

FROM SEDES TO SOLIUM:

Dating the Bible translations of Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459)



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In the 1450s, the Florentine humanist Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459) translated the Psalter and the New Testament into Latin. These translations were part of a larger translation project, originally intended to comprise the entire Bible, which Manetti took up at the court of Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455). It is unclear when each part of the translation was written, and which one was made first. This paper explores the possibilities of using Manetti’s lexical choices to reconstruct the translation process and to come to a relative dating of his Psalter and his New Testament.

Introduction

In the early 1450s, the Florentine humanist Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459) moved to the Vatican court of Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455). At this point in his career, Manetti had already established himself as a humanist in Florence, authoring philosophical treatises, biographies of famous Florentines, and an impressive number of diplomatic speeches.¹ The Pope now invited him to move to the Vatican “to translate and compose”.² One of the projects Manetti took up at the papal court was a new Latin translation of the Old and New Testament. As he was one of the first Italian humanists who learned Hebrew, this project suited his skills.³ Manetti’s Bible translation is a rare example of Biblical scholarship in the fifteenth century, and it is connected with a much more famous case: the *Annotationes* to the New Testament by Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457).⁴

¹ For Manetti’s speeches, see Wittschier 1968; for his biographical writings, Manetti 2003. Recent editions of some of Manetti’s works are e.g. Manetti 2016, Manetti 2017, Manetti 2018.

² “Per tradurre et comporre”, as Vespasiano da Bisticci wrote. See below, n. 21. For Manetti’s translations and movements in the 1450s, see Botley 2004, 62–114.

³ For Manetti’s Hebrew scholarship, see Stein Kokin 2016.

⁴ For the connection between Manetti’s translation and Valla’s *Annotationes*, see below, n. 47. For humanist Biblical scholarship in fifteenth-century Italy, see e.g. Garofalo 1946; Monfasani 2008.

This article explores the genesis of Manetti's Bible translation, and more particularly, the question of the relative dating of the two parts that Manetti finished, the New Testament and the Psalter.⁵ Whereas the New Testament never circulated during Manetti's lifetime, the Psalter was dedicated to King Alfonso V of Aragon (1396–1458), who became Manetti's patron after Nicholas's death.⁶ As we shall see below, it is unclear when these projects were begun, and which one was completed first. If this could be determined, it would throw more light on Manetti's activities as a translator, his movements in the 1450s, and particularly his relationship with his two patrons, Nicholas V and Alfonso of Aragon. In what follows, I shall therefore attempt a relative dating of these two projects by using internal, textual evidence. Concretely, I shall compare Manetti's lexical choices in the New Testament and the Psalter, focusing on some cases where his preference changed in the process.

Manetti's Bible translation project

Before we turn to the analysis of the translations themselves, I shall first give a brief overview of what we know about Manetti's Bible translation project from other sources. The first reference to Manetti's translation of the Bible is found in his biography of Nicholas V, which he wrote shortly after the Pope's death in 1455.⁷ When describing the Pope's many patronage projects, specifically his support of Greek–Latin translations, Manetti mentions his own activities at the papal court:

Nova [...] quedam utriusque et veteris et novi testamenti, partim ex hebreo, partim ex greco idiomate, ut ab origine a propriis scriptoribus suis litteris mandata fuisse constabat, in latinam linguam traductio non iniuria mentem irrepserat. Et nisi [...] eius mors prevenisset, preveniensque assiduum operationis nostre cursum non modo non impedisset retardassetque, sed omnino etiam abstulisset, forsitan [...] utrumque opus [...] non multo post ad finem usque perduxissemus. Quod si hic importunus dicendi locus non videretur, nimirum causas, quibus et ad traducendum et ad scribendum impellebamur, paulisper commemorassemus: quod in prefationibus predictorum operum, si Deus – ut speramus – adiutor noster erit, absque iusta reprehensione non iniuria efficere posse uidebimur.⁸

⁵ For Manetti's Psalter, see Botley 2004, 99–114.

⁶ For Manetti's New Testament, see den Haan 2014 and 2016. For Manetti's Psalter, see Botley 2004, 99–114 and 178–181, as well as the editions of *Apologeticus*, Manetti 1981 and Manetti 2016. For *Apologeticus* see below, n. 11.

⁷ *De vita ac gestis Nicolai Quinti*; the text is in Manetti 2005.

