

The vocabulary of righteousness in Martin Luther's New Testament translations

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Abstract

In his first version of the New Testament of 1522, Luther had default translations for each of the principal Greek terms relating to righteousness, but departed from them in ways which reflected his theological views. For example, while his default translation of δίκαιος was *gerecht*, he used *frum* or *recht* in contexts which refer to human goodness or lawful conduct, respectively, rather than to righteousness according to his strict conception of it. Luther thus signalled to the reader/listener, at a lexical level, theological distinctions which, outside the Bible, he could spell out explicitly. Luther repeatedly revised his New Testament translation and, when referring to righteousness, he increased the number of translations based on *gerecht* (*gerecht*, *gerechtigkeit*, *gerecht machen/werden/sein*) at the expense of those based on *rechtfertig* (*rechtfertig*, *rechtfertigung*, *rechtfertigkeit*, *rechtfertigen*). This occurred across different parts of speech, but was particularly marked in the translations of verb phrases meaning 'to justify/make righteous', where the fraction of *gerecht*-based translations rose from zero in 1522 to over three-quarters in 1530. The effect was to unify the language of righteousness and justification: rather than having one word-family, based on *gerecht*, for righteousness and another, based on *rechtfertig*, for justification, Luther now used *gerecht* overwhelmingly for both. This was again a reflection of Luther's theological views, this time emphasizing the identity between the righteousness of God and the God-given righteousness of mankind.

Keywords: Luther, Erasmus, Reformation, New Testament, *Septembertestament*, translation, righteousness, justification, *gerecht*, *frum*, *rechtfertig*, *rechtfertigen*

1. Introduction

What is righteousness? This question is central to an understanding of Protestantism and has been the subject of theological argument for the last five hundred years. Yet there has been no in-depth linguistic discussion of how the German terminology of righteousness developed. This study is intended to fill part of the gap by offering a detailed analysis of the vocabulary of righteousness in Luther's New Testament translations.¹

The motivation for this study came from translating Luther's *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* of 1530 as part of a series of Reformation pamphlets being published by the Taylor Institution Library in Oxford.² Two details about Luther's vocabulary of righteousness in that work were striking. First, in the *Sendbrief* Luther used both *gerecht machen/werden* and *frum machen/werden* for divine justification (or 'making/becoming righteous'); this contrasts with Luther's Bible translations, in which he avoided *frum* in this sense and reserved it (and its variant *from*) for other contexts. The second striking detail has to do with Luther's famous discussion of why he inserted 'allein' in 'Wir halten, das der mensch gerecht werde on des gesetzs

¹ The author thanks Markus Bockmuehl, Ulrich Bubenheimer, John Flood, Lucas Jones, Martin Jones, Martin Keßler, and Henrike Lähnemann for their extremely valuable insights and guidance.

² For background and links to the digital editions in this series, see editions.mml.ox.ac.uk. For this translation of the *Sendbrief*, see *Martin Luther: Ein Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen*, ed. by Howard Jones, Henrike Lähnemann, and Emma Huber (Oxford: Taylor Institution Library, 2017).

werck, allein durch den glauben' (Romans 3: 28).³ Luther defended this departure from his sources on both linguistic and theological grounds: it made the German version more idiomatic, and it reflected what St Paul really meant.⁴ But what Luther did not point out was that, since the publication of his first translation of the New Testament, the *Septembertestament* of 1522,⁵ he had actually altered his translation of this verse, by replacing 'gerechtfertiget werde' with 'gerecht werde', as part of a sweeping set of changes which, from 1530 onwards, saw most *rechtfertig*-based vocabulary of justification replaced by *gerecht*-based vocabulary.

These two observations led to the empirical analysis of the vocabulary of righteousness in Luther's New Testament translations which is attempted in the present paper. Particular attention is paid to Luther's choice of a default translation for each term in his source, to departures from this default translation, and to subsequent revisions. Like other accounts of Luther's translation technique, this study finds evidence that Luther's Bible translation was informed by his theology.⁶ However, this time it is through lexical choice in context rather than by more overt means such as the addition of 'allein' mentioned above. To take the first of the two details mentioned in the previous paragraph: the distribution between *gerecht* and *frum* in Luther's Bible translations has the effect of encoding, by the choice of lexeme, a theological distinction between righteousness and human goodness which, outside his Bible translations, Luther could spell out explicitly. To take the second of those details: the replacement of *rechtfertig*-based expressions with *gerecht*-based ones to refer to justification ensured a lexical alignment between, on the one hand, Luther's vocabulary of justification and, on the other, his vocabulary of righteousness (which was already based on *gerecht*). Given Luther's emphasis on the identity between the righteousness of God and the God-given righteousness of mankind, this alignment can similarly be viewed as a reflection of his theology.

2. Approach and methodology

³ Luther's writings are quoted from *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 120 vols (Weimar, 1883–2009) ('WA'); this quotation comes from WA 30, II (volume and sub-volume), 632 (page number); references to Luther's Bible translations are marked 'WAB' rather than 'WA'.

⁴ As Luther put it in the *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen*: 'Allein der glaube, und nicht die werck machen uns gerecht, das zwinget die sache selbs neben der sprachen art' (WA 30, II, 641).

⁵ In 1522 there were two editions of Luther's New Testament translation, one in September (the *Septembertestament*) and another, in response to high demand, in December (the *Dezembertestament*). On the *Septembertestament*, see Heimo Reinitzer, 'Das Septembertestament (1522) – Theologie, Sprache, Kunst', in *Meilensteine der Reformation: Schlüsseldokumente der frühen Wirksamkeit Martin Luthers*, ed. by Irene Dingel and Henning P. Jürgens (Gütersloh, 2014), pp. 160–70. For a chronology of Luther's Bible translations, including a list of the editions which appeared in his lifetime, see Heimo Reinitzer, *Biblia deutsch: Luthers Bibelübersetzung und ihre Tradition* (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, 1983), pp. 103–25; or Hans-Gert Roloff (ed.), *Das Neue Testament in der deutschen Übersetzung von Martin Luther nach dem Bibeldruck von 1545 mit sämtlichen Holzschnitten. Studienausgabe, Bd. 2: Entstehungsvarianten, Glossar, Bibliographie, Nachwort* (Universal-Bibliothek 3741, 3742) (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1989), pp. 8–16.

⁶ For recent accounts of Luther's translation technique and references to the literature, see Charlotte Methuen, "'These four letters s o l a are not there': Language and Theology in Luther's Translation of the New Testament', *Studies in Church History* 53 (2017), 146–63; Karl-Heinz Göttert *Luthers Bibel: Geschichte einer feindlichen Übernahme* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2017); and Heinz Blanke 'Bibelübersetzung' in *Luther Handbuch*, 3rd ed. by Albrecht Beutel (Tübingen: Siebeck, 2017), pp. 298–305.

It is safe to assume that Luther's lexical choice on the subject of righteousness was not accidental. Luther is known to have chosen his language carefully in his Bible translations: in the *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* Luther claims that he and his colleagues Philipp Melanchthon and Matthäus Aurogallus (professors of Greek and Hebrew, respectively, at Wittenberg, where Luther was professor of Theology) would spend up to four weeks agonizing over a single word.⁷ Moreover, in the few years up to and including the publication of the *Septembertestament*, Luther had written extensively on righteousness, including three treatises dealing largely or entirely with the subject,⁸ and he devoted a large part of the *Preface to Romans* in the *Septembertestament* itself to a definition of terms relating to it.

Starting from the assumption that Luther's choice of words was deliberate, we analyse his translations of the vocabulary of righteousness from the *Septembertestament* onwards in the following steps:

- Find all the words and phrases relating to righteousness in the source text which Luther used for his New Testament translation, and analyse how he translated them, starting with the *Septembertestament* and tracking any subsequent revisions;
- For each word or phrase in the original, identify the default translation and note departures from it, taking into account the context in which they occur;
- Attempt to explain such departures in light of (i) earlier translations which may have influenced Luther and (ii) Luther's theological views.

The sources used for Luther's pronouncements on righteousness are works which he wrote on the subject at the time of the *Septembertestament* or just before. The detailed empirical analysis in the present paper is confined to Luther's New Testament translations, although the findings from this analysis are compared with patterns in his translations of the Old Testament and in other works.

For the text of the *Septembertestament* and subsequent revisions, the *Weimarer Ausgabe* is used; most of the revisions relevant to this study were first made in 1530 (and reproduced in subsequent versions), although a few were already in a version of 1527.⁹ The basic source text for Luther's New Testament translations is taken to be the Greek edition of Erasmus published in 1519. Given Luther's statements about the importance of original sources,¹⁰ it would have been surprising if he had not used a Greek original for his translation; in any case, Luther had the *Septembertestament* checked by his Greek specialist colleague Philipp Melanchthon before publication.¹¹ The Greek texts available to Luther at the time were the first (1516) or second (1519) edition of Erasmus's New Testament, which also had Erasmus's own Latin translation facing the Greek version.¹² Heinz Bluhm, in his analysis of Luther's translation of

⁷ WA 30, II, 636.

⁸ The *Sermo de triplici iusticia* of 1518 (WA 2, 43–7), the *Sermo de duplici iustitia* of 1519 (WA 2, 145–52), and *On the Freedom of a Christian* of 1520 (German: WA 7, 20–38; Latin: WA 7, 49–73).

⁹ More precisely, all of the revisions of 1527 relevant to this study are marked '1527²', and all of those of 1530 are marked '1530¹' in the *Weimarer Ausgabe*. See WAB 6, lxiii–lxx for details and WAB 6–7 for the *Septembertestament* and the revisions themselves.

¹⁰ For his statements in relation to the New Testament, see especially the *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* (WA 30, II, 632–46).

¹¹ See Reinitzer, *Septembertestament*, p. 161.

¹² For details of Erasmus's 1516 and 1519 editions, see Reinitzer, *Biblia deutsch*, p. 87.

Galatians,¹³ finds evidence that Luther used the 1519 Greek version, rather than the 1516 one, for that epistle at least; in any event, a comparison between the 1516 and 1519 Greek versions in their use of the vocabulary of righteousness reveals no differences in the choice of lexemes, so they can be treated as interchangeable for present purposes.¹⁴ Erasmus's choice of Latin terms in his parallel translation does not always map one-for-one onto the Greek terms, so his Latin translation has been taken into account in case it was also an influence.

Heinz Bluhm found evidence that Luther's translation in Galatians sometimes agrees with the (Latin) Vulgate against Erasmus's Greek text, so Luther's translations have been compared with the 1509 edition of the Vulgate printed in Basel in case Luther followed that in any departures from the pattern of the Greek. The 1509 Basel edition is the one used by Bluhm in his analysis and seems a reasonable proxy for whichever edition or editions of the Vulgate Luther may have been familiar with.

The evidence that Luther was influenced in his Bible translations by earlier German printed Bibles is patchy.¹⁵ However, for completeness, Luther's translations are compared with the edition of Anton Koberger at Nuremberg of 1483 which, in its choice of vocabulary in respect of righteousness and justification, was followed by all subsequent pre-Reformation German Bibles up to and including that of Silvanus Otmar printed in Augsburg in 1518.¹⁶

3. Luther's statements on righteousness and justification, 1520–22

After controlling for the possible influence of previous translations on Luther's vocabulary of righteousness, we assess whether his choices reflect his own theological views. Luther and his Catholic opponents agreed on certain basic aspects of righteousness, namely that it was a necessary condition for human beings to achieve salvation, and that it came about by a process called 'justification', or 'being made righteous'. As will be shown, the most straightforward effect of Luther's departures from the pattern of his Greek source was to make a lexical distinction in German

¹³ Heinz Bluhm, 'Sources of Luther's Septembertestament: Galatians' in *Luther for an Ecumenical Age: Essays in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation*, ed. by Carl Meyer (St Louis: Concordia, 1967), pp. 144–71.

¹⁴ Excluded from our analysis are three cases in which Luther translated a noun phrase with a verb phrase. These comprise one case each in Romans 10: 4 and Romans 10: 10 where Luther translated 'εἰς δικαιοσύνην' ('for righteousness') with the construction *rechtfertig werden*, and one example in Galatians 5: 5 where the Greek reads 'ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα' ('we wait for the hope of righteousness through faith') and the *Septembertestament* reads, 'Wyr aber wartten ... der hoffnung, das wyr durch den glawben rechtfertig seyen.'

