

TESTING GOOGLE TRANSLATE AND THE YANDEX  
TRANSLATOR FOR PARALLEL TEXT TRIGGERING BY USING A  
SPECIFIC TEXT FROM THE LATIN BIBLE AND A SIMILAR  
APOCRYPHAL TEXT

PART 1 TESTING THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Examples from the Gospel of John, Latin Vulgate, using "Google Translate"

Example 1. Source: Gospel of John, Chapter 18, verse 30

Parallel text is not triggered, because Google cannot index it due to a tiny textual variation, not affecting the sense of the text:

> Responderunt et dixerunt ei: Si non esset hic malefactor, non tibi tradidissemus eum. <

literal translation: They replied and said unto him: "If this (man) were not a malefactor, we wouldn't have delivered him unto you"

Google: They replied: If you were not doing would not have given him. (raw mode, not intelligible)

Parallel text triggered:

> Illi responderunt et dixerunt ei: Si non esset hic malefactor, non tibi tradidissemus eum. <

literal translation as above.

Google: They answered, and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up.

*Text found, "translation" correct, "unto" betrays a biblical translation!  
Note: "tibi" - "to you" is missing at the end, whereas the initial "Illi - they" strangely does not even figure in the original text, but Google needs it for triggering the parallel version, for some reason*

## Example 2: Gospel of John, Chapter 18, verse 33, Vulgate

Google does not see the word "Pilate" due to different word order (This error often happens in modern languages too!)

> **Introivit ergo iterum in praetorium Pilatus, et vocavit Iesum et dixit ei: Tu es rex Iudaeorum?** <

literal translation: **So Pilate entered the judgement hall again, and called out Jesus and said to him: Are you the king of the Jews?**

Google: **Went back into the hall again and called Jesus and said, You are the king of the Jews? (Pilate is missing)**

Word order modified (*not as in original, but equally correct in Latin*):

> **Introivit ergo Pilatus iterum in praetorium et vocavit Iesum et dixit ei: Tu es rex Iudaeorum?** <

literal translation: **same as above**

Google: **Pilate then went back into the hall and called Jesus and said, 'You are the king of the Jews?'**

*(correct, except that "judgment" is missing from "praetorium" meaning a hall, building or a mobile construction like a large tent acting as a Roman court of law)*

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## Example 3 taken from the "Gospel of Nicodemus" Chapter 3, section 2

Partial triggering of a parallel text due to similarity to the biblical gospel text (the translation "*thou sayest*" is eloquent proof of that!) The first part of the section is identical to the text in the gospel of John, whereas the second is not found in the biblical text and is therefore unknown to Google. (There are too few parallel versions of the apocryphal text on the Web, if any)

The "Gesta Salvatoris" ("The acts of the Saviour" aka Evangelium Nicodemi or Acta Pilati), Chapter 3, section 2 is **similar to the Gospel of John, Chapter 18, verse 37**

> Dicit ei Pilatus: Ergo rex es tu? Respondit Iesus: Tu dicis quoniam rex sum. Iterum dicit Iesus Pilato: Ego in hoc natus sum et in hoc veni, ut omnis qui est ex veritate, audit vocem meam. Dicit ei Pilatus: Quid est veritas? | [ from here on text is not found in the canonical bible ] Dicit ei Iesus: Veritas de caelo est. Dicit ei Pilatus: In terris veritas non est? Dicit Iesus Pilato: Intende veritatem dicentis in terra, quomodo iudicatur ab his, qui potestatem habent in terris. <

Google: Pilate said king, then? (garbled) Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. Again, Jesus said to Pilate: (partially parallel text, "sayest" proves it) I was born and, in fact, (raw mode) that everyone who belongs to the truth listens to me. (mixed) He says to him: What is truth? [From here unknown text to Google, switching to raw mode]: Jesus said, Truth is heavenly. Pilate said the countries true? Jesus said to Pilate forward, tell the truth on the ground, as judged by those who have no power on earth. (Text makes little sense, also due to a standard interpretation of "intendere", having a different sense here.)

