

## Musings

Over the last three years, I found only one scholarly article for these readings and it used that vulgar chauvinistic phrase, "Pisser against a Wall." The point of the article is about how to understand the phrase after it is literally translated. In 1963, Krister Stendahl posited uncertainty about the "tacit proposition that man remains basically the same through the ages."<sup>1</sup> This means that how humans understand the phrase as vulgar in this the Third Millennium A.D., may not be how humans understood the same phrase in the First Millennium B.C.

The origin of "pisser against the wall" with the Assyrians dates from before 1000 B.C. The term probably entered the Hebrew Bible during the Exile starting about 600 B.C. The Hebrew Bible uses the term six times, twice in 1 Samuel, thrice in 1 Kings, and once in 2 Kings. The Lectionary completely avoids the term.

Translations of Sacred Scripture into the English vernacular are only about four hundred years old. The academic problem is understanding whether there is a negative connotation about the man or men involved. This academic problem is useful for identifying other problems that do impact how people get along together in the context of the Christian command to love one another. Racism and sexism are two such problems that interfere with love of neighbor. Unwarranted assumptions, under cover of racism and sexism, interfere with preaching the Gospel in African-American Communities and among other minority groups elsewhere.

The prayer for these readings is for hearts willing and able to accept the aim of the Responsorial Antiphon, *Lord, I love your commands*. The prayer is to get past unwarranted biases, so often associated with the cross, and to love the commandment, to love one's neighbor as oneself.

## Readings

First Reading:	1 Kings 3:5, 7-12
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130 (97a)
Second Reading:	Romans 8:28-30
Alleluia:	cf. Matthew 11:25
Gospel:	Matthew 13:44-52

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## Annotated Bibliography

Material above the double line draws from material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some interesting details.

### 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by Duane E. Smith, "'Pisser against a Wall': An Echo of Divination in Biblical Hebrew," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October 2010) 699.

## Personal Notes

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 109A, July 24, 2011

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1 Kings 3:9

Bettye Collier-Thomas, Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979<sup>2</sup>

Florence Spearing Randolph (1866-1951) delivered a sermon, "Woman, the Builder of her House," in 1909, in Newburgh, New York. Randolph was not preaching in an environment accepting of Catholics. I attended Epiphany Apostolic College and Mary Immaculate Novitiate there with the Josephite Fathers and Brothers from 1952 to 1955. Josephites who purchased property for Epiphany in the 1930s disguised themselves because of the anti-Catholic biases in Newburgh.

Randolph says nothing about wives obeying their husbands, but she does write, "She alone has it in her power to make that house or home a paradise or to make it just the opposite (,) the most miserable place on earth." Randolph looks for understanding and wisdom in 1 Kings 3:9, which Randolph presents as *Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people (1 Kings 3:9)?*" The same verse from the Lectionary: *Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong, For [sic] who is able to govern this vast people of yours?* Randolph uses *good and bad*, where the Lectionary uses *right from wrong*. Randolph has *that I may discern*, where the Lectionary has *to distinguish*. Randolph has *great a people*, where the Lectionary has *this vast people*. Randolph leaves room for individual difference from groupthink that the Lectionary avoids. Because of lingering racism, difference from groupthink is essential for preaching the Gospel in African-American communities.

1 Kgs 3:5-14

Duane E. Smith, "Pisser against a Wall": An Echo of Divination in Biblical Hebrew"<sup>3</sup>

"Pisser against a wall" is a metaphor for a male. The question Smith raises is whether the "trope" or phrase is pejorative. Smith argues that "pisser against the wall" is not pejorative, but instead refers to one who desires offspring. In the Hebrew Bible, the term always appears in the context of genocide. Only one reference in this article refers to Scripture used in the Lectionary, a reference to a dream of Solomon. Smith argues from the dream of Solomon, mentioned in the Lectionary, to other Middle Eastern dreams in other religions.

What strikes me most about this article is the assertion that Middle Eastern gods were considered literate. Smith offers a lengthy quotation from another scholar to make the point. I thought only the Israelite God was literate, that is, able to read and write. I am aware of no other god writing down anything like the Ten Commandments.

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<sup>2</sup> San Francisco, CA 94103-1741: A Wiley Imprint: 1998, 101, 105, 114, 137.

<sup>3</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October 2010) 711, 715.

**Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130 (97a)**

Psalm 119 is available for Funerals.<sup>4</sup>

**Romans 8:28-30**

**cf. Matthew 11:25**

**Matthew 13:44-52**

For my background and more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at [www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes](http://www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes).

Themes

For recurring themes in Sacred Scripture, see the following. The exclamation point (!) indicates principal reference lists of passages related by a common theme or expression. The exclamation point sometimes also functions as a semi-colon, comma, or period. *Italics* of a different verse or book from where it appears, indicates a direct quote. Commas separate verses within the same book and semi-colons separate books. The abbreviation for *following* is f. With this material, I am trying to lay a foundation for developing Biblical themes the next time through the Cycles. I intend to add in which Lectionary readings to find the relevant passages.

Sacred Scripture develops themes for the following readings in Romans 8:28-30:

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|----------|---|
| Verse 28 | Psalms of Solomon 4:25 etc.; 1 Corinthians 2:9, 8:3; James 1:12, 2:5; Ephesians 1:11! The Greek manuscripts are difficult at the words <i>work for good</i> . |
| Verse 29 | 1 Peter 1:2; Ephesians 1:5; Philippians 3:21! 2 Corinthians 4:4; Genesis 1:17; Colossians 1:18! Hebrews 2:10; John 20:17!                                     |
| Verse 30 | 2 Thessalonians 2:13 f.; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 3:18.  |

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<sup>4</sup> N.a., International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by Authority of Pope Paul IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 277-288.