¹⁵ For the sources used by Luther in the *Septembertestament*, see Blanke, *Bibelübersetzung*, pp. 300–1. For a textual comparison between the *Septembertestament* and earlier German printed Bibles, see Bluhm, *Sources*. On the relationship between Luther's Bible translations, earlier German Bibles, and Erasmus's editions more generally, see Thomas Kaufmann, 'Vorreformatorische Laienbibel und reformatorisches Evangelium', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 101 (2004), 138–174.

¹⁶ Source: *Die Erste Deutsche Bibel*, ed. by William Kurrelmeyer, vols 1–2 (Tübingen: Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 1904–5). This is an edition of the first printed German Bible by Johannes Mentel with notes showing variants in later pre-Reformation printed German Bibles. For background, see also Reinitzer, *Biblia deutsch*, pp. 63–85, and John Flood, 'Martin Luther's Bible Translation in its German and European Context' in *The Bible in the Renaissance: Essays on Biblical Commentary and Translation in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. by Richard Griffiths (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2001), pp. 46–7.

between contexts which refer to righteousness/justification at all (whether according to Luther's theology or that of his opponents) and those which do not.

However, we are also on the look-out for lexical choices in Luther's translations which correspond to differences between his views on righteousness and those of his opponents. This presupposes that it is possible to pin down what Luther's views were, a task fraught with difficulty because of the nuanced and sometimes conflicting statements found in his works. The approach taken in the present study is to draw from Luther's writings at or shortly before the time of the *Septembertestament* and to focus on aspects of his theology of righteousness which are likely to be the least controversial among scholars: our aim is to investigate Luther's choice of vocabulary in light of his theological views rather than to investigate those views themselves. Two texts are taken as sources: the Latin version of *On the Freedom of a Christian* of 1520 (which is more extensive than the German version) and Luther's preface to St Paul's Epistle to the Romans which appeared in the *Septembertestament* itself. As shorthand, Luther's statements on righteousness in these works are referred to as 'Luther's theology of righteousness' (or similar expressions), but this term should not be taken to suggest that Luther's theological views on righteousness were definitive and unchanging.¹⁷

The main differences between Luther's and his opponents' views on righteousness concern the way in which people become righteous (or 'are justified') and the nature of the justified person. For Luther, justification is brought about when God gives a person faith in redemption through Christ, i.e. faith that Christ died and rose from the dead to redeem humanity from sin. Luther describes justification as a change in status rather than an intrinsic change, because the justified person remains sinful. Justification is therefore an unmerited act of grace by God and is not a reward for deeds (or 'works'). In fact, good works do not lead to justification, but rather the opposite, because works can be counted as good only if they are performed by a righteous person. One particular category of works, namely the 'works of the law', are Old Testament laws and commandments by which 'works-righteous' people mistakenly (according to Luther) think they are made righteous; this 'works-righteousness' contrasts with Luther's 'justification by faith alone'. Such laws do, however, have a function in Luther's theology of righteousness, which is to make people recognize, owing to their inability to obey them, that they are sinners, so that they turn to Christ, and their faith in him becomes the fulfilment of the law. It is important to note that, although Old Testament characters pre-date Christ's death and resurrection, they can, according to Luther, also be adjudged righteous by God in virtue of their faith.

In contrast to Luther's theology of justification, the Catholic Church at the time believed that human beings could, by obeying Old Testament laws and by doing good

¹⁷ On Luther's theology of justification, see Hans Joachim Iwand, *Glaubensgerechtigkeit nach Luthers Lehre*, 3rd edn (Munich, 1959), Bernhard Lohse, *Luthers Theologie in ihrer historischen Entwicklung und in ihrem systematischen Zusammenhang* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), and Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); on current debates, see Risto Saarinen, 'Justification by Faith: The View of the Mannermaa School' and Mark Mattes, 'Luther on Justification as Forensic and Effective', both in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. by Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and Batka Lubomír (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 254–63 and 264–73.

works, contribute to their own justification, which was therefore a joint enterprise with God. They also held that justification made an intrinsic change in the justified person, eventually purging that person of sin, in contrast to the change of status which, in Luther's theology, did not alter a person's intrinsic sinfulness.¹⁸

In the appendix to this paper, excerpts are provided from *De libertate christiana* (given in Latin with an English translation) and the *Vorrhede auff die Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Romern* (*Preface to Romans*) from the *Septembertestament* to support the outline above. Two detailed points about the extracts from Luther are worth highlighting. First, Luther glosses 'gottis gerechtigkeit' as follows in the *Preface to Romans*: 'Gottis gerechtigkeit, odder die fur Got gilt';¹⁹ that is, for Luther, 'God's righteousness' refers to a status of human beings which is recognized as 'valid' before God. Secondly, he uses 'sunder' ('sinner') in two senses: first, for irredeemable works-righteous people who believe that righteousness can arise from obedience to divine laws rather than through faith; and, secondly, for redeemable people who recognise their sinfulness and have faith in Christ, opening the way to justification.

4. Empirical analysis

Luther's translations from Erasmus's Greek are analysed by three parts of speech: the adjective δίκαιος (and its inflected forms), for which the default translation in English Bibles is 'righteous', the nouns δικαιοσύνη ('righteousness') and δικαίωμα and δικαίωσις (roughly, 'justification'), and the verb δικαίω ('I justify').

4.1. Luther's translations of the adjective δίκαιος

Outside the New Testament, the adjective δίκαιος is used in first-century Greek of people and things with meanings including 'straight', 'suitable' in a general sense, 'right', 'fair', 'just' in a juridical sense, and 'righteous' in a religious sense; its usual Latin translation in Luther's time was *iustus*.²⁰ It is used in the New Testament not only as an attributive adjective but also as an adjectival noun (e.g. ὁ δίκαιος 'the [δίκαιος] man', τὸ δίκαιον 'the [δίκαιος] thing', 'that which is [δίκαιος]'). Luther's various translations of the adjective δίκαιος in the *Septembertestament* and their distribution are set out below.

¹⁸ The differences between the Church's understanding of justification and Luther's are reflected in Hieronymus Emser's 1523 refutation of Luther's New Testament translation, entitled 'Auß was gründ vnnd vrsach Luthers dolmatschung, vber das nawe testament, dem gemeine[n] man billich vorbotten worden sey'; see Heribert Smolinsky, *Augustin von Alvelde und Hieronymus Emser: Eine Untersuchung zur Kontroverstheologie der frühen Reformationszeit im Herzogtum Sachsen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1983). An official statement of the Catholic Church's doctrine of justification was later set out in the Sixth Session of Council of Trent in 1547.

¹⁹ WAB 7, 10–11.

²⁰ For these meanings and those of the other Greek lexemes analysed here (viz. δικαιοσύνη, δικαίωμα, δικαίωσις, and δικαίω), see H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); William Arndt and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961). For Latin translations of these words in Luther's time, see Girolamo Aleandro, *Lexicon Graecolatinum: multis et preclaris additionibus locupletatum* (Paris, 1512).

Greek (Erasmus 1519)	German (Luther, September 1522)
<i>Breakdown by lexeme</i>	
δίκαιος (N=81)	gerecht (N=53) frum (N=11) recht (N=10) rechtfertig (N=4) billig (N=3)

This distribution cannot be explained in terms of previous Latin translations of the Bible. Erasmus's 1516 and 1519 Latin versions have *iustus* for δίκαιος in all but one instance, and the 1509 Vulgate has *iustus* in every instance where the Greek is translated.²¹

As for the pre-Reformation German printed Bibles, these use *recht* in four of the ten cases in which the *Septembertestament* has *recht*, and *gerecht* in the others (except for one where the versions do not correspond). These earlier German Bibles also have *recht* in four of the cases where Luther has *gerecht*, making it unlikely that Luther followed them in his distribution between *gerecht* and *recht*. For the three cases of *billig* in Luther, the pre-Reformation editions have *gerecht* or *recht*.

4.1.1. Contexts where Luther translates δίκαιος as *gerecht*

The contexts in which Luther translates δίκαιος by *gerecht* are all compatible with Luther's theology of righteousness, but not exclusively so, because they are also compatible with the traditional theology from which he was breaking away. Here is a selection in two groups, the first concerning people and the second concerning God and Christ.

Statements about people

- (1) die augen des herrn sehen auff die gerechten (1 Peter 3: 12)
- (2) . . . das gerechte blutt, das vergossen ist auff erden, von dem blute an Abels des gerechten, bis auffs blutt Zacharias des sons (Matthew 23: 35)
- (3) Der gerechte aber wirt des glawbens leben (Hebrews 10: 38)
- (4) Wer recht thut, der ist gerecht (1 John 3: 7)
- (5) ich bynn komen zu ruffen den sundern zur busse vnnd nicht den gerechten (Luke 5: 32)

Examples (1) and (2) give no distinctive detail about the nature of righteousness and so cannot be assigned to any particular theology of righteousness. Examples (3)–(5) are more specific, but could also be interpreted both according to Luther's theology and according to that of the Church at the time. Thus, (3) refers to the justification by

²¹ The single exception in Erasmus is in the 1519 (but not the 1516) Latin translation of Colossians 4: 1, which has the noun 'aequitatem' for 'τὸ δίκαιον' (Luther has 'gerecht'). In the 1509 Vulgate, no translation is given for δίκαιος in Matthew 20: 7.

faith which was heavily emphasized by Luther, but it does not refer to justification by faith alone, so a combination of faith and works is not excluded. Example (4) could be read to mean either ‘deeds are good only if done by a righteous person’ (in line with Luther) or ‘good deeds make righteous’ (in line with traditional theology). Finally, example (5) would be Lutheran if ‘sundern’ were taken to refer to the redeemable sinners who recognise their sins but have not yet been justified, in contrast to those already justified who do not need to be called. On the other hand, this example would also fit with a more traditional interpretation if sinners were merely those who must be purged of their sinfulness.

It should be pointed out that the only named human beings described as *gerecht* in the *Septembertestament* are Old Testament figures, as in (2), rather than New Testament figures.

Statements about God and Christ

Where δίκαιος is used of God or Christ in the *Septembertestament*, it is translated by *gerecht*, as in the following examples.

- (6) denn du hast mich geliebt ehe denn die weltt gegründet wart, gerechter vater (John 17: 25)
- (7) Herr, du bist gerecht (Revelation 16: 5)
- (8) ob yemand sundiget, so haben wyr eynen fursprechen bey Gott, Jhesum Christ, der gerecht ist (1 John 2: 1)
- (9) zum antzeygen des gerechten gerichtts Gottis (2 Thessalonians 1: 5)
- (10) herr almechtiger Got, deyne gericht sind warhafftig vnd gerecht (Revelation 16: 7)

In examples (6)–(8), δίκαιος qualifies God or Christ, while in (9) and (10) it qualifies divine judgement and judgements, respectively (‘deyne gericht’ is plural in (10)).

4.1.2. Contexts where Luther translates δίκαιος as *frum*

There are two main contexts in which δίκαιος is translated by *frum*: those in which (falsely) virtuous conduct is described and those in which an attribute of a named New Testament character is mentioned favourably.

False virtue

On three occasions *frum* is used to describe the conduct of people who feign virtue:

- (11) Also auch yhr, von aussen scheynet yhr fur den menschen frum, aber ynnwendig seyt yhr voller heucheley vnd vntugent (Matthew 23: 28)
- (12) Er saget aber zu ettlichen, die sich selbs vermessen, das sie frum weren, vnd verachten die andern (Luke 18: 9)
- (13) Vnd sie hielten auff yhn, vnd sandten laurer aus, die sich stellen solten, als weren sie frum (Luke 20: 20)

There are no instances in which *gerecht* is used in this way. It is important to note in these cases that the word *frum* on its own does not denote false virtue, but the falseness is conveyed elsewhere in the sentence (‘von aussen scheynet’, ‘vermassen, das . . . und verachten’, ‘als weren sie’). However, what is being feigned is outward conduct which has nothing to do with the inner righteousness of Luther’s theology.²²

A positive attribute of named New Testament individuals

In six cases δίκαιος is translated as *frum* for named New Testament individuals (other than Christ).

