitive pressure. It was not until the 17th century that this competitive pressure led to the discovery that Luther’s translation contradicted the Latin Vulgate in many places, and that even verses from the Holy Scripture were missing, which were then more or less tacitly supplemented in revisions of the Lutheran tradition.

The fact that verses were missing from the 1545 Edition of Luther’s Bible only gradually became apparent when verse numbering was introduced in German Bibles (1568 the Heidelberg Luther Bible and 1592 the Catholic Diätenberger Bible) and the corresponding verses could not be marked in Luther’s Bibles – but no one in the 17th century assumed that different Latin texts

² Original quote: “Luther, das läßt sich nicht leugnen, hat die allerbeste Sache angefangen und unter lebhaftestem Beifall der ganzen Welt für den fast aufs Altenteil gesetzten Christus sich einzusetzen begonnen. Hätte er nur eine so wichtige Sache ernster und ruhiger, gemäßigter in Stimmung und Sprache geführt! Und wäre doch in seinen Schriften nicht so viel Gutes oder hätte er sein Gutes nicht durch unerträglich Schlechtes verpfuscht!”.

³ . Cf. also Frech (1995) on the influence of Erasmus on Luther.

⁴ „Bis zu acht Mitarbeiter umfasst sein Übersetzerteam, darunter Philip [sic] Melanchthon, Johannes Bugenhagen und Georg Spalatin“ (‘He had a team of up to eight translators, including Philipp Melanchthon, Johannes Bugenhagen, and Georg Spalatin’) (Bigl 2016: 32).

could be the reason for this. Gradually, the differences between Luther and the Vulgate became apparent, without Erasmus' bilingual (ancient Greek/Latin) translation being considered.

Nevertheless, in central Germany, the 'Normal Bible' ("Normalbibel") of 1581 was regarded as the version with the standard text, which only attempts to reflect the revisions that can be traced back to Luther without a doubt; it was only through the efforts of Carl Mönckeberg, the theologian and church politician, who convincingly demonstrated in the 19th century that those Editions that were in circulation, in terms of their textual quality, by no means deserve a normative status – Mönckeberg was tasked then to develop guidelines for standardizing the text of the Luther Bible (cf. Bigl 2016: 32f.). Mönckeberg (1855) himself initially published contributions on the dignified reproduction of the text of Luther's Bible translation. In the fourth section ('On the Criticism of the Text', Mönckeberg 1855: 131–162), he lists textual evidence for the Old and New Testaments in comparison with the Septuagint, other Greek Editions, the Vulgate, and German Editions. These references do not claim to be exhaustive but rather represent 'a list of the most important passages that we have come across' in order to show that 'these are not insignificant details' (Mönckeberg 1855: 132). As I will show in section 4 with evidence, Mönckeberg does not use Erasmus' Edition for comparison, although he points out that Urbanus Rhegius suspected as early as 1524 that Luther had followed Erasmus' Edition dedicated to Pope Leo X in his translation (cf. Mönckeberg 1855: 131). In some places, however not relevant to our investigation, Mönckeberg refers to Goeze (1777), who also compared Luther's translation with that of Erasmus occasionally. With Mönckeberg a comprehensive revision of the Luther Bible began, leading to the text-standardized Luther Bible of 1892 and finally to the also linguistically modernized Luther Bible of 1912.

Missing verses are just one of the phenomena that suggest that Luther was more strongly influenced by Erasmus' bilingual Edition than by the Vulgate. Tummuseit (2009) has examined in detail the syntactic and semantic similarities and differences between Erasmus and Luther, the Vulgate, the Catholics, and the Zurich with regard to the Book of Revelation.

This paper explores how the differences in verse numbering could be explained from a philological-linguistic perspective, how and where Erasmus and subsequently Luther deviate in verse numbering from the Vulgate and subsequently from the Catholic translation based on the analyzed bible Editions of the 17th century, the revised Edition of the Wittenberg Faculty (1661) and the first Stader Bible (1690). This investigation is limited to the Book of Revelation, with which Martin Luther had the greatest difficulties in translation, as I will show in section 2. It is possible that he followed Erasmus even more closely in translating this book.

This paper is structured as follows. First, I give an overview on difficulties and challenges of the general translation process (Section 2). Second, I took a glance at the text transmission and underline the influence of Erasmus of Rotterdam on Luther as well as Erasmus' intentions by creating an independent translation (Section 3). Third, I present the analyzed bible Editions comparing them to the Latin models with regard to verse numbering (Section 4).

2 Difficulties and challenges of the translation process

In this chapter, I will first briefly discuss the circumstances surrounding Luther's translation work, then the general state of transmission of the text of Revelation, which was less well researched at the time, even for Erasmus and Luther.

2.1 Regarding Luther's perspective

Luther's first translation of the New Testament appears at the Leipzig Book Fair in September 1522. The meaning of Revelation remains hidden to him. Accordingly, in his preface to Revelation, Luther expressed his difficulties with this book as follows (preface to Revelation, September 1522, line 4-8.33-36):

'In this book of St. John's Revelation, I also let everyone do their own thing. I don't want anyone to be bound to my darkness or judgement. I say what I feel. I am not indifferent to this book that I consider it neither apostolic nor prophetic [...] Finally, everyone thinks of it what his spirit gives him, my spirit cannot be sent into the book. And this is reason enough for me that I don't respect it because Christ is neither taught nor recognized in it.'⁵

(Luther 1522)

But doesn't translating also mean interpreting, explaining, pointing out? And does this not particularly apply to a theologian who takes the translation method of the *sensus de sensu* as his maxim (cf. Tummuseit 2009: 34)? A consolation and glimmer of hope for Luther may have been the sleeping competitors that did not show up with a German Bible translation at the Leipzig Book Fair in 1522. The first Catholic who translated the New Testament is Hieronymus Emser. His Edition of the New Testament was published five years after Luther's in 1527. Emser, who is generally regarded as a plagiarist of Luther's translation, turns out, when comparing the two texts, to be a pioneer of decisive text-structuring principles that Luther adopted in the first revision of his New Testament, which in turn was published three years after Emser's in 1530 (regarding the specifics of Emser's Edition 1527 cf. Tummuseit 2009: 271-300).

