Every translator is not only a traitor (traduttore traditore), but also an exegete or interpreter. So-called ‘exegetical renditions’ are found in abundance in the Septuagint, and also in Jerome's Vulgate. In this book, Kraus's aim is to “examine the process of translation by closely analyzing the interpretive moves made by Jerome for a particular biblical text, the book of Exodus. Here we see the translator at work, interacting with the Hebrew language, the Greek biblical versions, and Jewish, Christian, and Classical exegetical tradition” (1). In an introductory chapter, Kraus briefly discusses the (recent) interaction between translation theory and LXX studies and emphasizes its relevance to his own research project.

In ch. 1, he defines his approach, which he calls “recentiores-rabbinic philology,” as follows: "Jerome utilized the Septuagint and the recensions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion in connection with rabbinic writings in order to reach an understanding of the Hebrew text” (20), but later on he modifies this statement somewhat (and rightly so) by saying that most probably Jerome did not read rabbinic works but gained his knowledge about Jewish exegetical traditions mainly in personal conversations with Jewish scholars during the 35 years he lived in Palestine. Next, he presents a survey of recent research and debate on Jerome's knowledge of Hebrew, and more in particular on the nature of the Vulgate as a translation. He concludes that all this justifies “the examination of whether or not recentiores-rabbinic philology is the translation technique of Vg Exodus” (41).

Ch. 2 is about the translation technique of the Vulgate. Kraus first shows that, in spite of his claim (in the famous Ep. 57)1 that it is justified to translate pagan texts freely ad sensum but that for biblical texts a more literal word-for-word translation is appropriate, in practice Jerome does apply an ad sensum method in the Vulgate. To be sure, the Vulgate is full of Hebraisms but these are integrated with the more free ad sensum translation. Kraus then lists many instances of literalism, free renderings, unusual meanings, intertextuality, influence of the Greek versions, and influence of both Classical and Christian Latin (not all of them equally convincing; and absit a te is not ‘it is useless to you’ but ‘far be it from you’ [Gen 18:25], p. 53]). He concludes that a rendition can reflect the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tradition, with a great degree of freedom in

1 At p. 46 Kraus indulges in a bit of overinterpretation of a passage in Ep. 57.6.3.
determining the literal meaning. This led Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein to the verdict that “Jerome’s translation displays an unevenness with regard to the guiding principle to an extent unknown from any other classical Bible version.” Kraus tries to defend Jerome against this attack with arguments from translation studies, but one cannot but feel some sympathy for this harsh judgement.

In the footsteps of Michael Graves, Kraus demonstrates in ch. 3 that Jerome’s translation is strongly influenced by key categories of late antique Latin grammar. *Lectio, enarratio, emendatio* and *iudicium* are the principles which guide Jerome in explaining Hebrew idioms, specifying terms, maintaining narrative and technical logic, creating vivid images, producing clearer Latin, and adding emphasis. The most obvious example is Jerome’s avoidance of the rigid paratactical style of the Hebrew original by replacing it with various forms of subordinate clauses, and his adding of particles (*autem, ergo*, etc.). All this is illustrated with dozens of passages.

In ch. 4 Kraus wants to demonstrate that “consideration of renditions based on the Greek and Latin translations and the available recensions (*recentiores*) represents another component of Jerome’s translation technique” (105). Here the evidence clearly points to Jerome’s analytical use of Origen’s *Hexapla*. “Jerome culls the other versions for semantic and syntactic suggestions … [H]e approaches these possibly useful sources of information, not as texts to be copied … [His] critical use of other translations best explains the concurrence of the following phenomena: sometimes he does not follow any of the versions; at other times he follows the Septuagint, the Vetus Latina, or one of the *recentiores*; or he rewords a version or combines versions together” (116-7). This is again illustrated with many examples. These clearly demonstrate that Jerome articulates both the strengths and weaknesses of the Greek tradition and of the Vetus Latina, most often on the basis of stylistic considerations.

In chs. 5 and 6 we get to the heart of the matter: Jerome’s exegetical translation technique, the main subject of the book. Ch. 5 focuses on the integration of Jewish and Christian exegetical traditions into the Vulgate, and ch. 6 deals with the Classical tradition. One of the finest examples of a Jewish exegetical tradition in Jerome’s Exodus is his translation of Exod 1:19, where the Hebrew text says that the Israelite women give birth before the Egyptian midwives

---