⁸ Manetti, *De vita ac gestis Nicolai Quinti* II, 25 (Manetti 2005, 66–67).

The idea had suggested itself to me – and with good reason – to produce a new Latin translation of both the Old and the New Testament, partly from the Hebrew, partly from the Greek tongue, as they were originally put into writing by their own authors. And had not his death [...] intervened, and, by intervening, not only hindered and delayed the constant progress of our work, but put a stop to it altogether, perhaps [...] I would have brought both works to their conclusion not long afterwards. And if this would not seem an inappropriate place to discuss this, I would certainly have briefly called to mind the reasons that prompted me to translate and write; and that I can do this without any just censure, will appear in the prefaces to these works I just mentioned, if God – as I hope – will help me.

This passage indicates that Manetti originally planned to translate the entire Bible, both the Old and the New Testament. Furthermore, the context suggests that he understood his own project as part of Nicholas’s translation programme. It also suggests that his work on the translation was dependent on papal support, because it was interrupted when the Pope died. At the time of writing, it had not been completed, but Manetti was still optimistic about the project: he believed that he would have finished it not long afterwards (“*non multo post*”) and he already had some ideas as to the prefaces he would write for these works.

After Nicholas’s death, Manetti moved to the court of king Alfonso of Aragon at Naples, where he received a salary on the understanding that he was to work as a translator there.⁹ He continued to work on his earlier translation project, and eventually he dedicated his translation of the Psalter to Alfonso. Manetti’s Psalter translation survives in eight manuscripts, which suggests that it found at least a modest number of readers.¹⁰ In fact, some of these readers apparently criticized Manetti’s translation project, and he wrote a response to them in the form of a treatise, *Apologeticus*, which he also dedicated to Alfonso:¹¹

Cum novam quandam totius Psalterii de hebraica veritate in latinam linguam traductionem, anno iam propemodum elapso, absolvissem atque id opus, quaecunque sit, huic tam claro tamque glorioso Alfonsi regis

⁹ For Manetti’s move to Naples, and his activities at Alfonso’s court, see Botley 2004a.

¹⁰ Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale – Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 10745; Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, 2948, Miscellanea Tioli, v. 17; Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, C 336 (Psalms 1–36); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter BAV), Pal. lat. 40, 41, 42, 43 and Urb. lat. 5. For descriptions of the last five manuscripts, which all contain *Apologeticus*, see Manetti 1981, xliii–lxv.

¹¹ The Latin text of *Apologeticus* is available in Manetti 1981 and also in Manetti 2016, with facing English translation.

nomini cum maxima reverentia dedicatum, ad maiestatem tuam transmissem, a non nullis partim ignavis, partim doctis hominibus, sed in sacris ac divinis Litteris parum eruditis, me in eo opere quodam arrogantie crimine insimulatum ac reprehensum et obiurgatum fuisse audivi.¹²

When about a year ago I had finished a new translation of the complete Psalter from the original Hebrew into Latin, and I had dedicated that work – whatever it is worth – with the greatest reverence to the renowned and glorious name of King Alfonso, and I had sent it to Your Majesty, I heard that several men – some idle, others scholarly but with little training in sacred and divine literature – had in a certain work made accusation against me with much censure and denunciation for arrogance.

Manetti writes that the Psalter translation had been finished about a year earlier, and King Alfonso, who is addressed here, died in June 1458. This puts the dating of the Psalter translation in the first half of 1457 at the latest.

As for the New Testament, it is unlikely that this ever circulated in Manetti's lifetime. There are only two manuscripts, one of which belonged to the Manetti family library, and which was corrected by Manetti himself.¹³ The other was copied for the Urbino library after Manetti's death.¹⁴ No letter of dedication survives. It is unclear if the version we have today represents the state of the translation at the time of Nicholas's death, when the project was interrupted, or if Manetti continued to work on it afterwards.

When Manetti dedicated the Psalter to Alfonso, he evidently still hoped that he would complete his translation of both the Old and the New Testament:

Sed cum huiusmodi opus, [...] partim ob magnam eius longitudinem, partim etiam ob nimiam difficultatem diuturnum fore uideatur et sit, ut paruulam interea reliquorum omnium degustationem tibi absque longa dilatione preberem, accuratam quandam ac integram solius Psalterii interpretationem nuper edere atque ad te mittere constitui.¹⁵

But since a work of this sort, [...] because it is so long and because it is so difficult, seems to be – and in fact is – a lengthy task, I have now decided to publish and send you an accurate and complete translation of the Psalter alone, so as to provide you in the meantime without further delay with a brief foretaste of all the rest.¹⁶

¹² Manetti, *Apologeticus* I, 1 (Manetti 2016, 2–3).