With this new Edition of the New Testament, a veritable hype of translations and revisions was triggered: in 1530, Luther's first revision is published, in 1531, the Swiss translators have published their first revision, in 1534, the Catholic Johann Dietenberger (regarding Dietenberger's translation work and life cf. Fischer/Moger 2016: 279-302), in 1537, the Catholic Johann Eck, and in 1545, Luther finally presents a second and final revision of the New (and Old) Testament. The results of the competition could be found out at the annual book fairs and used profitably for one's own work on the text.

⁵ Citation is made in the following way for the print versions of the 16th to 17th century: Sheet: page (recto [=front side]/verso[=back side])/line. Original quote: "In diesem buch der offenbarung Johannis/ las ich auch yderman seyenes synnes walden/ will niemant an meyn dunckel odder vrteyl verpunden haben/ Jch sage was ich fule/ Myr mangellit an disem buch nit eynerley/ das ichs wider Apostolisch noch prophetisch hallte/ [...] Endlich/ hallt davon yderman/ was yhm seyn geyst gibt/ meyn geyst kan sich ynn das buch nicht schicken/ Vnn ist myr die vrsach gnug/ das ich seyn nicht hoch achte/ das Christus/ drynnen widder geleret noch erkandt wirt." The Virgel is a polyfunctional punctuation mark of Early New High German and can mark boundaries of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and chapters. I normalize this punctuation in the translation according to contemporary English standards.

First linguistic studies on New Testament's translations (Simmler 2009; Tummuseit 2009) focused on the comparative analysis of definitions of text genre and different translations of different confessional currents that conquered the print-market in the years 1522–1545. The focus was particularly on the different use and imprinting of punctuation, the differing choices made by translators for a specific syntax (sentence structure and scope) and the directly related semantic, pragmatic, and functional differences. In addition to the translators' individual decisions, the differences in the translations were significantly influenced by the Latin models: For his translation, Luther mainly used the bilingual Edition of 1519 (ancient Greek/Latin) by the humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam, while the Catholic competitors used an Edition of the Vulgate of Hieronymus (cf. Tummuseit 2009). The Latin texts differ from one another in many places in terms of lexis, word order, use of tense and mode, and syntactical constructions, which lead to differences in content and differences of theological view in the Luther and Catholic translations. Neither a binding system of punctuation nor an orthographic norm exists in the early modern period, neither is there a uniform standard language nor a normative grammar. The Early Modern High German language level (approximately 1350–1650) is characterized by the creativity of its speakers and scribes, who begin to shape the forms and functions of morpho-syntactic, phonological, graphemic, semantic, pragmatic and discourse-functional structures for German in a variety of ways. Note that the diagonal line / [=Virgel] was then used as a sign for a comma or a dot or a colon in concatenation with a majuscule or minuscule. Note also that a separator can be expressed by - or =. Note also the many different diacritic signs and graphemes to represent phonemes in Early New High German and also in some Latin texts, for example and with relevance for the quotations here:

Our spelling nowadays	was represented then by
I, i	J, j, Y or y
ö, ü, ä	ō, ũ, ă
nn, mm	ñ, ñ̃
em	ẽ

Table 1: Representations of phonemes

I have not removed this diversity in the quotations based on the original prints, but the English translation offers a standardized spelling for orientation.

Especially the translations of the Bible provide information about this linguistic process of finding and identification, since through them the contents and prerequisites of faith, which are existential for the believers of that time, are transported from incomprehensible languages into the vernacular in an understandable way and have a decisive influence on doctrines and dogmas. In the age of Reformation, Bible translations enable the Christian layman to have a first encounter with Christian German texts, i. e. complex linguistic tissues. Such a layman or a scholarly colleague may have been in mind of any translator by creating a textual design that would guarantee efficient access to the content.

2.2 Regarding the transmission of the New Testament's text

With regard to the transmission of the New Testament's text, we are dealing with the following research situation:

Not a single autograph of any book of the New Testament has been preserved. The oldest surviving copies were made ca. 200 CE, except for a tiny fragment of the Gospel of John from a manuscript written in the first half of the 2d century CE (P 52). All of the earliest extant copies are papyri (for writing materials, see §2.6d) and all were found in Egypt, where the dry desert sand retards the decomposition of writing materials. They were ‘uncial’ manuscripts, also called ‘majuscules,’ that is, they were written in capital letters without any separation of words. Later manuscripts are ‘minuscules’; they are written in small cursive letters, connecting several letters to groups or syllables. While the preferred format for a book in antiquity was the scroll, all New Testament manuscripts were codices (with the exception of a few that were written on the verso of older scrolls like P 13). The format of the codex made it possible to include more than just one gospel or one epistle in a single manuscript. In fact several manuscripts from the time before 300 CE were collections of a number of writings, such as P 45, which included all four gospels and the Book of Acts, or P 46, which included almost all letters of Paul. The oldest manuscripts containing the entire New Testament were written in the 4th century CE (Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus). These are parchment codices and, like the earlier papyri, they are also ‘uncials.’ Although there are still numerous papyrus manuscripts of the New Testament from later centuries, the large parchment codex became the most frequently used format for manuscripts of the entire Christian Bible, comprising both the Old and the New Testament.

