

The Classics and Jerome's Prefaces to the Biblical Translations "From the Hebrew"¹

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Hagendahl's masterly survey of Jerome's debt to the classics notes that in the period following his settlement in Bethlehem "without doubt Jerome's greatest achievements" are his labours on the text of the bible²: Jerome began by revising the version from the Septuagint for some books, but then proceeded to translate all the canonical books afresh from the Hebrew³. Hagendahl observes that in the prefaces to all of these versions references to the pagan classics are admitted "only seldom"⁴. In connection with the revisions of the Septuagint text he cites only the prefaces to Chronicles and Job⁵. Hagendahl then goes on to state that by way of such allusions to the classics "the prefaces to the books translated from the original text afford still less". Few of the pas-

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

² H. Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics: A Study on the apologists, Jerome and Other Christian Writers*, Göteborg (Acta univ. Gothob. 64, 2) 1958, 132.

³ For reminiscences of the classics in Jerome's biblical text itself cf. the present writer, "Biblia Pagana: Classical Echoes in the Vulgate", *Augustinianum* 40 (2000) 77-87; id., "Biblia Catilinaria", *Maia* 55 (2003) 93-8.

⁴ *O.c.* (n. 2) 132 with 416.

⁵ On the former cf. the present writer, "The Younger Pliny and Jerome", *RPL* 24 (2001) 41-6; on the latter cf. id., "Virgil, *Eclogues* 2 and 10 in Jerome", *Eirene* 35 (1999) 102-13.