¹³ BAV, Pal. lat. 45; den Haan 2016, 40–42.

¹⁴ BAV, Urb. lat. 6. See den Haan 2016, 59–62.

¹⁵ The Latin text of the preface to the Psalter is available in Botley 2004b, 178–181. This passage is quoted from p. 180.

¹⁶ The translation is Botley's (Botley 2004b, 100–101).

Perhaps Manetti had the New Testament in mind as the next part to be dedicated to Alfonso, as some scholars have suggested.¹⁷

As regards a *terminus post quem*, it seems likely that Manetti took up his translation project only after moving to Rome, as he writes himself in his biography of Nicholas V.¹⁸ In November 1454, he wrote a letter to the Florentine book-seller Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421–1498), asking him to send the Biblical manuscripts they had talked about.¹⁹ Vespasiano knew Manetti well, and he wrote biographies of both Manetti and Nicholas V.²⁰ In the latter, he writes about Manetti’s translations as if they were Nicholas’s idea:

Avendo condoto a Roma, come inanzi s’è detto, molti uomini dotti con grandissimi salari, iscrisse a Firenze a meser Gianozo Maneti, che venissi a Roma per tradurre et comporre. Et partitosi da Firenze et giunto a Roma, fu ricevuto dal pontefice, secondo la sua consuetudine, onoratamente, et asegnogli, oltre all’ufficio suo del segretario ducati secento, confortandolo alla traducione di più libri della Bibia et Aristotile, et a finire il libro dallui cominciato, *Contra Judaeos et gentes*, opera mirabile s’ella se fussi finita, che finì insino a’ libri dieci, et tradussi il Testamento Nuovo, et il Saltero de Hebraica veritate, con cinque libri apologetichi in difensione di questo Saltero, mostrando che nella Scrittura Sancta non è una silaba alcuna senza grandissimo mistero.²¹

Having gathered in Rome, as said before, many learned men with liberal salaries, he wrote to Florence to Messer Giannozzo Manetti, who came to Rome to translate and write. And he, after leaving Florence and reaching Rome, was received by the Pope, according to his custom, with honour. The Pope granted him, besides his office of secretary, six hundred ducats, encouraging him to undertake a translation of several books of the Bible and Aristotle, and to finish a book that he had begun, *Contra Judaeos et gentes*, an admirable work if it had been finished, of which he completed only ten books, and he translated the New Testament, the Psalter from the Hebrew, with five books of apologetics in defense of that Psalter, showing that in Sacred Scripture there is not one syllable without an important hidden meaning.

¹⁷ Garofalo 1946, 359; Botley 2004b, 100–101.

¹⁸ For Manetti’s move to Rome, and related events, see Botley 2004b, 64–70.

¹⁹ This letter is dated 23 November 1454. It was published in Cagni 1969, 131–133. For a discussion of this letter and the Biblical manuscripts Manetti probably referred to, see den Haan 2016, pp. 37–38.

²⁰ Vespasiano 1970–1976, I, 35–81, 485–538, and II, 519–627.

²¹ Vespasiano da Bisticci, “*Vita di Nicolao p.p.v.*” (Vespasiano 1970–1976, I, 64–65). For Manetti’s *Contra Judaeos et gentes*, see Manetti 2017.

It remains unclear in Vespasiano's account when Manetti completed each of these works – the New Testament, the Psalter, and *Apologeticus*. Be that as it may, Vespasiano evidently believed that it was Pope Nicholas who first introduced the idea of a new Bible translation. If we can determine which part of the Bible was translated first, this may throw some more light on the Pope's involvement and his preferences. In what follows, I attempt to do this by analyzing the translations themselves, focusing on how Manetti's translation method developed over time.