Correct literal translation of the above paragraph:

Pilate says to him: So you are a king? Jesus answered: You say that I am a king. And again Jesus says to Pilate: I have been born in that and came into that, so that anyone who is of truth, hears my voice. Says Pilate to him: What is truth? | | Jesus says to him: Truth is from heaven. Says Pilate to him: Is truth not found on earth? Says Jesus to Pilate: Look at him, who is telling the truth on earth, in what manner he is judged by those, who have power on earth.

*These examples clearly show the extent to which "Google Translate" relies on parallel text in order to produce acceptable results.*

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## **PART 2 TESTING THE APOCRYPHAL TEXT**

The following snippets of perfectly simple text unknown to Google from the same "Gesta Salvatoris" (Evangelium Nicodemi) show that neither Google nor the Russian Yandex translator which is reputed to do better for Latin than Google, and is included here for that reason, are able to convert even the most essential short Latin sentences into intelligible English. Remember we're dealing with simple, vulgar Latin here, nothing like classical Latin. (Bing and DeepL do not support Latin.)

Closest biblical parallel to the text used: Gospel of John, Chapter 18, 29 - 38 - starting from example 7, and Matthew Chapter 27, 19 for No. 9.

Rating: wrong translation: 0 points; bad, but just intelligible: 0.5 points; partially correct: 1 point; correct with minor errors 2 points, untranslated word: - 0.5 points penalty.

*Note: Phrases 18 – 22 look innocent enough, but are much harder to translate for an automated system.*

1. > **Domine, clamat te praeses!** < (Chapter 1, end of section 2)

Google: Lord, I cried president! 0 points

Yandex: O lord, cries out to you president! 1 point

*correct literal translation:* Master/Lord! The governor calls (for) you!

2. > **Quare hoc fecisti?** < (Chapter 1, section 3)

Google: Why did you do? (incomplete) 1 point

Yandex: Why have you done this? (correct) 2 points

*Correct literal translation:* Why have you (singular) done that?

3. > **Quid est quod clamant hebraice?** < (Chapter 1, section 4)

Google: What is the Hebrew cry? 0.5 points

Yandex: Why is it that cry out in Hebrew? 0 points

*Correct literal translation:* What is it that they call out in Hebrew?

4. > **Dicit eis Pilatus: Vos autem adtestamini voces quas pueri dixerunt. Quid peccavit cursor?** < (Chapter 1, section 4)

Google: Pilate saith to them: But you are not the voices of the servants of the attest, they said. How did the runner? 0 points  
(Google located a snippet from a parallel text, but it didn't help!)

Yandex: Pilate said to them: You adtestamini voices which the children said. What you have worked cursor? – 0.5 points (nonsense), including - 0.5 points addit. penalty for not recognizing 1 Latin word.

*Correct translation:* But you (plural) confirm the words the youngsters said. So in what way did the messenger sin? (modern sense of "sinning" here: making a bad mistake)

5. **> Quare sic fecistis? <** (Chapter 1, section 5)  
Google: Why is this done? (*plain wrong*) 0 points  
Yandex: So why you did it? (*not quite correct*) 1 point  
*Correct literal translation:* Why have you (plural) acted in such a way/manner?
6. **> Nos viri pagani sumus. <** (Chapter 1, section 5)  
Google: We are the clowns. (*impressively wrong!*) 0 points  
Yandex: We men pagans are we. 2 points  
(nearly there, sense is OK, BUT: skipping the final full stop, Yandex also translates "clowns" for some mysterious reason.)  
*Correct literal translation:* We are pagan men.
7. **> Et iussit praeses ingredi Iesum secundo. <** (Chap. 1, sect. 6)  
Google: The president ordered him to come in second.  
1.5 points  
Yandex: And ordered the president to enter into Jesus second.  
0.5 points  
*Correct literal translation:* And the governor ordered Jesus to be entered in for a second time.
8. **> Pilatus vero videns, timor adprehendit eum, & coepit exsurgere de sede sua. <** (Chapter 2, beginning of section 1)  
Google: Pilate, however, when he saw, and fear, took hold of him, and his own, he began to get up from the throne of his own. 0.5 points  
Yandex: Pilate however seeing, fear seized him, & began to rise from their seat of their own. 2 points  
*Correct translation:* But as Pilate saw (that), he was gripped with fear, and began to rise from his seat.
9. **> Cogitante eo exsurgere de sede sua, matrona ipsius Pilati nomine Procula, misit ad eum. <** (Chapter 2, section 1)  
Google: Thinking him to rise from the throne of his own, a matronly woman of the same name of the Procreation of Pilate, that he sent to him. (*impressively wrong!*) 0 points