- (14) Joseph aber yhr man war frum (Matthew 1: 19)
- (15) Herodes aber furcht Johannen, denn er wuste, das er eyn frumer vnnd heyliger man war (Mark 6: 20)
- (16) Sie [Zacharias and Elisabeth] waren aber alle beyde frum fur got (Luke 1: 6)
- (17) vnd der selbige mensch [Simeon] war frum vnd gott furchtig (Luke 2: 25)
- (18) Joseph, eyn radher, der war eyn gutter frumer man (Luke 23: 50)
- (19) Cornelius der hewbtman eyn frumer vnnd gottfurchtiger man vnnd guttis geruchts bey dem gantzen volck der Juden (Acts 10: 22)

In each of these examples *frum*, and not *gerecht*, is used for δίκαιος of named figures who are presented in a favourable light. Mätzke (2013: 143) characterizes the favourable qualities denoted by *frum* in these examples under various headings, but its central meaning for her relates to interpersonal human relationships. This could apply to all the examples above except for (16), in which *frum* refers explicitly to a relationship with God. But whatever the precise quality denoted by *frum*, all these examples share the fact that the characters are not, in these verses, in a position to have been justified according to Luther’s theology of righteousness. Since, for Luther, the faith which God gives to mankind is faith in Christ’s death and resurrection, none of these individuals could yet have had that faith: examples (14)–(18) come from contexts before Christ’s crucifixion, while in (19), although the context is after the resurrection, Cornelius the centurion has not yet been told of it, and his conversion is still to come. It is therefore plausible that *frum* is being used here to signal that human conduct, rather than righteousness, is meant.

4.1.3. Types of context where δίκαιος is translated by both *gerecht* and *frum*

There are two contexts in which δίκαιος is translated by *frum* and which are similar to contexts in which it is translated by *gerecht*. The first is one in which a centurion refers to Christ (just after his death):

- (20) fur war diser ist eyn fromer mensch gewesen (Luke 23: 47)

²² For a discussion of “‘Fromkeit’ dem Anschein nach’ in Luther, see Verena Mätzke, *Gerechtigkeit als ‘Fromkeit’: Luthers Übersetzung von iustitia Dei und ihre Bedeutung für die Rechtfertigung heute* (Marburger theologische Studien, 118) (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2013), pp. 133–5.

This context is similar to that in which Pilate (before Christ's crucifixion) uses *gerecht*:

(21) ich byn vnschuldig an dem blutt dises gerechten (Matthew 27: 24)

In both contexts a Roman figure of authority is referring to Christ. The second pair of similar contexts is the following, together with that of example (5) above:

(22) Jch bynn komen den ßundern zur busße zu ruffenn, vnnd nicht den frumen
(Matthew 9: 13)

There is nothing in Erasmus's Latin translations, the 1509 Vulgate, or earlier German printed Bibles, to suggest that Luther was following those versions in making the choices he made in these two pairs of examples. One difference between the contexts in (20) and (21) is that, in (20), the centurion is asserting a quality of Christ, and Luther may have felt that he was not entitled to pass judgement on Christ's righteousness; in (21), by contrast, Pilate is asserting his own innocence but presupposing, rather than asserting, a quality in Christ. This might account for the use of *from* and *gerecht* in these two cases, respectively.

As for examples (22) and (5), there is nothing in their contexts to explain Luther's different choices: the evangelists are describing the same incident and, except for trivial differences, the Greek is identical in Erasmus.²³ As explained above, the contrast between sinners and those who are *gerecht* in (5) can be interpreted in terms of Luther's theology if 'sundern' are understood to be redeemable sinners. If in (22) we read *from* to refer to human goodness (its predominant sense in the *Septembertestament*) rather than righteousness, then Luther is making a different contrast from that in (5). In (22) the contrast is then between the same redeemable sinners as in (5) and those with merely outward goodness. Support for this reading of (22) comes from Luther's gloss to this verse, in which he writes, 'Christus verwurfft alle menschliche fromkeyt, vnd will das wir alleyn aufseyn fromkeyt bawen', but he does not similarly gloss 'den gerechten' in (5).²⁴

As the last two pairs of examples show, there was some overlap in the contexts in which Luther used *gerecht* and *from* to translate δίκαιος. Nevertheless, all of the contexts discussed before, in which only *from*, and not *gerecht*, was used, refer to human goodness as opposed to righteousness, suggesting that this constitutes the core meaning of *from* in the *Septembertestament*. This is supported by the fact that the other Greek adjective translated by *from* in the work is ἀγαθός, meaning 'good', as, for example, of a servant in Matthew 25: 21.

4.1.4. Contexts where Luther translates δίκαιος as *recht*

²³ Erasmus 1519: 'οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον καλέσαι δίκαιους ἀλλὰ ἁματωλοὺς' (Matthew 9: 13); 'οὐκ ἐλήλυθα καλέσαι δίκαιους ἀλλὰ ἁματωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν'. (Luke 5: 32). The Matthew version has the aorist tense ('ἦλθον' 'I came') and 'γὰρ' ('for'), while the Luke version has the perfect tense ('ἐλήλυθα' 'I have come') without 'γὰρ'.

²⁴ WAB 6, 44. On *fromkeit/frumkeit*, a word which does not occur in Luther's Bible translations themselves, see Section 5.

There are nine instances in which δίκαιος is translated by the adjective *recht* to refer to what is right or fair, either in human terms or according to divine law (in the tenth case, *recht* appears to be used as a noun; see fn 27); here are four examples:

- (23) vnd sprach zu yhn, geht yhr auch hyn ynn den weynberg, ich will euch geben, was recht ist (Matthew 20: 4)
- (24) Richtet nicht nach dem ansehen, sondern richtet eyn recht gericht (John 7: 24)
- (25) Das gesetz ist yhe heylig, vnd das gepot heylig recht vnd gut (Romans 7: 12)
- (26) ßo es anders recht ist bey Got, zuuergelten, trubsal, denen, die euch trubsal anlegen (2 Thessalonians 1: 6)

In each of these and the other five instances,²⁵ the context refers to rules governing human conduct. These can all be said to lie outside Luther's theology of righteousness, which is a status recognized by God as valid in human beings regardless of their conduct. This is most obvious in cases such as (23) and (24) where the rules are man-made, but is also true in cases such as the divine law in (25) or the God-given rule of retaliation referred to in (26), the sort of Old Testament law which, according to Luther's theology, did not make people righteous by their obedience to it.

In the *Septembertestament* the choice of *gerecht* and *recht* in the context of divine decision-making correlates with a distinction between, respectively, divine judgement(s), as in (9) and (10), and divine law, as in (25) and (26). However, the distinction was made less clear-cut in Luther's revisions. For example, in the New Testament translation of 1530, (9) was reworked so that *gerecht* was replaced by the adverb *recht*:

... welchs anzeigt, das Gott recht richten wird (2 Thessalonians 1: 5)²⁶

As a result of such revisions, the types of context in which *recht* was used therefore sometimes overlapped with those in which *gerecht* was used. However, as with *frum*, a core meaning for *recht* can be identified, which is 'right' by reference to some externally imposed standard. This is confirmed by an examination of the other Greek adjectives translated by Luther with *recht*, including ἔνδικος, meaning 'rightful' of punishment in e.g. Romans 3: 8, and ἀληθής, meaning 'true' of Christ's judgement in e.g. John 8: 16; similarly, the verb form ἔξεστι(ν) 'it is permitted/lawful' is also often translated by 'ist's recht, das ...', as in Luke 20: 22.²⁷

²⁵ The other instances are in Matthew 20: 7, Luke 12: 57, Acts 4: 19 and 22: 14, and Colossians 4: 1.

²⁶ Similarly, *gerecht* is changed to *recht* from 1527 in Christ's words in John 5: 30: 'meyn gericht ist gerecht'. In Acts 22: 14, Luther in the *Septembertestament* follows Erasmus and takes 'δίκαιον' as a neuter accusative singular translating it as 'das rechte' (Erasmus's Latin reads 'id quod iustum est'), but from 1530 he takes δίκαιον as a masculine accusative singular and translates it as 'den gerechten'.

²⁷ In one case, Romans 5: 7, Luther translates a genitive singular form of δίκαιος as if it were a neuter noun meaning 'that which is δίκαιος': 'μόλις γὰρ ὑπὲρ δικαίου τις ἀποθανεῖται· ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τάχα τις καὶ τολμᾷ ἀποθανεῖν' 'Nu stirbt kaume yemand vmb des rechts willen vmb des guttis willen thurste ('would dare') villeicht yemand sterben'. The form 'des rechts' seems to be the genitive singular of the noun (*das recht*), meaning 'law', 'right', rather than being the genitive singular of the adjective meaning 'right', because if it were the latter we should expect 'des rechten', with the weak adjectival ending after a determiner. It is conceivable that Luther was using a strong adjectival ending here where we should expect a weak one (as he occasionally did). However, while he changed the

4.1.5. Contexts where Luther translates δίκαιος as *rechtfertig*

There are four instances of this in the *Septembertestament*. Three refer to or echo the Old Testament (there are two instances in (27)):

- (27) vnnd hatt [i.e. God] erloßet den rechtfertigen Lot . . . die weyl er [i.e. Lot] rechtfertig vnter yhn wonet (2 Peter 2: 7–8)²⁸
- (28) wie denn geschrieben stehet, Da ist nicht der rechtfertig sey, auch nicht eyner (Romans 3: 10)²⁹

There seems to be nothing distinctive about these contexts: δίκαιος, when used of Old Testament figures, is also translated by *gerecht*, as seen in (2). Indeed, 2 Peter 2: 8 in (27) goes on to refer to Lot's 'ψυχὴν δικαίαν', translated by Luther as 'gerechte seele'. From Luther's 1530 revisions onwards, he replaced *rechtfertig* in these three cases with *gerecht*, which supports the argument that they are synonyms.

The fourth translation of δίκαιος as *rechtfertig* is:

- (29) wer rechtfertig ist, der rechtfertige sich weyter (Revelation 22, 11)

It is possible to take δίκαιος to mean 'righteous' in a Lutheran sense here: the context is the Last Judgement when the time for people to change their ways is over.

However, given that the reflexive verb *sich rechtfertigen*, which follows, tends to be used in Luther's translation to refer to self-justification, which would lie outside Luther's theology of righteousness, it is not so straightforward to read *rechtfertig* to mean 'righteous'. We return to this instance in Section 4.5.4. in the discussion of Luther's translation of verbs.

4.1.6. Contexts where Luther translates δίκαιος as *billig*

In two of the three cases in which δίκαιος is translated as *billig*, the context is non-religious and δίκαιος means 'fitting', 'suitable'.³⁰ In the other case, Ephesians 6: 1, 'δίκαιος' is used to describe the obedience which children should show their parents, which would also lie outside Luther's theology of righteousness.

4.1.7. Luther's translations of δίκαιος – summary

There may be some small overlap in the meanings of the words Luther uses to translate δίκαιος. However, the analysis above suggests that they all have a core meaning and that Luther chose from among them in a way which reflected his own theology of righteousness. The core meaning of *gerecht* and *rechtfertig* is 'righteous' according to this theology as outlined in Section 3, while the core meanings of *from*,

similar phrase 'des guttis' later in the verse to the unequivocally adjectival 'des guoten' (1527) and 'etwas gutes' (1530), he did not make corresponding changes to 'des rechts', so it seems likely that 'des rechts' should indeed be read as a noun phrase.

²⁸ The spelling 'rechtfertig' (without 't') is in the original.

²⁹ As Luther points out in his gloss to Romans 3: 10, there is an echo here of the Psalms, in the case of this verse an echo of Psalm 14: 1.

³⁰ Philippians 1: 7 and 2 Peter 1: 13. Luther otherwise used *billig* to translate words or phrases meaning '(to be/deem) fitting', e.g. Acts 15: 38 'Παῦλος δὲ ἡξίου . . .' 'Paulus aber achts billich . . . '.

recht, and *billig* lie outside it. Thus, *frum* can be read as referring to human goodness, *recht* to what is permitted or lawful, and *billig* to what is fitting or appropriate.

Luther's translation of the nouns δικαιοσύνη, δικαίωμα, and δικαίωσις

Of these three nouns, the first, δικαιοσύνη, is an abstract noun denoting the same state or attribute as δίκαιος; in first-century Greek authors its meanings include 'fairness' in a general sense, 'justice' in a juridical sense, and 'righteousness' in a religious sense; its usual Latin translation in Luther's time was *iustitia*. The other two nouns are derived from the same root as δικαιοσύνη; δικαίωμα has meanings which include 'regulation' in a juridical sense, 'commandment' or 'judgement' in a juridical or religious sense, and 'righteous deed' in a religious sense; its usual Latin translation was *iustificatio*; the main first-century meanings of δικαίωσις are 'vindication' or 'justification', principally in a religious sense.³¹ We first discuss δικαιοσύνη and then the pair δικαίωμα/δικαίωσις.

4.2. Luther's translations of δικαιοσύνη

The breakdown of Luther's translations of δικαιοσύνη in the *Septembertestament* is set out below.