Manetti's translation method

Manetti's Bible translation is clearly based on the Vulgate, the Latin Bible in common use in the Western Church at the time.²² We know which Vulgate text Manetti kept in his library, which makes it easier to compare his translation with his model.²³ His New Testament varies from passages where only a few words are replaced, to quite drastic retranslations. Generally speaking, however, the translation is about as literal as the Vulgate, which typically follows the word order of the Greek. Most of the differences between it and Manetti's translation concern lexicon, and some specific grammatical features.²⁴ To illustrate this, I quote a passage from the Gospel of Luke, with the changes Manetti made to the Vulgate put in italics:²⁵

Et tu, puer, propheta altissimi uocaberis: preibis enim ante faciem domini ut pares uias ei, ad dandam *cognitionem* salutis *populo suo* in remissionem peccatorum eorum, per uiscera misericordie dei nostri, in quibus uisitauit nos oriens ex alto, *ad illuminandum* his qui in tenebris et *umbra* mortis sedent, ad dirigendos pedes nostros in uiam pacis. Puer autem crescebat et confortabatur spiritu et erat in desertis usque *ad* diem ostensionis sue ad Israel.²⁶

As regards the Psalter, I have not studied this as systematically as the New Testament. However, based on a line-by-line comparison of Psalms 1 and 150, I conclude that even there Manetti's translation method was quite literal, following the original word for word, and resulting in a translation similar to the Vulgate. This is in line with the descriptive title of Manetti's translation, which says

²² I use the name Vulgate here for the sake of convenience, although it is anachronistic for the fifteenth century. For the history of the Latin Bible, and relevant terminology, see Linde 2012, 1–48.

²³ BAV, Pal. lat. 18, which was part of his library, and annotated by him. See den Haan 2016, 31–33.

²⁴ For Manetti's translation method in the New Testament, see den Haan 2016, 153–190.

²⁵ Where Manetti changed the text, the Vulgate has: *parare, scientiam, plebi eius, illuminare, in umbra, in, in*.

²⁶ Manetti's translation, Luke 1: 76–80, BAV, Pal. lat. 45, fol. 35v (den Haan 2016, 268).

“*pene ad verbum*” (almost word for word).²⁷ This similarity to the Vulgate makes it possible to identify Manetti’s preferences for Latin words and constructions.

For the New Testament we know even more, since the oldest copy, BAV, Pal. lat. 45, was corrected by Manetti himself. His corrections provide a clue as to how his method developed. For example, if we compare the Latin equivalents that he chooses for the Greek word *σώζω* (to save), we find that he initially used multiple translations for this in the Gospel of Matthew: *saluum facio* or *saluo* in the active voice, and *saluus sum*, *saluus fio* or *saluor* in the passive voice. In the later books of the New Testament, he settled on *saluo* and *saluor* exclusively. In BAV, Pal. lat. 45, the earlier translations in Matthew are changed to *saluo* and *saluor*. These corrections make it possible to determine when Manetti decided to translate *σώζω* as *saluo* or *saluor*: in Matthew 28. We find similar patterns for *ἴδιος* (his/her own), translated first as *suus*, and then as *proprius*; *ὅλος* (total), translated first as *omnis* or *uniuersus*, and then as *totus*; *οἰκουμένη* (the inhabited world), translated first as *orbis*, *terra*, *orbis terrarum*, or *omnis terre*, and later only as *orbis terrarum* and *orbis terre*; and *θρόνος* (throne), translated first as *thronus* or *sedes*, and then as *solium*.²⁸ Such cases suggest that Manetti aimed at consistent translation – i.e. using the same Latin equivalent for a Greek word each time it occurs.²⁹ They also suggest that he settled on Latin equivalents in the course of the translation process, after encountering a particular Greek word at least a few times close together. The development of Manetti’s lexical preferences is shown schematically below, Table 1.

Table 1. *Lexical choices in Manetti’s New Testament*

<i>σώζω</i>	saluum facio , saluo saluus sum , saluus fio , saluor	saluo saluor	
<i>ἴδιος</i>	suus , proprius	suus	proprius
<i>ὅλος</i>	omnis , uniuersus , totus	omnis, uniuersus, totus	totus
<i>οἰκουμένη</i>	orbis , terra , orbis	orbis, orbis terrarum,	orbis terrarum, orbis terre

²⁷ *Psalterium a Iannozio Manetto de Hebraica veritate pene ad verbum in Latinum traductum* (BAV, Pal. lat. 40, fol. 3r). For Manetti’s views on *ad verbum* and *ad sensum* translation, see den Haan 2016, 128–137.

²⁸ These examples are discussed in more detail in den Haan 2016, 45.