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Sacred Scripture develops themes for the following readings in Matthew 13:44-52:

- Verse 44 Proverbs 2:4; Sirach 20:30 f, 19:21, 29; Luke 14:33; Philippians 3:7.  
Verse 47 Matthew 22:9 f., 4:19 parallel; Habakkuk 1:14 f.  
Verse 49 Matthew 13:39! 25:32; Psalm 1:5.  
Verse 50 *Daniel* 3:6; Matthew 8:12!  
Verse 52 Matthew 23:34, 20:1, 21:33, 12:35 parallel; Mark 1:27.

Manuscripts

Through Reading 70A, January 30, 2011, I designed these comments on the availability of manuscripts to make the point that uncertainty exists about exactly which Greek to use for the purposes of translation. At that point, I began offering manuscript availability for background when examining Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology, which I purchased based on the review in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly.<sup>5</sup>

Romans 8:28-30

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.<sup>6</sup>

P. Chester Beatty II in Dublin has a papyrus dating from about 200 with Rom 8:15-15:9.

Matthew 13:46-52

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.<sup>7</sup>

Sinai Harris 9 has a Greek-Arabic diglot (bilingual) parchment. The date is not given.

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Hodgson, Jr., review of Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology, Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda (eds.) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October 2010) 877-878.

<sup>6</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 99.

<sup>7</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 122.

For my background and more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at [www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes](http://www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes)

## **After Action Report**

For the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Reading 49A, May 14, 2011  
I am changing the Commentary to read as follows:

### **Commentary**

As Scott Carroll, research professor of manuscript studies at Baylor University declares, "Translating the Bible is a soap opera of moving spiritual and political parts."<sup>8</sup> In this vein, USA Today has an article "'Booty' booted from revised Bible,"<sup>9</sup> to which the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) host, Raymond Arroyo, seems to refer when he complains about the new translation approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for the New American Bible.<sup>10</sup> Arroyo wants to keep the traditional language, teaching what it meant, rather than incorporating meaning for those unfamiliar with traditional language. If Arroyo wants to get back to the traditional language, he needs to revert to the original Greek, with which the Faithful struggle in these Personal Notes.

The new translation of the entire Bible came out March 1, 2011. I do not know where to obtain a copy. My intention is to obtain a copy from Liturgical Press, when they offer it.

Roman Catholics now have two official English translations: one outside the liturgy from the USCCB, the other inside the liturgy from the Vatican. The best I can do is guess about the forthcoming relationship between the USCCB and the Vatican translations. The Vatican translation (called the New Roman Missal) is replacing the Sacramentary. The Sacramentary, used by the priest, is the book that remains on the altar during Mass. So far, these Notes have done nothing with the Sacramentary. When the new Sacramentary becomes available, I intend to compare the Lectionary translations with USCCB translations and with Vatican translations.

These Notes have only treated the Sunday Lectionary, which appears in two books for liturgical use at Mass. The ordinary cloth-covered book contains the First and Second Readings, from which the laity, including females, may read. The heavy gold-

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Cathy Lynn Grossman, "Planned high-tech museum to take scholarly look at Bible" USA Today, Monday, April 4, 2011, page 6A Nation, column 3, paragraph 5.

<sup>9</sup> Cathy Lynn Grossman, "'Booty' booted from revised Bible" USA Today, Wednesday, March 2, 2011, page 1 column 5 and page 2, columns 2-3 below the fold.

<sup>10</sup> Raymond Arroyo, the Encore Presentation on ETWN, "The World Over," Sunday, March 13, 2011. I do not own the technology required to record this program, and accept the risk associated therewith.

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covered book, the Book of the Gospels, which is carried by a Deacon, if one is available or, otherwise, by one of the Faithful (who may be female), in the procession at the beginning of Mass. Only ordained (male) clergy may read from the Book of the Gospels.

These Notes repeatedly observe, in the Lectionary, that just because a book has a *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* of USCCB approval does not make it, *ipso facto*, academically acceptable. What is happening is that the Vatican is imposing one set of politics on Sacred Scripture, while the USCCB is imposing another set of politics on the same Sacred Scripture. Please pray that these Notes unscramble and verify whatever relationship exists between the two translations. In this case, the hierarchy, both Vatican and USCCB, appear to prioritize their particular brand of politics over the truth academically-free and unfettered scholarship has to offer. The better approach is to begin with the truth and end with political considerations.

The Word, the Bible, Sacred Scripture is the gate through which the Faithful enter the religious life of God. The Word shepherds the Faithful. Roman Catholics sometimes call the first part of the Mass “The Liturgy of the Word.” The Word is there for all to read and, unlike as recently as two hundred years ago, today practically everyone is literate enough to read Sacred Scripture.

I was amazed to the point of being dumbfounded when I realized that someone was always carrying a Bible in my classes at Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC), in Hampton, Virginia. This means that society is not as secular as I once thought. This also means that some of the Faithful are always reading Sacred Scripture, at least daily. The TNCC setting is reasonably secular.

How I discovered the hidden religious nature of our culture was that I frequently quoted Sacred Scripture in class and sometimes students challenged what I said. Testing my observation that someone always had a Bible in class to verify my quotations, I did find a class, once, in which no one had a Bible. My students seemed upset and several assured me that they could readily get their Bibles from their cars. Sacred Scripture is the gateway through which the Faithful enter the life of God. We live in and reinforce such a culture.

The prayer suited for these readings is that the truth of an understandable translation from the original Greek will determine the politics of liturgical prayers and readings.