Greek (Erasmus 1519)	German (Luther, September 1522)
δικαιοσύνη (N=89)	gerechtigkeit (N=83) recht (tun) (N=5) rechtfertigkeit (N=1)

As was the case with Luther's translations of δίκαιος, so here the distribution cannot be explained in terms of previous translations. Erasmus's Latin versions and the 1509 Vulgate have *iustitia* for δικαιοσύνη in almost all cases, with a handful of exceptions where *iustificatio* is used and one instance (in the 1509 Vulgate) where *aequitas* occurs.³² However, these do not correspond with Luther's departure from his default translation of *gerechtigkeit*. As for the previous German printed Bibles, in four of the five cases in which Luther translates δικαιοσύνη as *recht (tun)*, earlier German versions have *das recht*. However, this is a noun, whereas Luther uses *recht* as an adverb; furthermore, the earlier printed Bibles use *das recht* in four cases where Luther uses *gerechtigkeit*, so it seems unlikely that Luther was following those versions in his own choice of terms.

4.2.1. Contexts where Luther translates δικαιοσύνη as *gerechtigkeit*

The types of contexts in which Luther translates δικαιοσύνη as *gerechtigkeit* correspond largely to the types in which he translates δίκαιος as *gerecht*, namely contexts referring either to people or to God and Christ.³³ Here are two examples of each, respectively:

³¹ See fn 20; the *Lexicon Graecolatinum* cited there does not have an entry for δικαίωσις.

³² Acts 17: 31.

³³ Both the Greek -σύνη and the German -(ig)keit are suffixes commonly used to form abstract nouns from adjectives; see J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 2

- (30) Selig sind, die vmb gerechtickeyt willen verfolgt werden (Matthew 5: 10)
- (31) wyr müssen yhe sagen, das Abraham sey seyn glawbe zur gerechtickeyt gerechnet (Romans 4: 9)
- (32) Jsts aber also, das vnser vngerechtickeyt, gotis gerechtickeyt preysset, was wollen wyr sagen? (Romans 3: 5)
- (33) . . . ynn Christo Jhesu, wilcher vns gemacht ist von Got, zur weyßheyt, vnd zur gerechtickeyt, vnd zur heyligung, vnd zur erlosung (1 Corinthians 1: 30)

As with the translation of δίκαιος as *gerecht*, so here the contexts in which δικαιοσύνη is rendered by *gerechtigkeit* do not have to be interpreted in terms of Luther's theology of righteousness, but they can be. However, in one respect Luther's translations of δικαιοσύνη as *gerechtigkeit* are distinctive, and this is that he sometimes renders 'θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη' ('δικαιοσύνη of God') and similar expressions, not as 'gotis gerechtickeyt' (as he does in (32)), but in one of the following ways (underlined):

- (34) syntemal drynnen offinbart wirt die gerechtickeyt die fur got gilt, wilche kompt auß glawben ynn glawben (Romans 1: 17)
- (35) Denen, die mit vns gleychen glawben vbirkomen haben ynn der gerechtickeyt, die vnser Got gibt vnd der heyland Jhesus Christ . . . (2 Peter 1: 1)³⁴

In both cases Luther's makes 'God's righteousness' refer to a status in human beings rather than to an attribute of God. In (34) righteousness is a human attribute which is recognized as valid by God, while in (35) it is described as God-given.³⁵ In both these examples *gerechtigkeit* refers to righteousness according to Luther's theology; in fact, Luther's translation explicitly ensures that this is so.³⁶

(Edinburgh: Clark, 1929), p. 358; Walter Henzen, *Deutsche Wortbildung*, 3rd edn (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1965), pp. 188–90.

³⁴ In (35) the underlined German corresponds to 'ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ' ('in δικαιοσύνη of our God and of the saviour Jesus Christ').

³⁵ Example (34) is one of six cases where the Greek θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη (or a similar expression) is translated by *gerechtigkeit, die fur* (= 'vor') *got gilt* or *gerechtigkeit fur got*; (35) is the only example where the expression *gerechtigkeit geben* occurs.

³⁶ In the 1545 introduction to his Latin works, Luther explained the moment at which he understood *iustitia Dei* to be 'passive' rather than 'active'. By 'active righteousness', he meant '[iustitia], qua Deus est iustus, et peccatores iniustosque punit' ('[righteousness], by which God is just and punishes sinners and the unrighteous'), and by 'passive righteousness' he meant '[iustitia], qua nos Deus misericors iustificat per fidem' ('[righteousness], by which merciful God justifies us through faith' (WA 54, 185–6). Luther likens 'iustitia Dei' in this passive sense to expressions such as 'opus Dei' ('work of God') or 'salus Dei' ('salvation of God'), which refer to the work or salvation, respectively, brought about by God in mankind. It is in this way that translations such as (34) and (35) can be understood. However, as example (32) shows, Luther also translated 'θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη' simply as 'gotis gerechtickeyt'; and, as seen in (6), and (7) (Section 4.1.1.), Luther rendered δίκαιος when it was an epithet of God simply as *gerecht* (and not as *rechtfertigend* or *gerecht machend*). These translations suggest that, even if Luther did not consider God's righteousness as punitive (in the 'active' sense which he rejects in 1545), he did see righteousness as a divine attribute (as well as a God-given human status). This is in keeping with the excerpt from *De libertate christiana* in which he writes, 'Verum est enim et iustum, deum esse veracem et iustum, et hoc ei tribuere et confiteri, hoc est, esse veracem et iustum' (see Appendix for translation).

In two instances in which Luther translates δικαιοσύνη as *gerechtigkeit*, a form of works-righteousness is referred to, which would not count for Luther as true righteousness:

- (36) . . . nach der gerechtickeyt ym gesetz . . . vnstrefflich (‘ . . . according to the righteousness in the law, blameless’; Philippians 3: 6)
- (37) nicht . . . die gerechtickeyt, die aus dem gesetz, Bondern die durch den glawben Christi kompt, nemlich, die gerechtickeyt, die von Got kompt ym glawben (Philippians 3: 9)

In these examples (with the relevant part underlined in (37)), the context makes it clear that works-righteousness, not righteousness as Luther defines it, is being referred to.

The translations of δικαιοσύνη as *gerechtigkeit* can all be summarized by saying that, unless the context makes it explicit that works-righteousness is meant, *gerechtigkeit* refers to righteousness as a divine attribute (as in (32) and (33)) or to righteousness as a status in human beings recognized or given by God, in keeping with Luther’s theology of righteousness outlined in Section 3.

4.2.2. Contexts where Luther translates δικαιοσύνη as *recht (tun)*

There are five instances of δικαιοσύνη which Luther translates by a reformulation in which *recht* as an adverb qualifies *tun*. In each case δικαιοσύνη is the direct object of part of a verb meaning ‘to do’; one example is in (4) above, which is a translation of the following from Erasmus’s 1519 Greek version:³⁷

ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν (1 John 3: 7)

(the man doing righteousness is righteous)

Since, for Luther, righteousness is not something which human beings do, but a status which is recognized as valid by God, the avoidance of *gerechtigkeit* in this and the other four instances is in line with Luther’s theology of righteousness as distinct from that of his opponents.

4.2.3. One instance where Luther translates δικαιοσύνη as *rechtfertigkeit*

- (38) Wisset yhr nicht, wilchem yhr euch begeben zu knechten, ynn gehorsam, des knechte seyt yhr, dem yhr gehorsam seyt? es sey der sunde zum todt, odder dem gehorsam zur rechtfertickeyt. (Romans 6: 16)

The verse starts with the metaphor that a slave can serve only one master, and ends with a contrast between the sinful, who die, and the obedient, who are justified. Like examples (30)–(33), the verse can be read as being consistent both with Luther’s theology of righteousness and with traditional theology. It is consistent with Luther’s

³⁷ The others are in 1 John 2: 29 and 3: 10, Acts 10: 35, and James 1: 20.

if ‘sunde’ is taken to be the sin of irredeemable works-righteous people; accordingly, the contrast is between the sinful refusal to embrace a faith in Christ, leading to damnation, and an acceptance, which leads to righteousness. It is consistent with the traditional theology of righteousness if the contrast is interpreted as one between sin and good works in the traditional conception of righteousness. In any case, *rechtfertigkeit* appears to be a synonym of *gerechtigkeit* here, and this is supported by the fact that, from 1527 onwards, Luther replaced *rechtfertigkeit* in (38) by *gerechtigkeit*.

4.2.4. Luther’s translations of δικαιοσύνη – summary

According to the analysis above, Luther translated δικαιοσύνη by *gerechtigkeit* or *rechtfertigkeit* to refer to righteousness in a Lutheran sense (either as a divine attribute or as a status in human beings) or, if the context makes this explicit, to work-righteousness. However, when δικαιοσύνη is the object of a verb of doing, Luther translated it by *recht* (*tun*), in keeping with his stated belief that righteousness is not a function of human actions.

4.3. Luther’s translations of δικαίωμα and δικαίωσις

There are ten instances of δικαίωμα in Erasmus 1519 and one of δικαίωσις. The translations in the *Septembertestament* are shown below.

Greek (Erasmus 1519)	German (Luther, September 1522)
δικαίωμα (N=10)	rechtfertigung (N=4) rechtfertigkeit (N=2) gerechtigkeit (N=2) recht (N=1) satzung (N=1)
δικαίωσις (N=1)	rechtfertigung (N=1)

Starting with δικαίωμα, it is striking that, in all but two instances, Luther avoids using the translation *gerechtigkeit*. He thus follows Erasmus’s Greek version in the sense that the lexical distinction between δικαιοσύνη on the one hand and δικαίωμα on the other is largely mirrored by the use of *gerechtigkeit* and *rechtfertigung/rechtfertigkeit*, respectively. We consider the base *rechtfertig-* with one or other of these suffixes as Luther’s default translation of δικαίωμα.

Among the translations of δικαίωμα (rather than between them and those of δικαιοσύνη) the pattern in the *Septembertestament* cannot be explained by that in previous translations. Erasmus’s Latin translations render δικαίωμα as *iustificatio* except for one translation with *iustitia* and one with *iudicium*;³⁸ the 1509 Vulgate has *iustificatio* five times, *iustitia* four times, and *iudicium* once;³⁹ and the earlier German

³⁸ Romans 1: 32 and Revelation 15: 4, respectively.

³⁹ *iustificatio* in Luke 1:6, Romans 5: 16 and 8: 4, Hebrews 9: 1, and Revelation 19: 8; *iustitia* in Romans 1: 32, 2: 26, 5: 18 and Hebrews 9: 10; and *iudicium* in Revelation 15: 4.

Bible editions have *gerechtigkeit* in every instance except for one of *urteil*.⁴⁰ However, there is no apparent correspondence between the variation in these previous translations and that in the *Septembertestament*.

4.3.1. Contexts where Luther translates δικαίωμα as *rechtfertigung*

Nouns formed with the suffix *-ung*, such as *rechtfertigung*, are typically derived from verbs to denote the action of that verb or the result of that action.⁴¹ As will be shown, the use of *rechtfertigung* in the *Septembertestament* is in line with this broad semantic type.

In all four instances where Luther translates δικαίωμα as *rechtfertigung*, the Greek noun is plural. In three, δικαίωμα refers to divine ordinances or judgements:

- (39) Es hatte zwar auch das erste seyne rechtfertigung des Gotis diensts vnd eußerliche heyligkeyt (Hebrews 9: 1)
- (40) mit speyse vnnnd tranck, vnd mancherley tauffen, vnd fleyschlicher rechtfertigung, die bis auff die zeyt der besserung sind auffgelegt (Hebrews 9: 10)
- (41) denn alle heyden werden komen, vnd anbeten fur dyr, denn deyne rechtfertigung(e) sind offinbar worden (Revelation 15: 4)

As Luther points out in glosses to Hebrews 9, the references in (39) and (40) are to God's ordinances to Moses in Exodus 40: 'seine rechtfertigung' in (39) can therefore be read as plural (with apocope of the final *-e*), while the semantic plurality of 'rechtfertigung' in (40) is signalled by 'mancherley' ('a number of', 'various'). In (41), the context indicates that divine judgements (part of the Last Judgement) are being referred to, and 'rechtfertigung(e)' has a plural inflection. Given that in these three cases δικαίωμα appears to refer to divine judgements, a meaning of 'justification' according to Luther's theology seems to be excluded. Consistently with this interpretation, in his translations from 1530 onwards, Luther replaced 'rechtfertigung(e)' in each of these cases (with 'rechte', 'heiligkeit', and 'urteil', respectively).