Yandex: Thinking him rise from the throne of their own, a mentor of Pilate in the name Procula sent to him. 0.5 points

Correct literal translation: As he was thinking of getting up from his seat, his wife, named Procula, sent for him.

10. > Numquid non diximus quoniam maleficus est? Ecce, somnium inmisit ipse ad uxorem tuam. < (Chap. 2, sect. 1)

Google: Is it not maintain that any wizard, is it? Behold, he is thrown the person belongs to your wife, you dream of. 0 points (total nonsense)

Yandex: Do not we have said that a witch is? Behold, the dream inmisit myself to your wife. 0.5 points (first phrase nearly correct)

Correct lit. translation: Did we not say that he is a sorcerer? Behold, he has sent a dream to your wife.

11. > Qua ratione volunt eum occidere? < (Chapter 2, section 6)

Google: For what reason would wish to kill him? 1 point ("they" is missing, otherwise it's correct)

Yandex: For whatever reason they want him to kill? 1 point

Correct translation: What is the reason they want to kill him for?

12. > Pilatus, furore repletus, exiit foris praetorium et dicit eis: Testem habeo solem, quoniam nec unam culpam invenio in homine isto. < (Chapter 3, section 1)

Google: And so Pilate, filled with rage, that he went out in the streets of the judgment hall, and saith unto them, I have a witness to the sun, that not even the one I find a fault in this man touching. 1 pt. (the "saith" proves that Google inserted part of a parallel text from the gospel of John, 18, 38 b! Second part disastrous)

Yandex: Pilate, anger filled, went outside the hall and says to them: as a Witness I have to the sun, because not a single fault I find in the man this. 1.5 points (the "saith" proves that Yandex also found the self-same text!)

Correct translation: Then Pilate, filled with rage, went out of the judgement hall and said to them: I have the sun as a witness, that I do not find a single fault in that man!

13. > Respondens Pilatus, ad Iesum dixit: Numquid ego Iudaeus sum? Gens tua et pontifices tradiderunt te mihi! Quid fecisti? < (Chapter 3, section 2; note that it equals the text in the Gospel of John, 18, 35!)

Google: In reply again, Jesus said: Am I a Jew? Nation and the priests brought you to me! What have you done? 1.5 points (Pilate is missing)

Yandex: Answering Pilate, Jesus said: Did I Jew am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you to me! What have you done? 1 point

Correct literal translation: Pilate answered and said to Jesus: Am I a Jew? Your people and the high priests delivered you unto me. What have you done?

14. > Quid faciam tibi? < (Chapter 4, section 3)

Google: What do you do? 0 points

Yandex: What can I do for you? 0 points

Correct translation: What shall I do with you? (literally: "to you")

15. > Nos volumus ut crucifigatur! < (Chapter 4, section 4)

Google: We want to be crucified! 0 points (Oh, really? We? Fantastically wrong)

Yandex: We want to crucifigatur! - 0.5 points (doing even worse than Google plus penalty for not recognizing "crucifigatur")

Correct literal translation: We want him (to be) crucified!

