

Redeam (Jerome, Epist. 22, 36, 3): A Solecism?¹

Jerome concludes the celebrated excursus on monasticism in his *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (Epist. 22) as follows: *nunc ad propositum redeam, quia de avaritia disserens ad monachos veneram* (36, 3). Recently de Vogüé has lavished a massive treatment on Jerome's *Libellus* in general and on this thirty-sixth chapter in particular². De Vogüé is clearly embarrassed by the form *redeam*, which he translates ambiguously as «je reviens»³; elsewhere he significantly mis-cites the word as an unambiguously subjunctive plural: *nunc ad propositum redeamus*⁴. The immediately antecedent first-person singular future⁵. Moreover a slightly earlier chapter of the *Libellus* (31, 5) had quoted the Old Latin version of Job 1, 21 (*nudus exivi de utero matris meae, nudus et redeam*), in which *redeam* is indubitably future⁶. Both of these foregoing futures would naturally lead the reader to take the *redeam* of the present passage as another one⁷.

1 Works are cited according to the conventions of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*², Leipzig 1990.

2 A. de Vogüé, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité 1: Le monachisme latin; De la mort d'Antoine à la fin du séjour de Jérôme à Rome (356-385)*, Paris 1991, 235-325, of which no fewer than eight pages (315-22) are devoted just to ch. 36, which occupies a mere 17 lines of CSEL text.

3 *O.c.* (n. 2) 316.

4 *O.c.* (n. 2) 245, n. 88.

5 *horum laborem et conversationem in carne, non carnis, alio tempore, si volueris, explicabo nunc ad propositum redeam.*

6 It translates LXX ἀπελεύσομαι.

7 In the whole of Jerome's vast literary output there is only one other case of a *redeam* which could be a future indicative rather than a present subjunctive (*Adv. Rufin.* 2, 11). Translators of this text evince a tellingly similar embarrassment to de Vogüé's: while J. Bareille, *Oeuvres complètes de S. Jérôme* 3, Paris 1878, 100 gives the same equivocal rendering «je reviens», the same unwarranted transformation into a plural («revenons-en») is

Neue-Wagener's discussion of this much rarer form of the future of *eo* and its compounds fails to adduce any instance whatsoever of such a first-person singular in *eam*; all their examples belong instead to the second and third persons (*-ies, -iet*)⁸. They do however cite Pompeius' commentary on Donatus' *Ars: si autem i non habeat ante o, sed e habeat, futurum tempus in bo mittit, exeo exibo: exiam (exeam: pars codd.) non dicimus, soloecismus est; eo eam non dicimus*⁹. Rubenbauer's article on *eo* in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* adds only one other text that discountenances such future forms of this verb: *sed s littera (sc. of munis) in am mutata fit futuri temporis eiusdem modi prima persona, ut muniam, excepto ibo, et siquid inde nascitur, quamvis Terentius «non eam ne nunc quidem» et «redeam»*¹⁰. The *Thesaurus* ought however to have cited three further passages which deprecate these futures in far stronger terms: Cledonius, *Gramm.* V 57, 11-12 (*ibo, non eam, ne sit coniunctivo temporis praesentis similis, cum eam*); Charisius, *Gramm.* p. 222, 9-15 (*in <verbis> quarti ordinis futurum in am est; ex eo quod est eo πορεύομαι et quae ex ipso derivantur...*); *Gramm. Suppl.* 153, 30-2 (*si i autem non habeat prima persona, sed e, idest ante o, futurum tempus in bo tantum mittit, ut puta eo ibo, exeo exibo: exeam non possumus dicere*). It might therefore be

found in P. Lardet, *S. Jérôme: Apologie contre Rufin*, Paris 1983 (SC 303) 129; scribes also succumbed to a similar temptation, since *redeamus* ins a *varia lectio*. It is however noteworthy that the phrase in which *redeam* occurs here (*sed ad causam redeam*) exactly matches that of the *Libellus (nunc ad propositum redeam)*: both declare Jerome's intention of returning to his theme. It would seem therefore that in the *Adversus Rufinum* as well *redeam* is future.