The other instance where Luther translates δικαίωμα (or rather, δικαιώματα in the plural) as *rechtfertigung* in the *Septembertestament* is:

- (42) vnd es ward yhr geben, sich antzu thun mit reyner vnd heller seyden, die seyde aber ist die rechtfertigung der heyligen (Revelation 19: 8)

Luther translates this with the singular 'rechtfertigung'. It is possible to read δικαίωμα here to refer to justification in a Lutheran sense given that it refers to the status of

⁴⁰ This is in Revelation 15: 4, where Luther himself later changed *rechtfertigung* to *urteil*, as described below (example (41)).

⁴¹ These types are often referred to as *nomina actionis* and *nomina acti*, respectively; see Henzen, *Deutsche Wortbildung*, pp. 179–182. The semantic function of the *-ung* suffix is thus close to that of the *-μα* suffix in Greek, which was to form a noun denoting the object or result of an action; see Pierre Chantraine, *La formation des noms en grec ancien* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1979), p. 182.

saints, who are by definition justified.⁴² The plural δικαιώματα would then be distributive, meaning ‘one justification per saint’. From his 1530 translation onwards Luther replaced *rechtfertigung* with *gerechtigkeit*, which has the effect of stressing the righteous status of the saints rather than their justification.

4.3.2. Contexts where Luther translates δικαιώμα as *rechtfertigkeit* and *gerechtigkeit*

The translations of δικαιώμα as *rechtfertigkeit* and *gerechtigkeit* are discussed together in this section because both words, ending as they do in *-keit*, would typically refer to states, rather than transitions⁴³ and because, from 1530 onwards, Luther replaced the two instances of *rechtfertigkeit* in the *Septembertestament* with *gerechtigkeit*. First the two cases of *rechtfertigkeit*:

- (43) Denn das vrteyl ist komen aus eyner sund zur verdammis, die gabe aber aus vielen sunden zur rechtfertickeit (Romans 5: 16)
- (44) Wie nu durch eynes sund die verdammis vber alle menschen komen ist, also ist auch durch eynes rechfertickeyt die rechtfertigung des lebens vber alle menschen komen (Romans 5: 18)⁴⁴

Given its context and content, (43) appears to refer to justification (whether according to Luther’s theology or that of his opponents), but it is not immediately clear why he opted for the stative noun *rechtfertigkeit* in (43) as opposed to *rechtfertigung*, which can have a transitional sense, given that this verse does appear to refer to justification and not righteousness. However, Erasmus’s Greek reads ‘εἰς δικαιώμα’, and Luther may have felt that ‘into/for righteousness’ and ‘into/for justification’ amount to the same thing in context, given that the former denotes a transition into a state and the latter a transition into that transition.

In (44), *rechtfertigkeit* occurs in the same clause as *rechtfertigung*, and Luther’s choice of these two words appears to be motivated by the need for two near synonyms to match Erasmus’s Greek, which uses both δικαιώμα and δικαίωσις as follows (corresponding to the words underlined in (44)):

δι’ ἐνὸς δικαιώματος . . . εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς
(through the *δικαίωμα* of one . . . for the *δικαίωσις* of life’)

In this verse, δικαιώμα is said of Christ and δικαίωσις is said of human beings, so that the context is easy to fit into Luther’s theology of righteousness: people’s lives are justified by the righteousness of Christ.⁴⁵

⁴² See Luther’s Lectures on Romans 1515/1516: ‘Sancti Intrinsece sunt peccatores semper, ideo extrinsece Iustificantur semper’ (‘Saints are inwardly always sinners and therefore outwardly always justified’) (WA 56, 268).

⁴³ See reference to Henzen, *Deutsche Wortbildung* in fn 33.

⁴⁴ The spellings ‘rechfertickeyt’ and ‘rechtfertigung’ (without ‘t’) are in the original.

⁴⁵ The suffix -σις, as in δικαίωσις, typically serves to form a word denoting the action of a corresponding verb; see Chantraine, *La formation des noms*, p. 286.

The two instances where δικαίωμα is translated by *gerechtigkeit* in the *Septembertestament* are:

- (45) . . . die gottis gerechtickeyt wissen (Romans 1: 32)
- (46) auff das die gerechtickeyt vom gesetz erfodert, ynn vns erfullet wurde (Romans 8: 4)

In (45), God's righteousness is referred to. The fact that His righteousness must be an eternal state might explain the use of *gerechtigkeit* here, rather than *rechtfertigung*, which denotes an action or the result of an action. While *gerechtigkeit* and *rechtfertigung* may have been synonyms, or near-synonyms, for righteousness, the choice of *gerechtigkeit* in this instance is in keeping with Luther's complete avoidance of *rechtfertig* and its derivatives in reference to God the Father (even though, as in (44), they are sometimes used of Christ).

In (46) the context is again compatible with Luther's theology of righteousness because it refers to Christ fulfilling, for human beings, the righteousness demanded by the law (but which cannot be fulfilled by the law itself). By using *rechtfertigung* Luther does not capture the sense of action or result underlying δικαίωμα. However, Luther may have considered the fulfilment of justification and the fulfilment of righteousness in human beings to be all but equivalent, in the same way that it was suggested above that a transition into justification and a transition into righteousness in (43) are close to being equivalent.

Judging from their contexts, Luther therefore used both *rechtfertigung* and *gerechtigkeit* to refer to righteousness according to his own conception of the term. It is plausible to consider them synonyms to this extent, although with only *gerechtigkeit* used of God the Father.

From 1530 onwards, Luther replaced *rechtfertigung* with *gerechtigkeit* in (43) and (44). In the one instance, in (44), where δικαίωσις was translated as *rechtfertigung* in the *Septembertestament*, this translation was kept in Luther's later revisions, even though in the four instances in which *rechtfertigung* was used to translate δικαίωμα in (39)–(42), it was replaced. A plausible reason for the retention of *rechtfertigung* in (44) is that two different words for righteousness/justification were needed in the same clause to match two different words in the Greek.

4.3.3. Two contexts where Luther translates δικαίωμα as *recht* and *satzung*

These contexts are:

- (47) Sie waren aber alle beyde frum fur gott, vnd giengen ynn allen gepotten vnnd satzungen des herrn vnthadelich (Luke 1: 6)
- (48) so nu die vorhaut des gesetzs recht helt, meynstu nicht, das seyne vorhaut werde fur eyn beschneyttung gerechnet werden? (Romans 2: 26)

In (47) the Greek has the plural of δικαίωμα, referring to laws, and (48) is about obeying ('helt') the law, which would be outside Luther's conception of

righteousness. This is likely to explain Luther's avoidance of any of the terms he uses elsewhere for righteousness or justification.

4.3.4. The (single) translation of δικαίωσις as *rechtfertigung*

This is discussed by reference to example (44) above. The use of *rechtfertigung* and its retention in later revisions appear to be motivated by the need to have two different German synonyms to match those in Greek.

4.3.5. Luther's translations of δικαίωμα and δικαίωσις – summary

Luther's translations of δικαίωμα and δικαίωσις in the *Septembertestament* show that he used *rechtfertigung* to refer both to justification according to his theology (42) and, in three instances ((39)–(41)), to divine ordinances or judgements which would be outside his conception of righteousness. In (42), *rechtfertigung* (in reference to saints) was changed to *gerechtigkeit*, while in (39)–(41) it was replaced by words which avoided any associations with righteousness, joining two instances in which δικαίωμα had, in the *Septembertestament*, already been translated by *recht* or *satzung*. *Rechtfertigkeit* is used twice in the *Septembertestament*, alongside *gerechtigkeit*, to refer to a state of righteousness in a Lutheran sense, but these two instances are later revised to *gerechtigkeit*, suggesting that Luther considered them synonyms.

4.4. Translation of the nouns δικαιοσύνη, δικαίωμα, and δικαίωσις – overall summary

The table below summarizes the translations of these three Greek nouns in the *Septembertestament* and, for comparison, in Luther's 1530 version of the New Testament.

Greek (Erasmus 1519)	German (Luther, September 1522)	German (Luther, 1530)
δικαιοσύνη (N=89)	gerechtigkeit (N=83) recht (tun) (N=5) rechtfertigkeit (N=1)	gerechtigkeit (N=84) recht (tun) (N=5)
δικαίωμα (N=10)	rechtfertigung (N=4) rechtfertigkeit (N=2) gerechtigkeit (N=2) recht (N=1) satzung (N=1)	gerechtigkeit (N=5) recht (N=2) satzung (N=1) heiligkeit (N=1) urteil (N=1)
δικαίωσις (N=1)	rechtfertigung (N=1)	rechtfertigung (N=1)

Our main findings on the translation of these three nouns are as follows. First, while in the *Septembertestament* the two Greek terms δικαιοσύνη and δικαίωμα had two different default translations, namely *gerechtigkeit* and *rechtfertigung/rechtfertigkeit*, respectively, this pattern was broken down in 1530, and *gerechtigkeit* was the favoured translation for both Greek nouns. Secondly, wherever *gerechtigkeit* occurred, it referred to righteousness according to Luther's theology of righteousness

or to works-righteousness when this was made explicit in context. Thirdly, Luther used other translations (*recht tun*, *recht*, *satzung*) in contexts which did not allow a reading according to Luther's theology of righteousness (and where the reference to works-righteousness was not explicit in context). Fourthly, in the *Septembertestament* Luther used *rechtfertigung* to refer both to righteousness within his own theology and (when the Greek was plural) to ordinances and judgements which lay outside it; however, from 1530 onwards Luther kept one instance of *rechtfertigung* to refer to justification within his own theology, and he replaced it in other senses with *recht*, *heiligkeit*, and *urteil*, so that, from this date onwards, there was a clear lexical separation between words denoting righteousness (according to Luther's theology) and words denoting concepts which lay outside it.

4.5. Luther's translations of the verb δικαιόω

The verb δικαιόω is used in first-century Greek authors to mean 'set right' or 'deem right' in a general sense, 'do justice to', 'treat according to the law' (and accordingly 'punish', 'vindicate', or 'acquit') in a juridical sense, and 'justify' in a religious sense; the usual Latin translation at the time was *iustifico*.⁴⁶ In the table below the Greek forms of the verb (which include finite forms as well as participles and infinitives) are separated by voice, in the categories active, reflexive, and passive.⁴⁷ Before dealing with each voice in turn, it is worth noting that all but one of the translations in the *Septembertestament* are based on *rechtfertig* or a derivative.

Greek (Erasmus 1519)	German (Luther, September 1522)
<i>Breakdown by voice of Greek verb</i>	
Active (N=8)	rechtfertigen (N=7) recht geben (N=1)
Reflexive (N=2)	sich rechtfertigen (N=2)
Passive (N=30)	gerechtfertigt (+ werden/sein) (N=15) rechtfertig (+ werden/sein) (N=12) sich rechtfertigen (N=3)

4.5.1. Translations of active forms of δικαιόω

The separation between *rechtfertigen* and *recht geben* has no precedent in Erasmus's Greek and Latin versions, the 1509 Vulgate, or earlier German printed Bibles. Erasmus's Latin versions and the 1509 Vulgate have forms of *iustifico* in every case,

⁴⁶ See fn 20. The verb δικαιόω has an -ο- stem suffix, which is typically used to form verbs with a factitive/causative sense, e.g. 'I make someone/something x', 'I cause someone/something to be x', where x is the adjective from which the verb is derived – in this instance δίκαιος.

⁴⁷ In some Greek tenses the passive form can have a middle as well as a passive sense and is called a 'medio-passive', while in other tenses there are separate forms for the passive and middle voice. The middle voice is used in Greek to express a situation affecting or benefiting the subject, and includes reflexive and, with plural subjects, reciprocal senses. The medio-passive tenses of δικαιόω found in the New Testament are the present and perfect, and those with separate passive forms are the aorist and future. There is no reason to interpret the medio-passive forms as middle, so (in line with all translations we know) we read them as passive.

while the earlier German versions use *gerecht machen* (N=5) or *(ge)rechtfertigen* (N=3)⁴⁸ for these eight instances in the active voice.