²⁹ See below, n. 36.

	terrarium, orbis terre	orbis terre, terra		
<i>θρόνος</i>	sedes, thronus		thronus, solium	solium

My analysis of the Psalter is based on the assumption that Manetti's translation method not only developed over time, but that translation decisions he made in one translation were carried over into his next translation. This means that if he settled on a particular Latin equivalent (X) later on in the Psalter, and we find that equivalent from the beginning in the New Testament, the conclusion follows that he translated the Psalter first, and then the New Testament. Vice versa, if we find a particular Latin equivalent in the later books of the New Testament, and we find that same equivalent early on, and consistently, in the Psalter, I would conclude that the New Testament was translated first, and the Psalter afterwards. These two scenarios are illustrated below, Table 2.

Table 2. Chronology of the Psalter and New Testament

<i>Psalter</i>		<i>New Testament</i>	
Equivalents a, b, c, X	Equivalent X	Equivalent X	Equivalent X
<i>New Testament</i>		<i>Psalter</i>	
Equivalents a, b, c, X	Equivalent X	Equivalent X	Equivalent X

Of course, there are some objections to this reasoning. First, Manetti's two translations are not based on the same language. Whereas the New Testament is based on a Greek original, the textual history of the Psalter is more complicated.³⁰ This book, like most of the Old Testament, was originally written in Hebrew, and translated into Greek in the Hellenistic period. The Greek Septuagint became a source text for Latin translators, next to the Hebrew version.³¹ Manetti explains this himself in the preface to his own Psalter translation:³²

³⁰ For the sources Manetti used for the New Testament, see den Haan 2016, 30–36.

³¹ Actually, Jerome made three translations of the Psalter: the first, the Roman Psalter, was a revision of the *Vetus Latina*, based on the Greek text of the Septuagint; the second, the Gallican Psalter, was based on the Greek text according to Origen's *Hexapla*; and the third, the *Hebraica veritas*, was based on the Hebrew text. For the sake of convenience, I only distinguish between the "Septuagint Psalter" and the "Hebrew Psalter", as Manetti does himself.

³² For this text, see above n. 15.

Due enim [...] Psalterii translationes ceteris celebratiores reperiuntur atque extant, quarum una est de greca in latinam linguam a Hieronymo ex septuaginta duobus illis primis famosissimisque interpretibus transumpta: hec est illa qua romana ecclesia in orationibus suis iam pridem usque ad tempora nostra uti consuevit; altera eiusdem Hieronymi perhibetur et est, cuius titulus fertur de hebraica ueritate.³³

Two translations of the [...] Psalter can be found and are available, that are better known than the others, one of which is taken from the Greek in the Latin language by Jerome, from those seventy-two first and most famous translators; this is the one that the Roman church has used in its prayers from long ago up until the present time; the other is said to be – and indeed is – of the same Jerome, and it is titled *From the Hebrew Truth*.

Manetti also discusses the textual history of the Psalter at length in his treatise *Apologeticus*, and he presents a long list of differences between the two Latin Psalters in books III and IV. His own Psalter translation was based on the Hebrew text, not the Greek.³⁴ However, Manetti may have exaggerated his reliance on the Hebrew text. The comparison in *Apologeticus* is based on the two Latin Psalters and could have been made without any reference to the Hebrew or Greek sources. Furthermore, his lexical choices in the New Testament are not always informed by the source text. In some cases, he selected a Latin equivalent from among a number of alternatives for stylistic reasons or because of connotations in the target language.³⁵

A second objection is that we cannot take it for granted that Manetti's lexical choices are consistent across translation projects. It is no easy task for a translator to keep track of all the equivalents he chooses for every term in the source text, even within one translation.³⁶ Although it is possible that Manetti kept a list of a selection of Greek terms with his preferred Latin translations, he may not have used this list for his next translation³⁷. One could argue, however, that in the case of these Bible translations, it would be

³³ Botley 2004b, 180.

³⁴ As indicated by the title: *Psalterium a Iannozio Manetto de Hebraica ueritate pene ad uerbum in Latinum tractatum* (BAV, Pal. lat. 40, fol. 3r). Manetti also states this explicitly in the opening of *Apologeticus*; see p. 3 above. Manetti owned a Hebrew Psalter, BAV, Vat. ebr. 28; see Cassuto 1935, 45.