16. > Quid quaeritis cum homine isto? Homo iste multa signa faciebat, et gloriosa qualia nullus fecit, nec facit. < (Chapter 5, section 1)

Google: What do you want with this man? This man is performing many miraculous signs he was doing, for the aged, such as no one has done, He does not perform. 0.5 points

Yandex: What you are looking for a man with this? This man does many signs he did, and gloriosa as no one did, or does. 0.5 points (including a penalty for not recognizing "gloriosa")

Correct translation: What do you want from this man? This man does many (miraculous) signs, and glorious ones, that no one ever has done, nor does.

17. > **Et nunc dimittite hominem istum, non enim est dignus mori!** < (Chapter 5, section 1)
- Google: **And now, this man is not worthy to die!** 0.5 points
- Yandex: **And now let the man this is not worthy to die!** 0.5 p.
- Correct translation: **And now let this man go, he is not worthy of death (lit.: to die)!**
18. > **Tu discipulus eius factus es et verbum pro ipso facis!** < (Chapter 5, section 2)
- Google: **You are a student and you will do for the word!!** 0 p.
- Yandex: **Are you a student of his art and the word for him, you do!** 1 point
- Correct translation: **You have been made a disciple of him, and speakest (in order) to defend him. [literally: make a word (use words) for him (to his advantage)]**
19. > **Curvus eram et correxit me verbo.** < (Chapter 6, section 2)
- Google: **I was bent and the correction word.** 0 points
- Yandex: **Curved was & correxit me the word.** - 0.5 points (*for not recognizing "correxit"*)
- Correct literal translation: **I was stooped/bent, and he straightened me up by (speaking) a word.**
20. > **Legem habemus mulierem in testimonium non veniri.** < (Chapter 7)
- Google: **We have a woman taken in evidence ought not to have been sold to the law.** (*absolute and total rubbish!*) 0 points
- Yandex: **The law we have a woman in the witness not veniri.** 0.5 points (*penalty for not translating "veniri", otherwise I had given it 1 point*)
- Correct literal translation: **We have a law not admitting women to come forward bearing witness / testimony.**
21. > **Dicit Pilatus ad illos qui dixerunt daemonia illi subiecta sunt: Quare et doctoribus vestris non sunt subiecta?** < (Chapter 8, section 1)
- Google: **He says out to those who have said that the spirits were as follows: Why and doctors are not your subject?** 0 pts



Yandex: Says Pilate to those who said demons they are subject: Why doctors and your are not subject to? 0 points

correct literal translation: Pilate said to those who said that the demons are subject to him: Why are they not subject to your learned men as well?

22. **> Quid vobis prodest effundere sanguinem innocentem? <** (Chapter 8)

Google: What can you derive from shedding the blood of an innocent man? 2 points

Yandex: What do you gain shedding innocent blood? 2 pts

Correct literal translation: What do you gain from shedding innocent blood?

23. **> Quid faciam quoniam seditio fit in populo? <** (Chapter 9, section 1)

Google: What shall I do, that is done in the mutiny of the people? 1 point

Yandex: What can I do because of the revolution happening in people? 2 pts

Correct translation: What shall I do, as there is an uprising (about) to take place in the people?

24. **> Tunc iussit Pilatus adduci illum ante tribunal suum, ubi sedebat, et prosecutus est his verbis, dicens sententiam adversus Iesum. <** (Chapter 9, section 5)

Google: Then again ordered him to be brought in front of the court where he was sitting and listening to these words, saying verdict against. 1 point

Yandex: Then ordered Pilate to be brought him before the tribunal of his own, where he was sitting, and attending these words, saying the sentence against Jesus. 1 point

Correct literal translation: Then Pilate ordered him to be brought before his tribunal, where he sat, and continued with these words, pronouncing the sentence / judgement against Jesus: (continuing below)

25. > Genus tuum conprobavit te ut regem. Propterea prae-cipio te primum flagellari secundum statuta priorum prin-cipum. Deinde praecepit allevari eum in cruce, in eo loco ubi tentus est, et duos malignos cum eo, quorum nomina sunt haec: Dismas and Gestas.< (Chapter 9, end of section 5)