8 F. Neue and C. Wagener, *Formenlehre der lateinischen Sprache*³ 3, Berlin 1897, 326-9.

9 Neue-Wagener, *o.c.* (n. 8) 326. This text of Pompeius is *Gramm.* V 225, 13-15. Neue-Wagener might have added that Pompeius repeats his point on two subsequent occasions: *si e habuerit ante o, fac futurum tempus eo ibo, exeo exibo, tantum in bo mittit* (ibis. V 225, 21-2); *si e habuerit ante o, futurum tempus in bo tantum mittit, ut eo ibo exeo exibo* (ibis. V 225, 34-226, 1). It has been suggested that the presence of the other type of future in Jerome is due merely to the influence of the Old Latin Bible; cf. C. Paucker, *De latinitate B. Hieronymi observationes ad nominum verborumque usum pertinentes*, Berlin 1880, 149 («...in *-ies, -iet...* exempla... quae forsitan non Hieronymianae sint latinitatis, sed transsumpta de S.S. vet.»); H. Goelzer, *Étude lexicographique et grammaticale de la latinité de S. Jérôme*, Paris 1884, 287 («je ne pense pas en effect qu'il faille attribuer à S. Jérôme des formes comme *deperiet...*»). The evidence of the present article would seem however to show that such a view is untenable.

10 Sacerdos, *Gramm.* VI 434, 10-12, quoted by H. Rubenbauer in *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 5, 2 (1931-53) 626, 38-40, who points out that these Terentian forms (*Eun.* 46 and 49) are in fact deliberative subjunctives.

thought that Jerome's use of the future *redeam* in ch. 36 of the *Libellus* is indeed a «solecism».

On the other hand grammatical texts can also be adduced which appear to sanction such future forms of *eo*. Again Rubenbauer quotes the views of just two grammarians in this regard¹¹. Once again he fails to cite the most significant text: the doyen of *grammatici* himself, Donatus, takes *eam* for granted as a normal future of *eo* on no fewer than two occasions. In his *Ars minor* he asks: *quando tertia coniugatio futurum tempus non in am tantum sed etiam in bo mittit? interdum, cum i litteram non correptam habuerit sed productam, ut eo is ibo, queo quis quibo, eam vel queam* (4). Similarly the *Ars maior* observes that *quidam... negant in bo et in bor rite exire posse tertiam coniugationem, nisi in eo verbo quod in prima persona indicativi modi temporis praesentis numeri singularin e ante o habuerit, ut eo queo eam queamibo quibo* (2, 12 p. 635, 1-3). Since the eminent and authoritative Donatus was Jerome's own mentor¹², employment of the future *redeam* in the *Libellus* might accordingly be supposed to have appeared to its author as wholly free from the taint of solecism.

Evidence can nonetheless be adduced from Jerome himself to indicate that such was not in fact his attitude to these future forms of *eo*: his Vulgate shows a tendency to eliminate Old Latin readings of this type. Here the *Libellus* itself provides two convenient illustrations. At the start of the present article it was noted that ch. 31, 5 cites the old Latin wording of Job 1, 21: *nudus exivi de utero matris meae, nudus et redeam*. However Jerome's Vulgate version of the same passage significantly replaces *redeam* with *revertar*. The second Old Latin text is Isaiah 11, 1, which the *Libellus* quotes in ch. 19, 4: *exiet virga de radice Iesse*. This time the Vulgate substitutes *egredietur* for *exiet*¹³. The

11 *Art. c.* (n. 10) 626, 37-8; viz. Cledonius, *Gramm.* V 57, 27-9 (*usque adeo futurum duplicem habet coniugatio, ut Terentius diceret «non eam? ne nunc quidem»* [Eum. 46], et Vergilius «*ibo animis contra*» [Aen. 11, 438]); Consentius, *Gramm.* V 381, 33-4 (*tunc [sc. in eo verbo quod in prima persona indicativi modi temporis praesentis numeri singularis e ante o habuerit] enim recte dici eam queam, ibo quibo*); *ibid.* V 384, 9-11 (*ea quae e habent ante o ultimam futurum indicativi et in am bo mittunt, ut adeam adibo, sicut iam paulo ante diximus*).