Wherever *rechtfertigen* is used in the active, the context relates to divine justification in a way which is consistent with Luther's theology of righteousness (and also with the theology of his opponents). All seven instances come from Romans or Galatians; here are three examples (two in (49)):⁴⁹

- (49) wilche er aber beruffen hat, die hat er auch rechtfertiget, wilche er aber hat rechtfertiget, die hat er auch herlich gemacht (Romans 8: 30)
- (50) Die schrifft aber, hats zuuor ersehen, das Got, die heyden durch den glawben rechtfertiget . . . (Galatians 3: 8)

The one example with *recht geben* is as follows:

- (51) Vnd alles volck, das yhn horet vnd die zollner, gaben gott recht, vnd ließen sich tauffen mitt der tauffe Johannis (Luke 7: 29)

In (51) the Greek might be translated as 'acknowledged as righteous',⁵⁰ but the verb cannot refer to divine justification because the people are the subject and God is the object. Luther thus makes a separation, at a lexical level, between what would be considered (within both his own theology and that of his opponents) as divine justification and what would not.

From 1530 Luther replaced every instance of active forms of *rechtfertigen* with *gerecht machen*, a verb phrase which had also occurred in earlier German printed Bibles;⁵¹ however, Luther did not change *recht geben* in Luke 7: 29 in his later translations. In other words, the distinction between divine justification, on the one hand, and a human acknowledgement of divine righteousness, on the other, was preserved in Luther's later translations, but with a change of verb phrase for the former.

4.5.2. Translations of reflexive forms of δικαιώω

There are two examples of this, both translated by a reflexive verb in the *Septembertestament*:

- (52) Er aber wollt sich selb rechtfertigen vnd sprach zu Jhesu, wer ist denn meyn nehister? (Luke 10: 29)
- (53) er sprach zu yhnen, yhr seyts, die yhr euch selbs rechtfertiget fur den menschen (Luke 16: 15)⁵²

⁴⁸ In these earlier German editions the active form of the verb is found both with and without a *ge*-prefix.

⁴⁹ The others are at Romans 3: 26, 3: 30, 4: 5, and 8: 33.

⁵⁰ The verb form in Erasmus 1519 is 'ἐδικαίωσαν'.

⁵¹ The earlier German Bibles had this expression in five of the seven contexts where Luther had active forms of *rechtfertigen* in the *Septembertestament*.

⁵² This instance of 'rechtfertiget' is spelt with a medial 's' in the *Septembertestament*.

In both cases the context relates to attempts by human beings to defend themselves in a worldly sense, and clearly lies outside both Luther's theology of justification and that of his opponents. Erasmus's Greek and Latin versions, the 1509 Vulgate, and earlier German editions all have reflexive forms (with *sich gerecht machen* the form used in German). Luther retained *sich rechtfertigen* in all his subsequent revisions.

4.5.3. Translations of passive forms of δικαιώω in the *Septembertestament*

The translations of passive forms of δικαιώω in the *Septembertestament* present a more complex pattern, as can be seen from the table at the beginning of Section 4.5. This pattern cannot be explained as an imitation of previous translations: Erasmus's Greek and Latin versions have passive forms of δικαιώω and *iustifico*, respectively, in all instances with one exception in the Latin, where a periphrastic construction is used,⁵³ while the earlier German Bible editions vary between passive forms of *(ge)rechtfertigen* and forms of the verb phrase *gerecht machen*, but with a different distribution from that in Luther.

Most of the instances of *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) and of *rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*) refer to divine justification, specifically according to Luther's theology of justification, e.g.

- (54) So halten wyrs nu, das der mensch gerechtfertiget werde, on zu thun der werck des gesetzs, alleyn durch den glawben (Romans 3: 28)

In certain cases, works-righteousness is referred to using one of these verb phrases, but in contexts which make it clear that this would lie outside Luther's theology of justification, e.g.

- (55) Darumb wirt durch die werck des gesetzs keyn fleysch gerechtfertiget (Galatians 2: 16)
- (56) Syntemal fur got nicht die das gesetz horen, gerecht sind, sondern die das gesetz thun werden rechtfertige seyn (Romans 2: 13)

In (55), the negation explicitly rejects works-righteousness, while (56) comes from a passage in Romans in which St Paul is rehearsing the arguments of the Jews, which he later goes on to reject with his own theology of justification.⁵⁴

There is one context in which *gerechtfertigt/rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*) is used (twice) to refer to works-righteousness without such a negation, directly at odds with Luther's theology of righteousness:

- (57) Szo sehet yhr nu, das der mensch durch die werck rechtfertig wirt, nicht durch den glawben alleyn, Desselben gleychen die hure Rahab, ist sie nicht durch

⁵³ The exception is at Romans 2: 13, where Erasmus's Greek versions have a passive form of δικαιώω ('δικαιωθήσονται', the future passive indicative), but the Latin versions have the periphrastic construction 'iusti habebuntur' ('will be held/considered righteous').

⁵⁴ For modern commentary on this verse along such lines, see, for example, Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation and Introduction and Commentary* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993), p. 308, and Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 147–8.

die werck rechtfertiget, da sie die boten auff nahm, vnd lies sie eynen andern weg hynaus? (James 2: 24–5)

However, Luther makes clear in the preface to this book in the *Septembertestament* that he does not consider the Epistle of James to be the writing of an apostle, and he rejects its teachings about justification precisely because it flatly contradicts the teaching of Paul.⁵⁵

There are two occasions on which the passive of δικαιόω is translated by *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) and where it is doubtful that righteousness is being referred to in the sense outlined in Section 3, but where Luther does not explicitly distance himself as he does in the Preface to James:

(58) Aus deynen wortten wirstu gerechtfertiget werden vnnd aus deynen wortten wirstu verdampt werdenn (Matthew 12: 37)

(59) Denn wer gestorben ist, der ist gerechtfertiget von den sunden (Romans 6: 7)

In (58) the reference is to the vindication or condemnation of a person's words at the Last Judgement. We do not read this as a situation included in Luther's theology of justification, which comes about by faith alone (and not by words or deeds). However, while Luther did not systematically reconcile his theology of justification with the Last Judgement, scholars have attempted to,⁵⁶ and if these attempts are regarded as successful, (58) might lie within Luther's theology.⁵⁷ As for (59), it appears to refer to the liberation from sin which occurs after death, rather than to the justification by faith in life which Luther's theology of righteousness requires. Modern commentators generally do not interpret this verse as referring to justification by faith in a Pauline (or implicitly in a Lutheran) sense,⁵⁸ which would again suggest that this context lies outside Luther's theology of justification.

The examples reviewed so far indicate that, when Luther was translating passive forms of δικαιόω, he used *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) and *rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*) to refer to divine justification, both within his own definition of righteousness and outside it.

As for the distribution between these similar formulations, *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) and *rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*), they appear to be used interchangeably. This is illustrated in example (57), and here are further examples:

(60) doch weyl wyr wissenn, das der mensch durch die werck des gesetzs, nicht rechtfertig wirt, sondern durch den glawben an Jhesu Christ, so haben wir

⁵⁵ 'Aber, das ich meyn meynung drauff stelle, doch on ydermans nachteyl, acht ich sie fur keyns Apostel schrifft, vnnd ist das meyn vrsach. Auffß erst, das sie stracks widder Sanct Paulon vnnd alle ander schrifft, den wercken die rechtfertigung gibt . . . ' (WAB 7, 385).

⁵⁶ e.g. Albrecht Peters, (1962) *Glaube und Werk: Luthers Rechtfertigungslehre im Lichte der heiligen Schrift* (Berlin/Hamburg: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1962); Berndt Hamm, 'Was ist reformatorische Rechtfertigungslehre?', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 83(1) (1986), 1–38, esp. 20–2.

⁵⁷ However, the argument that judgements such as these lie outside Luther's theology of righteousness is supported by the change made to example (41), where *rechtfertigung* was replaced from 1530 with *urteil*.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Fitzmyer, *Romans*, pp. 436–07, Moo, *Romans*, pp. 376–07.

auch an Jhesum Christ gglewbet, auff das wyr gerechtfertiget werden, durch den glawben an Jhesu Christ, vnd nicht durch die werck des gesetzs. Darumb wirt durch die werck des gesetzs keyn fleysch gerechtfertiget. Solten wyr aber, die da suchen durch Christum rechtfertig zu werden, auch noch selbs sunder erfunden werdenn, so hetten wyr von Christo Glosse ansehen nicht mehr denn sunde (Galatians 2: 16–17)

As the underlinings show, *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden*) and *rechtfertig* (+ *werden*) are each used here (twice) to refer to divine justification. It is worth noting that Luther is fully prepared to use an active verb phrase, *rechtfertig* (+ *werden*), to translate a passive Greek verb form.

In three contexts, the passive of δικαιώω is translated by the reflexive *sich rechtfertigen* in the *Septembertestament*. One of these was seen in (29), in which *sich rechtfertigen* is one of a series of reflexive verbs in an extended *figura etymologica*. We come back to this example in Section 4.5.4. when analysing Luther's later revisions. The other two examples of Luther's use of the German reflexive for a Greek passive are as follows:

- (61) die weyßheyt mus sich rechtfertigen lassen von yhren kyndern (Matthew 11: 19)
- (62) die weyßheyt mus sich rechtfertigen lassen von allen yhren kindern (Luke 7: 35)⁵⁹

In their contexts, these near-identical verses appear to mean that divine wisdom is proved right or vindicated by looking at who its followers are,⁶⁰ and therefore do not seem to relate to divine justification in the sense of Luther's (or, for that matter, of his opponents') theology.

Before looking at the extensive revisions made by Luther to his translations of passive forms of δικαιώω, let us highlight certain points about their translation in the *Septembertestament*. First, while *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) and *rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*) occur only in contexts relating to divine justification, these contexts are not confined to justification according to Luther's theology: a number are contexts relating explicitly to works-righteousness (e.g. (55)–(56)) or to aspects of justification which would otherwise lie outside Luther's theology as set out in Section 3 ((58)–(59)). Second, *rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*) is used interchangeably with *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) in translations of the Greek passive, showing that Luther was prepared to use active verb phrases of human beings even though, in his theology, they are passive in this process.

4.5.4. Revisions in the translation of passive forms of δικαιώω after the *Septembertestament*

⁵⁹ The German present tense in these two examples corresponds to a Greek aorist 'ἐδικαιώθη', which Luther appears to have read as gnomic, that is, one which conveys a universal truth; see Buist Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 265–9.

⁶⁰ See, for example, D. A. Carson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew Chapters 1 through 12* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), pp. 270–01; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 434–5.

The revisions Luther made to these translations are summarized in the table below.

Luther, September 1522	Luther, 1530
gerechtfertigt (+ werden/sein) (N=15)	gerecht (+ werden/sein) (N=22)
rechtfertig (+ werden/sein) (N=12)	gerechtfertigt (+ werden/sein) (N=5)
sich rechtfertigen (N=3)	sich rechtfertigen (N=2)
	frum (+ sein) (N=1)

The most widespread change reflected in the table is that *gerecht* (+ *werden/sein*), which was not used in the *Septembertestament*, replaces all twelve instances of *rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*) and ten of the fifteen instances of *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*). These changes occur at the same time as the wholesale replacement of *rechtfertigen* by *gerecht machen*, described in Section 4.5.1. The changes cannot be explained by the distribution of forms in earlier translations: as mentioned in that section, the Latin uses passive forms of *iustifico* throughout; as for earlier German editions, the mixture between passive forms of (*ge*)*rechtfertigen* and *gerecht* (+ *werden/sein*) does not correspond to the choice which Luther makes between *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) and *gerecht* (+ *werden/sein*).

All the instances of *gerecht* (+ *werden/sein*) in Luther's revisions are in contexts which refer to divine justification, but not just under a Lutheran definition, because some refer to works-righteousness (for example, those in the Epistle of James in (57)). The five instances of *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) which were retained in Luther's revisions include (58) and (59), where the sense appears to lie outside Luther's theology of righteousness. The three other instances where *gerechtfertigt* was retained are:

- (63) ich sage euch, diser gieng hynab gerechtfertiget ynn seyn haus (Luke 18: 14)
- (64) Jch byn wol nichts myr bewust, aber daryn byn ich nicht gerechtfertiget, der herr ists aber der mich richtet (1 Corinthians 4: 4)
- (65) Vnd kundlich groß ist das gotselige geheymnis, wilchs da ist offinbart ym fleysch, gerechtfertigt ym geyst, erschynen den Engeln, gepredigt den heyden, geglewbt von der welt, auffgenommen ynn die herlickeyt (1 Timothy 3: 16)

The reference in (63) is to a publican in a parable who is justified after he has pleaded to God for mercy and acknowledged his sins, in (64) the words are those of St Paul, and in (65) the reference is to Christ. In each case the context is consistent with Luther's theology of righteousness, but Luther did not switch from *gerechtfertigt* to *gerecht*. There may be a linguistic reason for this: *gerecht* on its own, meaning 'righteous', would not have captured the sense of justification conveyed by the passives in Greek, and Luther would have had to use a periphrasis such as *gerecht gemacht* to reproduce this in German. Although *gerecht gemacht* does occur in earlier German printed Bibles, Luther may have avoided it for stylistic reasons: in (65), for example, the sequence of single-word participles ('offinbart', 'gerechtfertigt', 'erschynen', 'gepredigt', 'geglewbt', 'auffgenommen') would have been broken up by using 'gerecht gemacht' instead of 'gerechtfertiget'. In any case, these three examples show that Luther was prepared to continue using *gerechtfertigt* for divine justification

according to his own theology of righteousness. Therefore, even following his revisions, there is no clean theological distinction in Lutheran terms underlying the distribution between *gerecht* (+ *werden/sein*) and *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*).