(Koester 2000: 16f.)⁶

In 1964, Bruce Metzger published a study *The Text of The New Testament, its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* which was translated to German by Wolfram Lohse and published in 1966. Metzger’s agenda is to explain the production and transmission of ancient manuscripts, to describe the most important New Testament text witnesses and to trace the history of New Testament text criticism (cf. Metzger 1966: VII). Regarding the Greek and Latin text testimony history and preserved manuscripts, uncials and minuscules/manuscripts of Revelation the following picture emerges:

1. Ten slightly damaged sheets from a codex of Revelation containing the text of Rev 9: 10–17: 2 and dating from the middle or second half of the 3rd century (designated Papyrus 47, 3rd Chester Biblical Papyrus). Characteristic for Papyrus 47 is on the one hand its conformity with Codex Sinaiticus, on the other hand its ‘remarkable independence’ (Metzger 1966: 38),
2. The Codex Sinaiticus, dating from the 4th century, is the ‘only complete Greek uncial of the New Testament’ (Metzger 1966: 42), whose final publication did not occur until the 20th century (cf. Metzger 1966: 45),
3. The Codex Alexandrinus, dating from the 5th century (cf. Metzger 1966: 46f.),
4. Greek manuscripts from the 9th to the early 16th century (cf. the overview in Metzger 1966: 61–67), whereby manuscript 61, from the late 15th or early 16th century, was later also consulted by Erasmus for his 1522 Edition (cf. Metzger 1966: 62),
5. Old Latin witnesses dating from the 4th to 13th centuries, whereby the Codex Gigas (early 13th century) preserves the old Latin text of Revelation that matches the quotes from Lucifer of Cagliari (mid-4th century) (cf. Metzger 1966: 72–79),

⁶ On the New Testament’s text-transmission cf. also Metzger (1966), Aland/Aland (1982).

6. Various quotes from numerous church fathers which they have noted and passed down in their comments, sermons and other writings (cf. Metzger 1966: 87–92, Koester 2000: 18),
7. The Latin Vulgate of Hieronymus at the end of the 4th century (383), whereby Hieronymus revised the four Gospels:

‘When and how thoroughly Hieronymus revised the other writings of the New Testament is highly controversial. Various scholars (De Bruyne, Cavallera, Fischer) have argued that Hieronymus had nothing to do with the writing of the Vulgate text of the other parts of the New Testament, but that through a strange game of literary history the work of an anonymous translator got the credit of being circulated under the name of Hieronymus.’

(Metzger 1966: 38)

In addition, unsolved will remain how extensively monks (and church fathers) have tinkered with the text of the Bible. As Metzger shows, the following phenomena of interventions in the text can be traced (cf. Metzger 1966: 188–209):⁷

- Errors due to incorrect reading or hearing or remembering,
- Intended changes: ‘It may sound strange, but writers who reflected were more dangerous than those who only wanted to be faithful in copying what was before them’ (Metzger 1966: 197),
- Changes in orthography and grammar,
- Harmonization: ‘Since monks usually knew extensive parts of the Bible by heart, the temptation to harmonize incongruous parallels was great’ (Metzger 1966: 199f.),
- Merging of different readings/manuscripts,
- Changes for dogmatic reasons:

‘The New Testament manuscripts preserve traces of two kinds of dogmatic changes: first, the changes and deletions of passages that were considered unacceptable or inconvenient, and secondly, those that introduce into the text of Scripture a ‘proof’ of a popular theological doctrine or ecclesiastical custom.’

(Metzger 1966: 204)

In addition to these interventions, we have to consider the sort of changes Erasmus has undertaken, that is

[c]hanges which follow from the fact that Erasmus used and translated another Greek reading than that which underlay the Vulgate. In these cases too Erasmus’s reading is generally worse than that of the Vulgate, for as I remarked earlier, the Byzantine manuscripts he used were much more recent and of poorer quality than the Greek text translated in the Vulgate. One should not forget that Erasmus’s Greek manuscripts were almost a thousand years younger than the Greek codices underlying the Vulgate. As stated above, Erasmus was aware that in several cases the Vulgate had an older and better text than his Greek manuscripts [Erasmus 1516a, 170–71: Sunt, in quibus nostra vulgata magis probatur editio . . . quam Graeci codices, Footnote in De Jonge].

(De Jonge 2016: 39)

De Jonge (2016: 37–40) lists seven characteristics of Erasmus’s text intervention but did not mention missing verses compared to the Vulgate tradition. He also poses the question of how

⁷ Note, the list of phenomena is not complete.

one could grip the idea of Erasmus's endeavor of translating the New Testament newly as extensive as possible. De Jonge comes to the following conclusion:

Looked at this way, Erasmus's aim in his Latin translation of the New Testament was in some sense a missionary objective: it must win people for the *philosophia Christi*. It is hard to say how far this motive guided Erasmus in his work on the *Novum Instrumentum* and its later Editions. We cannot penetrate into the depths of the Rotterdammer's consciousness, like psychologists. But if we remember the efforts he made to reform church and society, to renew faith and theology, to combat immorality and stupidity, then it is not unlikely that the *Novum Instrumentum* was indeed a plea for the *philosophia Christi*.

(De Jonge 2016: 40)

As Jones shows, Luther provides this goal to simplify the language structure as well:

The effect was to unify the language of righteousness [i. e. divine goodness] and justification [i. e. human goodness]: rather than having one word-family, based on 'gerecht', for righteousness and another, based on 'rechtfertig', for justification, Luther now used 'gerecht' overwhelmingly for both. This was again a reflection of Luther's theological views, here emphasizing the identity between the righteousness of God and the God-given righteousness of mankind.

(Jones 2018: 381)

This intention of simplifying the language structure is also shown in another context within Luther's translations. Mucha-Tummuseit (2015) has conducted a study on German *da* analyzing Luther's translation of the New Testament's Gospels. *Da* is a very frequent discourse marker in Luther's translations that is represented in Greek and Latin by differently functional markers concerning the semantic and pragmatic level. As De Jonge points out, this idea of simplifying language and avoiding variation underlies also Erasmus's intention when translating the New Testament in contrast to the Vulgate's approach to play with language within the realm of poetics:

Erasmus often fulminates against unnecessary variation in the choice of words in the Vulgate: wherever a given Greek word occurs several times in one passage, it is often translated by two or more different words in the Latin. [...] In Erasmus's eyes this is an unnecessary display of a copious vocabulary ('copia verborum'), which can only confuse the reader, not because the translation is wrong, but because the reader is prompted to wonder what difference there is between the two terms: a question that ought to be avoided, because in the Greek there is no difference. It is striking just how often Erasmus criticizes the Vulgate for such unnecessary and misplaced variation.