12 Cf. (e.g.) *Chron. a. Abr.* 2370: *Donatus grammaticus praeceptor meus Romae insign[i]s habe[n]tur*.

13 Jerome also cites an Old Latin *exiet* at *Epist.* 39, 4, 8 (= Lev. 21, 12) and at *In Mich.* 4, 1 l. 205 (=Is. 2, 3); in the first case the Vulgate again replaces this reading with *egredietur*, while *exibit* takes its place in the second.

foregoing evidence would accordingly appear to warrant the conclusion that such futures of *eo* were marked by a certain colloquial flavour¹⁴.

In the present passage of the *Libellus* the colloquialism *redeam* is surrounded by considerable rhetorical refinement. The immediately antecedent sentence (*horum laborem et conversationem in carne, non carnis, alio tempore, si volueris, explicabo*) is embellished by a polyp-totic antithesis (*in carne, non carnis*) inspired by Gregory Nazianzen¹⁵, while the directly succeeding one (*quorum tibi exempla proponens, non dicam aurum et argentum et ceteras opes, sed ipsam terram caelumque despicias et Christo copulata cantabis*) enhances phraseology due ultimately to Origen with the figures of *homoeoprop-horon, tricolon crescens* and *incrementum*¹⁶. The resultant chiaroscuro of stylistic levels is comparable to that generated by Jerome's similar juxtaposition of such second-hand rhetorical finesse with the literary unrefinement of Old Latin texts¹⁷: this last-mentioned procedure is in fact also evident in the present passage of the *Libellus*, since the two afore-cited borrowings from Gregory Nazianzen and Origen are in turn flanked by two quotations from the Old Latin Bible¹⁸.

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14 Jerome's use of *redeam* in ch. 36 should therefore be added to the list of colloquialisms hitherto identified in the *Libellus*; cf. the present writer, «Some Notes on the Style of Jerome's 22nd Letter», *Riv. Fil.* 112 (1984) 288-9. The other passage in which Jerome employs the same confabulatory *redeam* (*Adv. Rufin.* 2, 11; cf. n. 7 above) follows a castigation of his opponent's linguistic incorrectness. Such apparent «inconsistency» is entirely in character; cf. the present writer, *art. c.* (n. 14) 290 with n. 2; id., «Some Notes on the Content of Jerome's 22nd Letter», *Graz. Beitr.* 15 (1988) 185-6.

15 Cf. the present writer, «A Note on Jerome, *Epist.* 54, 9, 3: *grandis ergo virtutis est superare, quod natus sis in carne, non carnaliter vivere*», *Eranos* 95 (1997) 2-4.

16 Cf. the present writer, «Self-Imitation in Jerome's *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (*Epist.* 22)», *Athenaeum* n.s. 83 (1995) 471. On *incrementum* cf. H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*³, Stuttgart 1990, 221-2 (n. 402-3).

17 For documentation of the latter practice cf. the present writer, «Some Features of Jerome's Compositional Technique in the *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (*Epist.* 22)», *Philologus* 136 (1992) 239-51.

18 Viz. Lam. 3, 27-30 and 3, 24; the second text is misidentified as Ps. 72, 26 by M. Kamptner, *S. Eusebii Hieronymi epistulae: 4 Indices et addenda*, Vienna 1996 (CSEL 56/2) 42. This passage of the *Libellus* may accordingly be added to those discussed in *art. c.* (n. 17).

SUMMARY

Jerome's famous description of the monks of Egypt closes with the word: *nunc ad propositum redeam* (Epist. 22, 36,3). His use of *redeam* in this passage as well as at *Adv. Rufin.* 2, 11 has perplexed commentators, who incline to regard the form as a present subjunctive. Grounds can however be adduced which would seem to indicate that here *redeam* is in fact a future indicative. While some grammarians condemn these futures of *ire* and its compounds as solecisms, others evidently view them as perfectly acceptable: among the latter is Jerome's illustrious preceptor, Donatus. Examination of Jerome's own treatment of such Old Latin forms in producing the Vulgate would however appear to show that he himself regarded them as not quite *salonfähig*.