Two of the three instances where a passive form of *δικαίωω* is translated by the reflexive *sich rechtfertigen* in the *Septembertestament* are retained in Luther's revisions; these are (61) and (62), in contexts which lie outside Luther's theology of righteousness. The third instance of *sich rechtfertigen* in the *Septembertestament* is quoted in example (29). The full verse in Erasmus's 1519 Greek version and its translation in the *Septembertestament* are as follows:

ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικησάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ ῥυπαρὸς ῥυπωσάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος
δικαιωθήτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἁγιασθήτω ἔτι

Wer beleydiget, der beleydige weytter, vnd wer besudelt ist, der besuddell sich
weytter, vnd wer rechtfertig ist, der rechtfertige sich weyter, vnd wer heylig
ist, der heylige sich weyter (Revelation 22: 11)

Commentaries on this Greek verse show that it has been variously interpreted, but a widespread reading is that the time for change is over, and that each person's status has now been decided once and for all.⁶¹ In this vein 'δικαιωθήτω ἔτι' may be read as 'let him be considered righteous still'; this would be within Luther's theology, according to which righteousness is not altered by deeds.⁶² The choice of *rechtfertig* and *sich rechtfertigen* in the *Septembertestament* could simply have been motivated by a desire for *figurae etymologicae* in German to match those of the Greek. Thus in the Greek version there are pairs of adjectives and aorist imperatives in which each pair has the same lexical base, and in the German there are pairs of adjectives and reflexive verbs, with each pair likewise having the same lexical base.

In his 1530 translation, Luther revised this verse to the following:

Wer böse ist, der sey böse, und wer unrein ist, der sey unrein. Aber wer frum
ist, der werde noch frümer, und wer heilig ist, der werde noch heiliger

In making this revision, Luther replaced the adjective-verb pairs of the *Septembertestament* with adjective-adjective pairs, and in the second part of the verse he rendered the positive adjectives of the original (*δίκαιος* and *ἅγιος*) with the comparatives 'frümer' and 'heiliger'. The change from 'rechtfertig . . . sich rechtfertige' to 'frum . . . frümer' thus provided Luther with another type of *figura etymologica*. It also allowed him to avoid both the adjective *rechtfertig*, which was dropped everywhere else in his translations from 1530 onwards, and *sich rechtfertigen*, which was otherwise used only in contexts which were outside his concept of divine justification. The effect of this revision was that, in a context in which the original apparently referred to righteousness, Luther now used the word

⁶¹ See, for example, David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22* (2017; electronic resource consulted on 20 July 2018), and Craig Keener, *Revelation* (2009; electronic resource consulted on 20 July 2018).

⁶² See section 4.5.3. on the difficulty of reconciling Luther's theology of righteousness with the Last Judgement.

frum, whose central meaning in Luther's New Testament translation was, as summarized in Section 4.1.7., human goodness as distinct from righteousness.⁶³

4.5.5. Luther's translations of the verb δικαιόω – summary

The most striking aspect of the evidence presented is that almost all verb phrases with the base *rechtfertig* were replaced from 1530 onwards by verb phrases with the base *gerecht*. This broke up the close correspondence that existed in the *Septembertestament* between forms of δικαιόω in Greek and verbs deriving from *rechtfertig* in German. All of the new forms with *gerecht* were used in contexts which refer to divine justification. They include a number of contexts in which there is a place for works, which would lie outside Luther's theology of righteousness, but in such cases this was made explicit (either in the Biblical context itself or, in the Epistle of St James, in Luther's preface). Of the five instances of *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) which were retained from 1530, three refer to divine justification (according to Luther's theology) and two apparently do not. We conclude that, even after his revisions, the *gerecht/rechtfertig* distinction did not correlate cleanly with a Lutheran/non-Lutheran view of justification.⁶⁴

The introduction of the phrase *gerecht* (+ *werden/sein*) to refer to people being justified does not mean that Luther systematically replaced a passive verb phrase with an active one because, in twelve instances, *gerecht* (+ *werden/sein*) replaced the equally active *rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*) in the *Septembertestament*.

The reflexive *sich rechtfertigen* was used in the *Septembertestament* largely in contexts which are outside any theology of righteousness, and from 1530 onwards exclusively so.

4.6. Recap of the evidence so far

Summaries of the findings so far can be found in Sections 4.1.7., 4.4., and 4.5.5. Taking these together, the following broad conclusions can be drawn about Luther's word choice in the *Septembertestament*. For each term in the Greek original Luther had a default translation which he used to refer to both (i) righteousness/justification according to his own theology and (ii) works-righteous when this was made explicit in context. However, Luther departed from the default translation in cases which were not consistent with his theology and where this was not spelt out in context, with the effect that he signalled his own theology of righteousness by his lexical choice. This meant, uncontroversially, that cases which would not be included in any theology of righteousness were lexically distinguished from those that would be. For example, Luther used *recht geben*, not *rechtfertigen*, to refer to the attitude of human beings towards God, rather than vice versa, which would not be captured in any theology of

⁶³ Note that Luther made a further change to this verse from 1540, in that he replaced 'frum . . . werde noch frümer' with 'frum . . . sey jmer hin frum', thus continuing to avoid *rechtfertig* and its derivatives.

⁶⁴ The five instances of *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) retained from 1530 are (58) and (59), which we have interpreted as lying outside Luther's theology of righteousness, and (63), (64), and (65), which are clearly within it. However, even if we read (58) and (59) as being within Luther's theology of righteousness, there is still not a clean correlation between word choice and theology, because in this case *gerecht* (+ *werden/sein*) and *gerechtfertigt* (+ *werden/sein*) would both be used for justification within Luther's theology.

righteousness; and he used the reflexive *sich rechtfertigen* to translate Greek passives in the sense of ‘to be proved’ (examples (61)–(62)) – again, this sense would lie outside any theology of righteousness. However, Luther also made translation choices which signalled differences between his theology and that of his opponents. Examples include the use of *frum* for δίκαιος to refer to human goodness and the use of *recht* for δίκαιος and *recht (tun)* for δικαιοσύνη to refer to permitted or lawful conduct. Two (likely) exceptions to these overall patterns are found in the translation of passive verbs: for the most part, *rechtfertig*-based translations in the *Septembertestament* refer to justification within Luther’s theology, but, in examples (58) and (59), this is apparently not the case.

Turning to Luther’s revisions, the most sweeping change is the replacement of translations based on *rechtfertig* and its derivatives by those based on *gerecht* and its derivatives. As seen in the table below, the number of *gerecht*-based translations of each underlying Greek word rose and the number of *rechtfertig*-based translations fell, taking the overall ratio between them from 138:51 in the *Septembertestament* to 173:10 in Luther’s translation of 1530.

Erasmus 1519	Luther, 1522		Luther, 1530	
	<i>gerecht</i> -	<i>rechtfertig</i> -	<i>gerecht</i> -	<i>rechtfertig</i> -
δίκαιος	53	4	55	0
δικαιοσύνη	83	1	84	0
δικαίωμα/δικαίωσις	2	7	5	1
δικαιόω	0	39	29	9
Total	138	51	173	10

In making these lexical changes, Luther strengthened some theologically based distinctions. Thus, *rechtfertig* was used four times in the *Septembertestament* apparently as a synonym of *gerecht* in the translation of δίκαιος; these four cases were revised to *gerecht* from 1530 onwards. And *rechtfertigung* for δικαίωμα/δικαίωσις was used in the *Septembertestament* to refer both to justification according to Luther’s theology and (in the plural) to the sort of laws and ordinances which would have been excluded from Luther’s theology of justification but included in his opponents’. From 1530 onwards it was used only to refer to justification in the former sense.

However, as the table shows, the switch from *rechtfertig* to *gerecht* as a lexical base mainly affected verbs. The *gerecht*-based verbal constructions introduced in 1530 were used either for Lutheran righteousness or for works-righteousness where this was made explicit in context – in the same way as the adjective *gerecht* and the noun *gerechtigkeit* had been used since the *Septembertestament*. However, Luther did retain some *rechtfertig*-based verbal passive constructions, and these were used in two cases ((58) and (59)) which appear to stand outside Luther’s theology of righteousness, and in three cases clearly within it ((63), (64), and (65)).

So although the revisions summarized above go some way to accentuate the lexical difference between Lutheran and non-Lutheran righteousness, these effects are modest. Among verbs in particular, Luther made a very widespread switch to *gerecht*-based forms, but this still did not make the lexical distinction between Lutheran and non-Lutheran contexts clear-cut because, as we have just seen, the *rechtfertig*-based

forms that he kept were used for both. The question therefore arises whether Luther had other reasons for the systematic adoption of *gerecht*-based forms. This question will be addressed once we have discussed the use outside Luther's New Testament translation of some of the terms discussed above.

5. The vocabulary of righteousness in Luther's works outside the New Testament

In Luther's Old Testament translations there is evidence that *gerecht* and *frum* as translations of the Hebrew word *צַדִּיק* ('*tzaddiq*') (or related words with the same root) have a distribution similar to that of the translations of *δικαίος* in the New Testament. Thus, while Luther's default translation of the word in the Old Testament was *gerecht*, he departed from it in, for example, Ezekiel 16: 51, where the Hebrew has 'you have declared your sisters to be *tzaddiq*' and Luther has '... das du deine schwester gleich frum gemacht hast' (1532) – here the context is a discussion of sin and the reference is to the sinfulness of the sisters, not to righteousness.⁶⁵ Similarly, Luther avoided the default translation *gerechtigkeit* for the Hebrew word *צְדָקָה* ('*tzedakah*') when the reference is to doing what is lawful, just as he avoided *gerechtigkeit* for *δικαιοσύνη* in this sense in the New Testament. For example, in Ezekiel 18: 21 the Hebrew has 'he shall do justice and *tzedakah*' and Luther has '[er] thut recht vnd wol' (1532).⁶⁶ Luther also replaced *rechtfertig*-based vocabulary with *gerecht*-based vocabulary in his revisions of the Old Testament, as he did in the New Testament. For example, in Genesis 7: 1, Luther's 1524 translation of *צַדִּיק* ('*tzaddiq*') was *rechtfertig*, and this was changed to *gerecht* in his 1534 translation of the Bible. Likewise, the form *צַדִּיקוּ* (from a verb with the same root as *צַדִּיק* ('*tzaddiq*')) was translated as 'werden gerechtfertiget' in Luther's 1528 translation of Isaiah 45: 25 but was changed to 'werden gerecht' in 1534. As these examples illustrate, the distribution of terms for righteousness and justification in Luther's Old Testament, the revisions to them, and the timing of those revisions, are similar to those in the New Testament.⁶⁷

Outside his Bible translations, Luther does use *frum* to refer to righteousness and justification within his own theology (as well as to refer to human goodness). This is most striking in the verb phrases *frum machen* and *frum werden* which occur in his writings throughout the period 1522–30.⁶⁸ Indeed, the expression *frum werden* even appears in Luther's glosses and in the prefaces to the New Testament from the *Septembertestament* onwards.⁶⁹ Moreover, the noun *fromkeit* occurs in Luther's works

⁶⁵ In other contexts, *frum* is Luther's default translation of *טָמֵא* ('*tam*'), which is typically glossed in English as 'blameless', 'perfect'; in his 1531 revision of the Psalms, Luther also uses *frum* for *יָשָׁר* ('*yashar*') as a replacement for his earlier default translation of this word as *aufrechtig*; see Mätzke, *Gerechtigkeit*, pp. 147–52.

⁶⁶ Given that the default translations of *צַדִּיק* ('*tzaddiq*') and *צְדָקָה* ('*tzedakah*') in the Septuagint are *δικαίος* and *δικαιοσύνη*, respectively, it is possible that Luther was following (or departing from) the Greek in these examples rather than the Hebrew.