(De Jonge 2016: 37)

One could get the impression that Erasmus's and Luther's method to reduce variation on different linguistic levels mirrors their understanding of what a scientific text has to look like. As Baumann (2021: 21f.) points out (vid. also on this De Jonge 2016: 30), the idea of Erasmus concerns also Greek and Latin stylistics and the preponderance of the golden era authors of the Greek philosophical world and the Roman empire combined with an enormous fascination for their languages, influenced by Thomas More, John Colet and further English humanists with whom Erasmus was connected by a close and longing friendship. Baumann underlines his

assumption that Erasmus and Thomas More were also discussing the New Testament's translation:⁸

[I]t must be considered as highly probable, although there is no hard documentary evidence for it, that Erasmus discussed this work and its progress with his friend Thomas More, or: It is hardly imaginable that the two friends did not exchange their views on the work's progress as well as on methodological and / or philological matters of detail concerning this pivotal project.

(Baumann 2021: 24)

This somewhat restricted view as well as a scientific understanding of the function of spiritual belief systems as poetic systems is confronted with a relatively huge amount of translation problems especially when interpreting the Revelation of John.

In the following, we take a look at the translators' and editors' differences with respect to the design and intention of the Bible Editions.

3 On the corpus

Besides the constant reference to and comparison with the different Latin templates (Vulgate and Erasmus), this study focuses on the following Editions. On the one hand, the attention is drawn to two Frankfurt Bible Editions, one of which introduces the verse numbering for the first time (Edition 1569), the other represents the first official revision of the Wittenberg Faculty (Edition 1661). On the other hand, the attention is called to an Edition from 1690, the *Stader Bible*, which, under the direction of Johann Diekmann, became the textual basis of the Canstein Bibles. In 1710, Carl Hildebrand founded the oldest Bible Institute in the world (Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt) in Halle, whose aim was to produce Bibles inexpensively and make them affordable for poorer people. The range of the two editions 1661 and 1690 can therefore be regarded as very large, whereby both editions are sold under the label "Luther Edition" or "Luther Bible".

Let us now look at examples of how much of the original Luther has been preserved in these Editions and to what extent the traditional line Erasmus-Luther differs from the traditional line Hieronymus-Catholic translators (Emser 1527, Dietenberger 1534). We do this with a short, incomplete look at the use of images and a longer, more intensive look at the design of verse numbering and structuring. In the following I will briefly outline the classification and the design of the selected Editions. The Editions are referenced in this article with the year of publication or the editor or the translator. :

- A. Edition 1545 (Original Luther, final Edition, Wittenberg)
- B. Edition 1569 (Frankfurt am Main)
- C. Edition 1661 (Wittenberg Faculty, Frankfurt)
- D. Edition 1690 (Diekmann, Stade).

Regarding A. Luther's last Edition 1545 is published in Wittenberg. The Luther Edition 1545, whose textual design corresponds to Luther's will, serves as a binding template for the further

⁸ Note also the following aspect: "Overall, Thomas More's knowledge of Latin classical literature cannot be overestimated. Time and again, by creatively and productively adapting this knowledge More demonstrates his ability to use the manifold, both argumentative and ornamental roles and functions of this literature" (Baumann 2021: 31).

textual design of Bible Editions in the Lutheran tradition, so that this Edition 1545 also forms the basis of the comparisons in this article. In the course of the 16th century, printing houses increased, with Wittenberg initially having a dominant position. From the second half of the 16th century onwards, Wittenberg lost its monopoly and the Frankfurt printing houses rose to become the market leader in the Bible printing scene.

The printed editions of the first half of the 16th century differ from later editions of the Bible in that they have a different punctuation system, have different types of writing, some have summaries, have a different internal paragraph and sentence structure, some have a different lexicon, and the book of Revelation is provided with pictures. The verse numbering known today, which establishes comparability between Bible translations and promised a larger, supra-regional and interdenominational sales market from the second half of the 16th century onwards, was first introduced by Robert Stephanus for a Greek-Latin edition of the Bible in Paris in 1551. For a German Bible, the verse numbering was first used in the Heidelberg Edition 1568 (cf. Köster 1995: 78).

Regarding B. In the Frankfurt Edition 1569 the numbering is presented for the first time in the preface as a novelty: ‘On the other hand, the text is divided properly in certain verses by numbers’ („Zum anderen/ so ist der Text in gewisse Verß mit der Ziffer ordentlich abgetheilt,” 5/v/21f.). The 1569 Edition is thus the first Frankfurt Edition to have the numbering (for a description of the Edition cf. Tummuseit 2010: 296–307). The verses are given chapter by chapter in Arabic numerals (from 1 to a maximum of 29) and appear in the left margin of the text:

‘The introduction of numbering results in a reorganization of the syntactical structure. The construction principles of these new structures correspond to the principles that Luther himself used in the 1545 Edition and emphasize them more strongly. Furthermore, this restructuring has a new philological text function: the reader is to be given the opportunity to make a comparison between Luther’s translation and the basic Latin text, for which purpose he is offered less extensive sentences with corresponding verse references. The paragraph structure of Luther’s 1545 Edition is still preserved in the 1569 Edition.’

(Tummuseit 2010: 313)

Regarding C. In 1661, the Wittenberg Faculty carried out the first electorally ordered revision of the Luther Edition 1545. A study has already been conducted regarding the modifications made by the Wittenberg Faculty in 1661 (as well as two Frankfurt prints of 1560 and 1569) concerning syntactic structures, in particular clause structure (cf. Tummuseit 2010). The results of this study show that the theologians in Wittenberg were striving to produce a reader-friendly edition, which on the one hand preserves Luther’s original translation, and on the other hand aims to establish comparability with the Catholics’ basic Latin text, the Vulgate. The Wittenberg Faculty states to have used the 1546 Edition of the Luther Bible as its binding source which was published one year after Luther’s death (cf. Goeze 1777: 306) But as Johann M. Goeze noted, the Faculty ‘can never have made the slightest comparison with this Edition [1546]’ (cf. Goeze 1777: 205) since none of the changes made in the 1546 Edition occur in the revised Edition 1661. It is more likely that the Wittenberg theologians have dealt with the Frankfurt Edition 1569 that already had the division into verses.