³⁵ For examples of this, see den Haan 2016, 46.

³⁶ For consistency in Manetti's translation of the New Testament, see den Haan 2016, 163–172.

³⁷ Manetti's manuscript collection contained several grammars and Greek-Latin lexicons. The Greek part of BAV, Pal. gr. 194, a Greek-Latin lexicon, was probably copied by Johannes Scutariota, a scribe employed in Manetti's household. Giuseppe Cagni believed that this lexicon was compiled by Manetti himself (Cagni 1960, 6–7).

natural to approach them as parts of a whole, or at least as closely connected, rather than as two separate texts. After all, these translations were part of a project that originally comprised the entire Bible. As we will see below, Manetti's lexical choices are in fact remarkably consistent across both translations, in at least one case.³⁸

Finally, we do not know if Manetti worked on multiple translation projects simultaneously, rather than one by one. Nor do we know if he wrote multiple versions of the Psalter, or if he corrected an early draft, as in the case of the New Testament. Four of the Psalter manuscripts, all of which include *Apologeticus*, once belonged to the Manetti family library.³⁹ One of them, BAV, Pal. lat. 40 is written in Manetti's hand.⁴⁰ It contains some corrections, possibly by his son Agnolo (1432–1479), but not on the same scale as the New Testament.⁴¹ The possibility of multiple redactions is important, if we want to draw conclusions about the conception of these translation projects, as opposed to their completion.

Lexical choices in the Psalter and the New Testament

With these caveats in mind, let us now turn to a comparison of Manetti's lexical choices in both translations. My analysis is based on lexical choices that show a clear development in Manetti's New Testament.⁴² I have compared these cases to his Psalter translation. My comparison is based on BAV, Pal. lat. 40, Manetti's autograph copy. His own new translation is presented there in parallel with the Septuagint Psalter and the Hebrew Psalter, which enables me to compare these versions verse by verse, in the version of the text that Manetti knew and used himself.⁴³

Unfortunately, it turns out that most of these cases do not lend themselves for a comparison. Manetti's translation of the Greek words *οἰκουμένη* (the inhabited world) and *ἴδιος* (his/her own) shows a development in the New Testament, but they do not appear in the Psalter often enough to make a

³⁸ See the discussion of Manetti's use of *solium* below p.10.

³⁹ These remained in the Manetti family until the sixteenth century, when they ended up in the collection of the Fugger family in Germany. Eventually, almost all Manetti's manuscripts found would find their way to the Vatican library. Cassuto 1935; Cagni 1960; Lehmann 1956–1960; den Haan 2019.

⁴⁰ Manetti 1981, xliii. It is likely that BAV, Urb.lat. 5, which also includes *Apologeticus*, was copied after Manetti's death, through the mediation of his son Agnolo, from an original in the Manetti library. This also happened in the case of the New Testament translation and of Manetti's translations of Aristotle's moral works; den Haan 2016, 59–60.

⁴¹ This is my first impression, but a more thorough study of the manuscript may prove otherwise.

⁴² See above, Table 1. Lexical choices in Manetti's New Testament.

⁴³ For the earlier Latin Psalters, see above, n. 31.

systematic comparison possible. In other cases, Manetti's preferred Latin equivalent in the New Testament corresponds to that in the Psalter, but it is still impossible to draw any conclusions from this, because the same word is used in one or both of the existing Latin Psalters. This is the case with the Greek *ὅλος* (total), which Manetti translated consistently as *totus* in the later books of the New Testament, but not in the earlier books. In the Psalter, he translated it as *totus* from the beginning. However, the Hebrew Psalter also has *totus* in most cases. It is therefore impossible to determine if Manetti made a conscious decision to use this Latin word each time, or if he simply followed one of his Latin models. The same is true for his translation of *σῶζω* (to save), which shows a clear development in the New Testament.⁴⁴ The Latin equivalent Manetti uses after the Gospel of Matthew, *saluo*, appears in Manetti's Psalter translation, but also in the Hebrew Psalter.