Google: King will be sanctioned race. Therefore, giving you first set whipped the previous ones. He ordered it to be raised on the cross at the spot where he was arrested, and two ill with him, whose names are these: Radio and achievements. 0 pts

Yandex: Type your conprobavit you to the king. Therefore giving you first whipped according to the statutes of the former leaders. Then charged allevari him on the cross, in that place where arrested, and two speaking with him, whose names are these: Dismas and Careers. - 1 pt (for not recognizing two Latin words)

Correct literal translation: "Your people have confirmed you as king. I therefore order you first to be lashed / flogged according to the statutes of the former rulers." Thereafter he ordered him to be raised on the cross, in the same place where he was arrested; and two criminals with him, whose names are these: Dismas and Gestas."

*Note: Don't look out for a complete English translation of the (old) Latin version of that apocryphal text, there is none yet; [except in J. E. Cross: "Two old English apocrypha and their manuscript source" (w-o Chapters 6 -10, those are missing in the 9<sup>th</sup> century manuscript (St. Omer 202) on which their work is based)]*

**Total points Google: 12 out of 50 poor**

**Total points Yandex: 18 out of 50 poor**

**"Bing" and "DeepL" do not support Latin**

So Yandex fares somewhat better than Google, but was penalized for not recognizing and translating words. But, as we have seen so far, the systems proved totally useless in translating Latin. Keep in mind that the same may be said to a lesser degree when translating from the Russian, where the lack of syntax analysis often leads to useless or outright erroneous translations, although especially Google and now "DeepL" are improving rapidly.

## CONTROL

Now, let's pass on to a non-biblical text as a control: I give marks ranging from 1 – 10 points (unusable > excellent)

René Descartes: "Regulae ad directionem ingenii", Regula 3, 8  
Google found 5 sources of the original Latin text, Yandex 2, Bing 7

> Hinc iam dubium esse potest, quare praeter intuitum hic alium adiunximus cognoscendi modum, qui fit per deductionem, per quam intelligimus illud omne quod ex quibusdam aliis certo cognitis necessario concluditur. <

*Literal translation:* "Henceforth a doubt may already be raised, why alongside intuition we added another mode of knowing (things) here, that operates by deduction, by which we understand all of that which is necessarily to be concluded from those things that were recognized with certainty (before)."

Google: Hence there is now no doubt that this can be, we have inserted the other here the gaze of knowing the why, in addition to the mode, which is performed by means of deduction, the other by means of which we understand with certainty say, that all was known, it is necessarily concluded that on some of them. (*raw mode > unintelligible*) 1 unusable

Yandex: This is already a problem, may be why in addition to the intuition here is another adiunximus identifying the mode, that is done by deduction, by which we understand that everything that comes out of some other specific learning necessarily concluded.

1 unusable (*raw mode > unintelligible, as a further malus, Yandex did not recognize "adiunximus", which is telling*)

The so-called "Eprevodilac" translator and others always use Google Translate; Bing and "DeepL" do not support Latin

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Now from German into English: German translation of original text by Ernst Cassirer except for the first five words and "notwendigerweise" for "certo":

*Source text:* "Nunmehr könnte jedoch ein Zweifel aufkommen, weshalb wir hier außer der Intuition noch eine andere Art der Erkenntnis angefügt haben, die durch Deduktion geschieht, worunter wir all das verstehen, was aus anderem sicher Erkanntem notwendigerweise erschlossen wird."

Google: "Now, however, there may be a doubt why we have added here, besides intuition, another kind of knowledge, which is done by deduction, by which we understand all that is necessarily inferred from other certainly known." **9 very good**

DeepL: "Now, however, a doubt may arise as to why we have here, in addition to intuition, added another kind of cognition, which happens through deduction, by which we mean all that is necessarily deduced from other things which are certain to be known. **9 very good**

Yandex: "Now, however, there may be doubts as to why, in addition to Intuition, we have added another kind of cognition, which is done by deduction, by which we understand all that is necessarily opened up from other surely recognized." **7 good**

Bing: "Now, however, a doubt could arise, which is why we have added a different kind of knowledge here besides intuition, which is done by deduction, by which we mean all that is necessarily developed from other safely known. " **7 good**

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Now from English into German:

Source text: "Henceforth a doubt may already be raised, why alongside intuition we added another mode of knowing (things) here, that operates by deduction, by which we understand all of that which is necessarily to be concluded from those things that were recognized with certainty (before)."