Regarding D. In contrast, the Stader Bible 1690 is a Bible edition that has been critically revised by General Superintendent Johann Diekmann. In 1703, his translation became the textual

basis for the Canstein Bibles in Halle. Diekmann's revised text is distributed via this route in umpteen following editions of the Bible. He himself states for his revision work: 'The orthography will be adapted in chronological steps: the words and the wording of the Luther Bible remain practically unchanged.' (Besch 2003: 2271).

4 Modifications of verse numbering

In its preface to the Bible Edition 1661, the Wittenberg Faculty lists innovations and explains related functions to the reader. Thus, for example, the reader is offered 'a general classification [...] for every biblical book' („eine general Eintheilung [...] Fuer einen jeden Biblischen Buch“) in which the thematic division of Revelation into related chapters is briefly described.⁹ Modifications in the numbering of verses are also pointed out. Thus, the Faculty states that 'numbering is always started anew and since an inequality was found in the distribution, these are now distinguished according to the basic text [= Vulgate]' ("Versiculi allezeit von forne angefangen / vnd da in der distinction ein Vngleichheit befunden / [warden sie nun] nach dem Grund Text [= Vulgata] vnterschieden").

With regard to the text of Revelation, this alignment measure concerns the correction of two false verse attributions in the Edition 1569. The numbering of these two verses is thereby shifted to the beginning of different sentences, in accordance with the division in the Vulgate. The first correction concerns the alignment with the Vulgate in Rev 21: 20. The verse numbering of the state's twelve cornerstones is made more balanced by the new numbering. In the 1569 Edition, the beginning of verse 20 is constituted at „Der vierdte ein Smaragd“ (259/v/20; Rev 21) ('The fourth an emerald'), whereas in the 1661 Edition the beginning of verse 20 is constituted at „Der fuenffte ein Sardonich“ (167/v/20; Rev 21) ('The fifth a sardonich').

That means, the verse shift concerns a mathematical relation: In 1569 three (cornerstones) are distinguished from nine (cornerstones), whereas in 1661 four (cornerstones) are distinguished from eight (cornerstones).

The second correction of the Wittenberg Faculty concerns a parallelism as well. In the Frankfurt Edition of 1569, the beginning of verse 10 is set at the beginning of the sentence "So jemand mit dem Schwerdt tödtet" ('If one kills with the sword') (cf. 1). The two sentences "So jemand in daß Gefengniß führet" ('If one leads into the prison') and "So jemand mit dem Schwerdt tödtet" ('If one kills with the sword'), which belong together content-related and are constituted rhetorically as parallelism, were thus separated by the verse numbering.

- (1) Edition 1569: So jemand in daß Gefengniß führet / der wirt in das Gefengniß gehen / 10So jemand mit dem Schwerdt tödtet / der muß mit dem Schwerdt getödtet werden.
(253/v/9–10; Rev 13: 9–10)
(‘If one leads into the prison, he must go into the prison. If one kills with the sword, he must be killed with the sword’).

⁹ Edition 1661: 12/r/1–4.7–27. With reference to a 1662 Edition of the Catholic tradition, Köster (1995: 137f.) also notes a stronger examination of the genesis of the text: 'What is noticeable, however, is a change of emphasis compared with earlier biblical prefaces, an increased turning to problems of text history and translation models' ("Festzustellen ist aber ein Akzentwechsel gegenüber früheren Bibelvorreden, eine verstärkte Hinwendung zu Problemen der Textgeschichte und Übersetzungsvorlagen").

We have to keep in mind that the main purpose of the verse numbering was to ensure quick access to text passages and the comparability of different translations on the one hand, and to make related content visible and memorizable on the other hand. These two principles are sometimes contradictory. The previous textual design of the translator, organized by paragraphs and within by sentence structures, is now given a new principle of order by the editor, the verse numbering. Sentences within paragraphs are therefore reorganized, with the editor probably asking himself: Which sentences belong together closely in terms of content? Where are rhetorical figures to be found? Which poetic regularities of the text must not be destroyed? This editing or revision process, as I mentioned above, can be imagined as if poems by different authors, which have been handed down in a special shape, had to be turned into a uniform legal text that guarantees understandability and comparability to be established on the book market.

The Wittenberg Faculty abolished this separation in 1661 by restructuring the two sentences into a single sentence and constituting the beginning of the tenth verse with the beginning of the first sentence (cf. 2).¹⁰ The text function that Luther originally intended in the 1545 Edition was to emphasize the parallel construction of the two hypotactically structured sentences (3). This emphasizing weighting is no longer present in the 1661 Edition. Rather, the new structure of the 1661 Edition reflects the previous structure of Luther's 1522 Edition (4).

- (2) Edition 1661: 10So jemand in das Gefängniß führet / der wird in das Gefängniß gehen / so jemand mit dem Schwerdt tödtet / der muß mit dem Schwerdt getödtet werden
(163/r/10; Rev 13: 9–10)

(‘If one leads into the prison, he must go into the prison. If one kills with the sword, he must be killed with the sword’).

Luther's Editions 1545 and 1522 are arranged without the verse by using the principles of the Early New High German punctuation, i. e. virgule + Majuscule (=capital letter) marks the beginning of a new sentence (cf. 3), whereas virgule + minuscule (=lowercase letter) indicates the beginning of a partial or content-related sentence (cf. 4):

- (3) Edition 1545: So jemand jnn das Gefengnis füret / der wird in das gefeng=nis gehen / So jemand mit dem Schwerd tödtet / der mus mit dem schwerd ge=tödtet werden
(CCCCV./v/27–29; Rev 13: 9–10)

(‘If one leads into the prison, he must go into the prison. If one kills with the sword, he must be killed with the sword’).

- (4) Edition 1522: So yemand ynñ des gefengnis furet / der wirt yns gefengnis gehen / so yemand mit dem schwerd todtet / der mus mit dem schwerd todtet werden
(cciii/v/41–43; Rev 13: 9–10)

(‘If one leads into the prison, he must go into prison. If one kills with the sword, he must be killed with the sword’).

