

## Redeam (Jerome, Epist. 22, 36, 3): A Solecism?<sup>1</sup>

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 particular<sup>2</sup>. De Vogüé is clearly embarrassed by the form *redeam*, which he translates ambiguously as «je reviens»<sup>3</sup>; elsewhere he significantly mis-cites the word as an unambiguously subjunctive plural: *nunc ad propositum redeamus*<sup>4</sup>. The immediately antecedent first-person singular future<sup>5</sup>. 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 future<sup>6</sup>. Both of these foregoing futures would naturally lead the reader to take the *redeam* of the present passage as another one<sup>7</sup>.

1 Works are cited according to the conventions of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*<sup>2</sup>, 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