Google: "Nun kann schon ein Zweifel aufkommen, warum wir hier neben der Intuition noch eine andere Art des Wissens (der Dinge) hinzugefügt haben, die durch Deduktion funktioniert, worunter wir alles verstehen, was notwendigerweise aus den Dingen zu schließen ist, die mit Sicherheit erkannt wurden ( Vor)." **9 very good** (*incredibly, Google does not understand the meaning of "before" = vorher*)

"DeepL": "Von nun an mag bereits ein Zweifel aufkommen, warum wir hier neben der Intuition eine andere Art des Wissens (Dinge) hinzugefügt haben, die durch Abzug funktioniert, mit der wir all das verstehen, was notwendigerweise aus den Dingen zu schließen ist, die mit Sicherheit erkannt wurden (vorher)." **6 average** (*except "Abzug" good; Abzug is literal for deduction, but the word is only used 1. for a real deduction meaning subtraction, like of money, pay, services etc.; or 2. for ventilation, as in a kitchen, but never for deduction. As a matter of fact, we may correctly say in German that "DeepL" gets an "Abzug" for not translating correctly; "Abzug" is a serious error*)

“Yandex”: "Von nun an kann bereits ein Zweifel aufgeworfen werden, warum neben intuition haben wir eine andere Art des Wissens (Dinge) hier, die durch Deduktion arbeitet, durch die wir verstehen, all das, was unbedingt aus den Dingen, die mit Sicherheit erkannt wurden abgeschlossen werden (vor)." (lousy style) **4 below average**

“Bing”: "Von nun an kann bereits ein Zweifel aufkommen, warum wir neben der Intuition hier eine andere Art des Wissens (der Dinge) hinzugefügt haben, die durch Abzug funktioniert, durch die wir all das verstehen, was notwendigerweise aus den Dingen zu schließen ist, mit denen man erkannt wurde. Gewissheit (vorher). " **4 below average** (same error with “Abzug” for deduction)

**So “Google Translate” is the only system that has produced a fair translation of the above German sentence.**

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Conclusion: Especially “Google Translate” fares much better in translating this phrase from the German version into English or vice versa, whereas it utterly fails to understand the original Latin. The reason for that is that Google has infinitely more "experience" (material) when translating between modern languages, whereas it cannot process Latin grammar at all. So if it does not find a parallel text, it's completely and utterly lost. But how good the translation eventually is, depends very much on the clarity of the input, as I said before in my article. For those types of translation avoid the Yandex and Bing translators, they do worse than Google and DeepL. The latter still apparently has some bugs, producing serious errors sometimes that “Google Translate” usually avoids.

The utterly disastrous results in Latin in my opinion result from a combination of two factors: 1) The database for single words (vocabulary) is very poor and cannot take into account multiple meanings of certain words, and 2) recognition and processing of grammar are practically non existent.

**But all in all, “Google Translate” is still the safest bet.** Use “DeepL” only, if you’re able to check the result. It some-times still makes ugly errors, although the overall results and style are better than Google’s. Using the other translators in my opinion does not make any sense at all. Even when translating from the Russian, “Google Translate” usually does better than the Yandex translator and it’s getting better all the time. UPDATE: “DeepL” now also supports Russian and is doing well. Give it a try. (Yandex did not make any progress lately).

For translating from the Latin, there is a good syntax analyser freely available on the Web. But the main work has to be done in the old-fashioned way. So, if a text together with its translation does not circulate on the web, there is no easy and simple way to obtain a translation. As we have seen, automatic translation is so poor, that it adds absolutely no benefit at all, rather, it muddies the waters for those, who already have problems understanding a given Latin text.