An explicit examination of difficulties arising from the formal alignment of Luther's translation with the Vulgate is only made in the Stader Bible. For the first time in the Luther tradition, philological problems of text history are addressed, and readers are explicitly pointed to these

¹⁰ According to the Vulgate: ¹⁰“qui in captivitate duxerit in captivitate vadet qui in gladio occiderit oportet eum gladio occidi” (Rev 13: 9–10). (‘Who has led in captivity must go in captivity. Who has killed with the sword has to be killed with the sword necessarily’).

changes. In this context the editor Diekmann names the problematic distribution of the verses, which are constituted in the 1661 Edition across chapters. Diekmann states that the division of the chapters does not correspond to the chapter division of the Vulgate:

‘Because the chapters and verses of the German Bible are divided up very unequally, so it has also been diligently seen in this section that the division in the present hand Bible corresponds to that which is attached to the basic text’¹¹

(Edition 1690: 29, 48–52)

Since, with regard to Revelation and numbering, the tenth chapter ends with verses, marked as 1 and 2, the eleventh with verse 3, the twelfth with verse 15, and the thirteenth chapter begins with verse 18. Hence, the numbering there at the end and beginning of the chapters is not subordinated to the chaptering, but goes beyond it (cf. Tummuseit 2009: 232). This discrepancy between the basic text and the Luther text is cleared up in the Stader Bible to the extent that the chapter divisions of the Vulgate are supplemented ‘where Luther made other chapters’ (‘wo Lutherus andere Capitel gemachet’, Edition 1690: 30, 24–26).

With regard to the chaptering, Luther in the 1522 Edition still follows the chapter division that exists in the Latin traditions as well as in the Catholic traditions. The eleventh chapter begins there with the sentence ‘And I was given a reed.’ In the 1545 Edition, Luther changed this division by assigning nine sentences of the eleventh chapter to the tenth chapter. Subsequently, the eleventh chapter of the later Luther print is opened by the sentence ‘And I will give power unto my two witnesses’ (cf. 5 in contrast to the Vulgate [6]).

- (5) Edition 1545: VND es ward mir ein Rhor gegeben einem Stecken gleich / vnd sprach / Stehe auff vnd miss den Tempel Gottes / vnd den Altar / vnd die darinnen anbeten. Aber den innern Chor des Tempels wirff hinaus / vnd miss jn nicht / Denn er ist den Heiden gegeben / Vnd die heilige Stad werden sie zutret=ten zween vnd vierzig monden.

[Chapter] XI.

VND ich wil meine zween Zeugen geben / vnd sie sollen weissagen tau=sent zwey hundert vnd sechzig tage / angethan mit Secken

(CCCCIII./v/1–10; Rev 11: 1–3)

- (6) Vulgate: [Chapter 11] 1 et datus est mihi calamus similis virgae dicens surge et metire templum Dei et altare et adorantes in eo 2 atrium autem quod est foris templum eice foras et ne metieris eum quoniam datum est gentibus et civitatem sanctam calcabunt mensibus quadraginta duobus 3 et dabo duobus testibus meis et prophetabunt diebus mille ducentis sexaginta amicti saccos

(Rev 11: 1–3)

(‘And I was given a reed like a measuring stick, and I was told, Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there. But leave out the outer court of the temple, and don’t measure it, for it is given to the ignorant people: and they will tread underfoot the holy state forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they will prophesy twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth’).

¹¹ Original quote: “Weil die Capitel und Versicul der Teutschen Bibel sehr ungleich eingetheilet sind / so hat man auch in diesem Stück mit Fleiß dahin gesehen / daß die Abtheilung in gegenwärtiger Hand-Bibel mit der jenigen / welche dem GrundText beygefügt ist / überein komme.”

In terms of content, these nine sentences, which represent the commissioning of John to survey the temple, can be more sensibly related to the preceding dialogue between John and an angel than to the following strand of the plot, in which the function and mode of action of two witnesses are depicted. Presumably to separate these two situations from each other, Luther in 1545 constituted a different chapter division, which, however, in retrospect did not correspond with the verse numbering and was therefore removed again.

The reader is now clearly shown at which point in the translation of Luther 1545 and where in the Vulgate the beginning of a chapter is originally constituted. The equivalence in terms of the verse numbering, also mentioned by the editor, between the German and Latin translations is thus first found in the Stader Bible in 1690. In the 1661 Edition, contrarily, the reader is not given such information, but the chapter division of the Vulgate is adopted without explanation, so that at the relevant points the numbering goes beyond the chaptering.

However, the 1661 and 1690 Editions' editors assume that Luther's Latin reference text was the Vulgate, the Catholic traditions' binding text, as I said above. Moreover, Diekmann, in his preface to the 1690 Edition, in this way traditionally motivated defended himself against the accusation from the Catholic side that Luther deliberately falsified the Bible through his translation:

‘The mere fact that blessed Lord Luther deliberately and maliciously falsified some sayings of Holy Scripture at his own discretion, as he found it harmful or advantageous to his teaching, sometimes leaving out something of the basic text, sometimes patching up something of it, is an accusation that has been proclaimed out of proportion by our opponents in the papacy in many ways before, but never proven.’¹²

(Diekmann Edition 1690: 14, 8–12)

But nevertheless, at the same time, Diekmann was highly surprised that Luther did not translate some verses ‘according to the example of the Vulgate’ (“nach dem Exempel der Vulgata”, Edition 1690, 31: 25).

With regard to Revelation, Diekmann adds a sentence (=verse) to the 1690 Edition because this sentence also appears in the Vulgate and would otherwise have been noticed as missing when comparing Luther's text with the Latin text of Vulgate or the German texts of the Catholic tradition. The matter was particularly precarious in that this sentence constitute the 26th verse of the 21st chapter (cf. 7) and is one of the most important prophetic statements regarding the new state's, i. e. the holy state Jerusalem (=God's state, the Holy Spirit), quality, nature, and characteristics. However, this precious sentence, which does not appear in Luther's 1545 Edition, appears in the 1661 Edition of the Wittenberg Faculty, but on the one hand without the editors' indication that verses missing are now being added, and on the other hand enclosed in brackets, thus signaling probably to the reader that this verse must be given less importance than the others (cf. 8).