The most interesting case is Manetti's use of *solium* (throne) as a translation of the Greek *θρόνος*. In the New Testament, Manetti made up his mind about this translation comparatively late: only when he arrived at Revelation, the twenty-seventh book. In first 26 books, where *θρόνος* appears 12 times, he used the translations *thronus* and *sedes*. In Revelation, where it appears 48 times, he introduced *solium*, and then used that word consistently until the end of that book. When he corrected BAV, Pal. lat. 45, he changed the earlier translations in some places, especially in Hebrews, erasing them and overwriting them with *solium*.⁴⁵ Now when we turn to his translation of the Psalter, it is clear that there, *solium* was always Manetti's preferred Latin term. We find *solium* almost exclusively from the beginning, while the other Latin Psalters have *cathedra*, *sedes* and *thronus* (

Table 3).⁴⁶ Based on this pattern, I believe it is likely that Manetti translated the New Testament first, where he decided in the process to use *solium* for *θρόνος*; and then moved on to translating the Psalter, where he used it from the beginning (Table 4).

Table 3. *θρόνος* in the Latin Psalters

	Septuagint Psalter	Hebrew Psalter	Manetti's Psalter
<i>cathedra</i>	2	2	0
<i>sedes</i>	13	2	4
<i>solium</i>	0	4	15
<i>thronus</i>	4	11	0

⁴⁴ See above Table 1.

⁴⁵ See above Table 1.

⁴⁶ In most cases where one of these words appears in Manetti's Latin, or in the other Latin Psalters, the Greek has *θρόνος*. For the analysis, it does not really make a difference if Manetti followed the Hebrew or the Greek here.

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Table 4: From *sedes* to *solium*

<i>New Testament</i>			<i>Psalter</i>
sedes, thronus	thronus , solium	solium	solium

Admittedly, this one case is feeble ground for a relative dating, but if it is correct, it has several implications. First, it means that the earliest copy of the New Testament that has come down to us, BAV, Pal. lat. 45, must have been written before the surviving copies of the Psalter. The significance of this is that Manetti must have had a translation of the New Testament ready when he dedicated the Psalter to king Alfonso, and when he promised him to dedicate other parts of his new Latin Bible soon. One wonders, therefore, why Manetti did not dedicate the New Testament to Alfonso as well. Either he expected that the King would be better pleased with a translation of the Psalter, or he had a reason for suppressing the New Testament.

A second implication is even more speculative. Based on the above analysis, we cannot draw any conclusions about the conception of these translation projects; only about their completion. However, if we assume that the New Testament was the first part of the Bible that Manetti set out to translate, this diminishes the importance of his Hebrew scholarship for his translation project, and it makes the connection with Valla's *Annotationes* even stronger.⁴⁷ If Manetti started from the New Testament, that is one more reason to believe that his Biblical philology was inspired by Valla's.

In conclusion

The above analysis shows that studying translation method – in this case, lexical choices – can in some cases contribute to a relative dating of translations. However, it also shows the limitations of such an approach. A comparison like this can only lead to results if many criteria are met: a word must appear frequently enough to allow for a systematic comparison; it must be clear that the chosen equivalent is not simply copied from another translation; there must be a clear development to establish a chronology. Manetti's case lends itself for such an analysis: he aimed at consistent translation, and this makes it possible to discern patterns in the Latin equivalents he chooses. Moreover, he corrected a manuscript of his New Testament translation, making it even easier to discern stages in the translation process. Needless to say, it would be much harder to determine

⁴⁷ For the connection between Manetti's translation and Valla's *Annotationes*, see den Haan 2014 and den Haan 2016, 48–58.

the order in which translation projects were undertaken if no corrected copy survives, and impossible if a translator's method is free and inconsistent. And as we have seen, even if such material is available, this type of analysis can only lend further support to a hypothesis based on other information, and hardly stand on its own feet.

All in all, however, if it is feasible, I believe that analyzing translations this way can lead to interesting insights. Determining the order in which translations were made has wider implications for the translator's career and connections with other projects. In this case particularly, my preliminary findings raise new questions about the role of Nicholas V and Alfonso of Aragon: their interest, or lack thereof, in Manetti's translation project, determined what he translated, and what he published. There is also another hint of the importance of Valla's *Annotationes*.

Manetti's translation activities provide more material for future study. Based on the preliminary analysis presented above, I believe that it would be worthwhile to compare the Psalter and New Testament more systematically, and perhaps to include Manetti's translations of Aristotle in the comparison. Furthermore, a more systematic analysis of the Psalter translation could throw light on the question of Manetti's Hebrew scholarship. In short, the possibilities of studying lexical choices in Manetti's translations, and perhaps other humanist translations as well, have not yet been exhausted.

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