¹² Original quote: “Allein daß der sel. Herr Lutherus einige Sprüche heiliger Schrifft willentlich und boshafftig sollte verfälschet / nach eigenem Belieben / wie er es seiner Lehre schädlich oder vorteilhaftig gefunden / bald etwas vom Grund-Text ausgelassen / bald demselben etwas angeflicket haben / ist eine von unsern Widersachern im Pabstthum zwar vielfältig vordem ausgeblasene / aber noch nie erwiesene [...] Beschuldigung.”

- (7) Edition 1690: 26. Vnd man wird die herrligkeit und die ehre der heiden in sie brin=gen
(163/r, Rev 21: 26)
(‘And one will bring the glory and the wealth of the pagans into the state’).
- (8) Edition 1661: Vnd ihre Thör werden nicht verschlos=sen deß Tages / denn da wird keine Nacht seyn. [Paragraph] 26(Vnd man wird die Herrligkeit und die Ehre der Heyden in sie bringen.) [Paragraph] 27Vnd wird nicht hinein gehen irgendet ein Gemeines
(167/r, XXI, 26).
(‘And their gates will not be shut by day: for they will be no night there. (And one will bring the glory and the wealth of the pagans into the state.) And nothing unclean will enter therein’).

But why did Luther refrain from translating this verse (cf. 9) in his 1545 Edition, when it appears in the Vulgate and is also involved in the Catholic tradition from the beginning (cf. 10 and 12)?

- (9) Edition 1545: denn da wird keine Nacht sein. Vnd wird nicht hinein gehen irgendet ein Gemeines/
(CCCCXI./r/46–51; Rev 21: 25–27)
(‘for there will be no night there. And nothing unclean will enter therein’).
- (10) Emser’s Catholic Edition 1527: denn da wirt kein na=cht sein / vnnd sie werden die ehre vnd glori der völker dareyn brin=gen / vnnd wirt nicht hyneyn gehen yrgent ichts beflecktes
(C.XCIII./v/14–15, Rev 21: 25–27)
(‘for there will be no night there. And they will bring the glory and the wealth of the peoples into the state. And nothing unclean will enter therein’).

The decisive factor for these divergent translations is the divergent Latin models. While the Catholic tradition from the beginning uses the Vulgate as the authoritative source for translation, Luther is mainly guided by the bilingual Edition of Erasmus of Rotterdam of 1519 (cf. 11 and 12), as I mentioned above (cf. on the differences in the syntactic structure between the Lutheran tradition and the Catholic tradition, which are due to the use of different Latin models, Tummuseit 2009: 371–415).

- (11) Erasmus’ Edition 1519: Nox enim non erit illic. Non intrabit in eam aliquid quod inquinat
(569/XXI/30-32; Rev 21: 25–27)
(‘for there will be no night there. And nothing unclean will enter therein’).
- (12) Vulgate: nox enim non erit illic 26 et adferent gloriam et honorem gentium in illam nec intrabit in ea aliquid coinquinatum
(Rev 21: 25–27)
(‘for there will be no night there. And they will bring the glory and the wealth of the ignorant people into the state. And nothing unclean will enter therein’).

What Diekmann does not seem to recognize, then, is that Luther did not use the Vulgate, but Erasmus’s translation as a model for his translation, just to underline this important philological discovery again (first made by Urbanus Rhegius in 1524, followed by Goeze in 1777). With regard to verse 21: 26, Mönckeberg (1855: 155) writes that Luther did not find it in the text – nor, as shown, in Erasmus’ bilingual Edition.

Now the Protestant tradition was forced to make textual design modifications for reasons of comparability. Against this background, it remains to be examined how many of the verses not

translated by Luther in his 1545 Edition do not appear in Luther's 17th and 18th century editions. The absence of sentences is particularly noticeable when they constitute an entire verse, as exemplarily shown in (9–12), or occur at the beginning or end of a verse, as I will show next.

In the following passage, for example, the missing of a sentence can be seen directly from the fact that the beginning of a verse is understood differently in Bible editions that follow one another in time. In the Vulgate, the sentence “et lux lucernae non lucebit tibi amplius” (‘and the light of the lamp will no longer shine in you’) constitutes the first part of the 23rd verse in chapter 18 (cf. 13). The Catholic tradition follows the Vulgate (cf. 14):

- (13) Vulgate: et vox molae non audietur in te amplius 23et lux lucernae non lucebit tibi amplius
(Rev 18: 22–23)
(‘and the sound of the mill will be heard no more in you, and the light of the lamp will shine no more in you’).
- (14) Emser's Catholic Edition 1527: vnd die stymm̃ der mölin soll nicht mehr inn dir gehört werden / vnd das liecht der Lucernen wird nicht mehr in dir leuchten
(C.XCI./r/17-19; Rev 18: 23)
(‘and the sound of the mill shall be heard no more in you, and the light of the lamp will shine no more in you’).

By contrast, the sentence does not appear in Luther's Edition 1545 (15) because it is put in brackets in Erasmus's Edition 1519 (16). Luther largely refrains from translating sentences that appear in brackets in Erasmus's translation (cf. on Luther's approach to sentences that appear in brackets in Erasmus' Edition 1519 Tummuseit 2009: 212f., 395, 399f.).

- (15) Edition 1545: vnd die stim der Müllen sol nicht mehr in dir gehöret werden / vnd die stim des Breutigams
(CCCCIX./r/28; Rev 18: 23)
(‘and the sound of the mill shall be heard no more in you, and the voice of the bridegroom’).
- (16) Erasmus 1519: Et uox molae noñ audietur in te am plius (& lux lucernae noñ lucebit in te amplius) & vox sponsi
(558/XVIII/15–17; Rev 18: 23)
(‘and the sound of the mill will be heard no more in you (and the light of the lamp will shine no more in you), and the voice of the bridegroom’).

With the introduction of the numbering process, the editor of the 1569 Edition is forced to determine the 23rd verse. However, since the corresponding sentence cannot be found in Luther's translation 1545, the editor has moved the numbering to the next sentence (cf. 17, ‘and the voice of the bridegroom’). In the 1661 Edition, on the contrary, the Wittenberg Faculty decided to let verse 23 be the preceding sentence (cf. 18, ‘and the sound of the mill’). Diekmann, again, shifted number 23 in the Stader Bible 1690 as the 1569's editor did (cf. 19 ‘and the voice of the bridegroom’), without adding the sentence that is missing in the Luther tradition (‘and the light of the lamp will shine no more in you’).

- (17) Edition 1569: vnd die stimm̃ der Mühlen sol nit mehr in dir gehöret werden / 23Vnd die stimm deß Breu=tigams
(258/v, XVIII, 22–23)
(‘and the sound of the mill shall be heard no more in you, 23and the voice of the bridegroom’).

- (18) Edition 1661: 23 Vnd die Stimme der Mühlen soll nicht mehr in dir gehöret werden / vnd die Stimme deß Bräutigams
(165/v, XVIII, 23)
(23 ‘and the sound of the mill shall be heard no more in you, and the voice of the bridegroom’)
- (19) Edition 1690: 23. Vnd die stimme des bräuti=gams [...] (161/v, Rev 18: 23)
(23 ‘and the voice of the bridegroom’).

Regarding verse 18: 23 Mönckeberg (1855: 155) says that Luther did not find it in the Greek text – but, as shown, in the Latin of Erasmus’ bilingual Edition (cf. 16), but put in brackets.

The following comparison of a text passage clearly shows the dependence of translators on their respective source text and the associated difference in meaning of the statement. In the Latin templates, the beginning of a visionary unit of John is represented by different syntactic and lexical units:

- (20) Vulgate: et vidi et audivi vocem unius aquilae volantis per medium caelum dicentis voce magna vae vae vae habitantibus in terra de ceteris vocibus tubae trium angelorum qui erant tuba canituri
(Rev 8: 13)
(‘I saw and heard the voice of an eagle flying through the middle of the sky, saying with a loud voice: Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on earth because of the other trombone’s voices played by three angels soon’)
- (21) Catholic tradition, Dietenberger Edition 1534: Vnd ich sa=he vnd höret ein stimm eins adlers der flog mit=ten durch den himel / vnnd sprach mit lautter stimm
(CCCCCLXXII/r/17-20,1; Rev 8: 13)
(‘I saw and heard the voice of an eagle flying through the middle of the sky, and spoke with a loud voice’).
- (22) Erasmus: Et uidi & audiui unum angelum volantem per medium coeli, dicentem uoce magna
(542/VIII/40-543/VIII/1; Rev 8: 13)
(‘I saw and heard an angel flying through the middle of heaven, saying with a loud voice’).
- (23) Luther Edition 1545: Vnd ich sahe / vnd höret einen Engel fliegen mitten durch den himel / vnd sagen mit lauter stimme
(CCCCII./v/8–11; Rev 8: 13)
(‘I saw and heard an angel flying through the middle of heaven, saying with a loud voice’).

In the Vulgate (cf. 20) and accordingly in Dietenberger’s Edition 1534 (cf. 21) John speaks of having seen (“vidi”) and heard (“audivi”) the voice of a single eagle flying through the middle of the sky (“vocem unius aquilae volantis per medium caelum”). In Erasmus (cf. 22) and accordingly Luther (cf. 23), on contrary, John sees and hears an angel flying through the middle of the sky (“uidi & audiui unum angelum volantem per medium coeli”). Here, therefore, it is not the voice of an animal that is seen and heard, but the appearance of an angel is perceived visually and acoustically according to the more often created messengers’ gestalt of angels in the Revelation. Hence, there are clearly functional differences in the translations due to the syntax and semantics chosen: The figure of an eagle appears only at this point of Revelation as messenger; the messenger’s tasks are incumbent on the angels of God in all other vision contexts of Revelation. The eagle, on the other hand, plays a symbolic role in so far as it could be

read as the symbol for John the evangelist. Since the 4th century, the evangelists have been assigned symbols within the Christian iconography, whereby John was assigned an eagle. This view of regarding the Revelation not as “an independent work” but to “keep in mind the intertextuality inherent in the books of the Bible” is taken by Ureña ([2013] 2019: 26).

Thomas More argues when defending Erasmus by referring to the authority of “the Church fathers” – knowing that the church father Hieronymus’s translation became the Catholic binding version in 1546 decided by the Council of Trent; Thomas More, however, was supported by the assurance of Pope Leo X who “had explicitly welcomed Erasmus’s *Nouum Testamentum*” (Baumann 2021: 39) but died in 1521.

To conclude: An examination of Bible editions of the 17th to the 20th century with further text material taken from the New Testament, also with a view to different languages, and with focus on such adaptation processes of Luther’s text that originally followed the Latin template of Erasmus and was accordingly contrary to the Vulgate and respectively to the Catholic tradition, is certainly an interesting task by which also the dependence of Luther on Erasmus, which up to now has only been slightly addressed and proven, can be more weightily addressed and proven – also with regard to differing theological understandings.

5 Summary

This paper has examined modifications of verse numbering that were made to the Lutheran translation of the Book of Revelation in two important revised Editions of the 17th century. The focus was on the comparison of the Edition of the Wittenberg Faculty (1661) and the Edition of Johann Diekmann (First Stader Bible 1690) with the Luther Edition 1545 and the (competing) Latin editions, Vulgate (originated in the 4th century) and Erasmus 1519.

In the revision Editions, Luther’s original translation, following mainly Erasmus’s translation, as well as his textual design is modified by verse numbering and expanded due to the Catholic tradition or rather to the Latin model of the Vulgate. It was shown that editorial intentions of understandability and comparability between the Luther and the Catholic tradition, corrections and therefore text-immanent necessities according to the Vulgate tradition were the reason for changes.

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