⁶⁷ On the semantic range of the Hebrew words mentioned in this paragraph, see Mätzke, *Gerechtigkeit*, pp. 20–32. This paragraph is based on a comparison between Luther's translations (WAB 8–11) and James Strong, *The New Strong's exhaustive concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1984).

⁶⁸ For example, '... das wyr durch yhn ym glawben frum werden' (*Weihnachtspostille*, 1522, WA 10, I, 1, 578); 'Allein der glaube on werck macht frum' (*Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* 1530, WA 30, II, 643).

⁶⁹ e.g. gloss to John 16: 8 (WAB 6, 392); Preface to Epistles of St John (WAB 7, 327).

outside the Bible translations to mean ‘righteousness’; for example, in the first section heading of Luther’s *De triplici iustitia* of 1518 (see fn 8), Luther refers to ‘iusticia, Teutonice fromkeyt’, and in the German version of *On the Freedom of a Christian* of 1520, the expression ‘zur frumkeyt und seligkeyt’ corresponds to the Latin ‘ad iustitiam et salutem’ (‘for righteousness and salvation’). Neither the expressions *frum machen/werden* nor the word *fromkeit* occur at all in Luther’s New Testament translations.⁷⁰

Luther comments on the words *gerecht*, *frum*, and *rechtfertig* as follows in the *Weihnachtpostille* of 1522: ‘Ich wollt auch, das das worttle Justus, iustitia, ynn der schrift, noch nie were ynnß deutsch auff den brauch bracht, das es gerecht, gerechtickeytt hiesse, denn es heyst eygentlich frum und frumkeytt. Und das wyr auff deutsch sagenn: das ist eyn frum man, das saget die schrift: der ist iustus, rechtfertig odder gerecht.’⁷¹ Despite this stated preference for *frum* and aversion to *gerecht*, Luther employed both terms but, as we have seen, with a different distribution in his Bible translations from elsewhere. Outside his Bible translations Luther used both *frum* and *gerecht* to mean ‘righteous’ in the sense of his own theology, and *frum* also to refer to human goodness. Within his Bible translations he used both adjectives but he reserved *frum* for contexts in which human goodness, rather than righteousness is meant. A possible explanation is as follows. Outside his Bible translations, Luther could make it clear in context when he was using *frum* as a synonym (or near-synonym) for *gerecht* within his theology of righteousness and when he was using it to refer to human goodness. By contrast, in his Bible translations, which had to stand alone, he avoided *frum* as a synonym for *gerecht* to avoid associating righteousness with the human goodness which *frum* could also denote. He thereby made a lexical distinction between two concepts which, as we saw in Section 3, he considered theologically important to keep apart.

In the choice between *rechtfertig* and *gerecht*, the pattern in Luther’s other works closely resembles that in his Bible translations: the incidence of *rechtfertig* declined in favour of *gerecht* in both at around the same time. Thus, Luther systematically replaced *rechtfertigen* with verb phrases involving *gerecht* (*gerecht machen/werden/sein*) in his glosses and prefaces from 1530 onwards. Moreover, a search of the electronic version of the *Weimarer Ausgabe* shows that the ratio of the precise (uninflected) form ‘rechtfertig’ to the precise form ‘gerecht’ in Luther’s other works listed for the years 1527 and 1530 falls from around 3: 4 (exactly 33 : 43 instances) to zero (0 : 53). The effect and motivation for this change are the subject of the next section.

6. The switch from *rechtfertig*-based vocabulary to *gerecht*-based vocabulary

What could have motivated the widespread shift from verbal constructions based on *rechtfertig* to those based on *gerecht* – a shift which, as has been shown, occurs both within and outside the Bible translations?

⁷⁰ On the difference in the semantic functions of *frum* between Luther’s Bible translations and his other writings, see Mätzke, *Gerechtigkeit*, pp. 130–53, esp. 144.

⁷¹ WA 10, I, 2, 36.

In Romans 3: 28 (example (54)), the change which Luther made in 1530 from ‘gerechtfertiget werde’ to ‘gerecht werde’ had both a grammatical and a lexical effect: it replaced a passive construction with an active one, and it replaced *rechtfertig* with *gerecht* as the basis of the verb phrase. If the first of these effects was a motive for the change, this could be used to support interpretations of Luther’s theology which emphasize effective, rather than forensic, justification.⁷² However, this seems unlikely because even before Luther introduced *gerecht*, he had already been using the active *rechtfertig* (+ *werden/sein*) interchangeably with the passive *gerechterftigt* (+ *werden/sein*).

As for the second effect, the lexical change, it has been pointed out that *rechtfertigen* had strong juridical connotations around Luther’s time, meaning ‘to file a suit’, ‘to carry out legally’, ‘to punish’, ‘to inspect’, ‘to claim’, ‘to compensate for’, ‘to substantiate’, ‘to acquit’. Similarly, the juridical meanings of *rechtfertig* included ‘legal’, ‘legally compliant’, ‘innocent’, and ‘proven’. *Rechtfertigung* and *rechtfertigkeit* are the abstract nouns corresponding, respectively, to the event (or its result) denoted by the verb *rechtfertigen* and the state denoted by the adjective *rechtfertig*.⁷³ The juridical senses of *rechtfertigen* have been used by scholars to inform their understanding of Luther’s theology of justification; see, for example, Elert (1967) and Kolb (2009), who focus on the meaning ‘to treat someone (whether they are innocent or guilty) according to the law’s demands’, including ‘to execute someone’.⁷⁴ Could the switch to *gerecht* (which neither Elert nor Kolb mentions) therefore be a move away from the juridical meanings of justification, or at least from some of these? In favour of this interpretation is the fact that, at least judging by the attestations in the Grimm *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, *gerecht* was used more widely than *rechtfertig* in non-juridical contexts around this time, with general meanings such as ‘just’, ‘fair’, ‘straight’, ‘right’, ‘correct’, ‘fitting’, alongside its legal senses, some of which it shared with *rechtfertig*.⁷⁵ Similarly, *gerecht machen* could have both a general sense (like other adjectives with *machen*) of ‘to make just, fair, straight, etc.’, and the juridical sense of ‘to give (someone) their legal due’.⁷⁶ On this evidence, the juridical connotations of Luther’s vocabulary of righteousness were, in general, weakened by the switch from *rechtfertig* to *gerecht*, perhaps making the language of the Bible more accessible to a non-specialist audience. But it is not clear which

⁷² ‘Effective’ justification refers to an intrinsic change in the person justified, while ‘forensic’ justification refers to a change in status of the person justified, without intrinsic change. Arguably the active construction ‘gerecht werde’ is more compatible with an intrinsic change in the person justified than the passive construction ‘gerechtfertiget werde’. It is important to note that the terms ‘active’ and ‘passive’ are being used here in their grammatical sense, as distinct from the way in which Luther used them in his 1545 recollection reported in fn 36. On current debates about effective vs forensic justification in Luther, see Saarinen, *Justification by Faith* and Mark Mattes, *Forensic and Effective Justification*.

⁷³ For these definitions, see *Deutsches Rechtswörterbuch* (consulted online at <http://drw-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/drw-cgi/zeige> on 18 July 2018) and Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 16 vols (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1854–1961).

⁷⁴ Werner Elert, ‘Deutschrechtliche Züge in Luthers Rechtfertigungslehre’, in *Ein Lehrer der Kirche, Kirchlich-theologische Aufsätze und Vorträge von Werner Elert*, ed. by M. Keller-Hüschemenger (Berlin, Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1967), pp. 23–31; Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 26.

⁷⁵ For examples where the meanings of *gerecht* and *rechtfertig* overlap, see Grimm *Wörterbuch*, vol. 14, column 410, ‘rechtfertig’, definition 2a; *Deutsches Rechtswörterbuch* ‘gerecht’, definition II, and *rechtfertig*, definition I.

⁷⁶ For this legal sense, see *Deutsches Rechtswörterbuch* ‘gerecht’, definition IV.

juridical connotations in particular would have been weakened or lost thereby, and what theological implications this might have had.

However, the switch from *rechtfertig* to *gerecht* had a more straightforward effect, which was to unify the vocabulary of righteousness and justification; this can be seen in the table in Section 4.6. In the *Septembertestament*, over 90% of the translations of the adjective δίκαιος and the nouns δικαιοσύνη, δικαίωμα, and δικαίωσις were based on *gerecht*, whereas all but one of the translations of the verb δικαίω were based on *rechtfertig*. The theological relationship between justification and righteousness – the fact that the former is a transition into the latter – was therefore, for the most part, not explicit at a lexical level in the *Septembertestament*. But by the replacement of *rechtfertig*-based vocabulary with *gerecht*-based vocabulary, this semantic relationship was made explicit. To take a concrete example, in Galatians 3: 11 the *Septembertestament* reads as follows: ‘Die weyl denn durchs gesetz niemant rechtfertiget wirt fur Got, so ists offfinbar, das der gerechte leben wirt durch den glawben’. The meaning is that the status which works-righteous people do not have is one which faithful people do have. However, the use of *rechtfertiget wirt* in one part of the verse and *gerecht* in the other means that this contrast is only implicit because it has to be understood that someone who is *rechtfertigt* (the *ge-* prefix does not occur here in the *Septembertestament*) is thereby *gerecht*. In 1530 the verse reads: ‘Das aber durchs gesetz niemand gerecht wird fur Gott, ist offenbar. Denn der gerechte wird seines glaubens leben’. Now the contrast is explicit at a lexical level: the fact that the same status which cannot be achieved by works comes about through faith is made unequivocal by the use of the same word, *gerecht*, for both sides of the contrast.

The equation of righteousness as an attribute of God and righteousness as a human status had already been made clear at a lexical level in the *Septembertestament*, as can be seen from examples such as (32), (34), and (35), in which *gerechtigkeit* was used in both these senses. But by switching from constructions based on *rechtfertig* to those based on *gerecht* when referring to justification, Luther made it explicit that it was precisely this divinely validated status which comes about when someone is justified. This move to *gerecht*-based forms thus lends support to accounts of Luther’s theology which emphasize the identity of the righteousness of God and the righteousness of mankind. Such accounts include that of Wilfried Härle, who sees *gerechtigkeit* as a reciprocal ‘Gemeinschaftstreue’ between God and human beings, realized on God’s side as mercy and on the human side as faith,⁷⁷ or that of Ulrich Wilckens, who cites statements from as early as the Lectures on Psalms of 1519–21 to show that Luther saw righteousness from the divine and human perspectives as identical.⁷⁸ However, even without taking a position on Luther’s theology of righteousness and justification, we can say that the shift from *rechtfertig* to *gerecht* ensured that, linguistically, righteousness as a state and righteousness as the result of justification became identical.

⁷⁷ Härle: ‘Die reformatorische Entdeckung Luthers besteht in der Erkenntnis, daß die “Gerechtigkeit Gottes” die Gemeinschaftstreue ist, durch die Gott den Menschen gerecht, und d.h. gemeinschaftstreu macht, indem er in ihm Glauben hervorruft.’ Wilfried Härle, ‘Luthers reformatorische Entdeckung - damals und heute’, *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 99 (2002), 278–95 (p. 287).

⁷⁸ WA 5, II, 144: ‘... ut eadem iustitia Deus et nos iusti simus ... et suum esse nostrum esse sit’ (‘... so that, by the same righteousness, God and we may be righteous ... and that his being may be our being’), quoted in Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, vol. 1 (Zurich: Benziger, 1978), p. 227.

7. Conclusion

We find that, in the *Septembertestament*, Luther had a default translation for each of the principal Greek terms relating to righteousness: *gerecht* for δίκαιος, *gerechtigkeit* for δικαιοσύνη, *rechtfertigung/rechtfertigkeit* for δικαίωμα/δικαίωσις, and *rechtfertigen* for δικαιοώ. These default translations were nothing new, because earlier German printed Bibles had used them for the Latin equivalents of these Greek words (*iustus*, *iustitia*, *iustificatio*, and *iustifico*, respectively). Luther departed from his default translations in a number of ways which correlate with his own theology. Thus, he used *frum* or *recht* in contexts which refer to human goodness or lawful conduct, respectively, rather than the default translation *gerecht*, which was reserved for contexts which were consistent with his own conception of righteousness; and he used *recht (tun)* instead of *gerechtigkeit* when the reference was to doing deeds, which would lie outside his stated belief that righteousness is a gift from God regardless of works. A comparison with Luther's Old Testament translations suggests that Luther similarly used *frum* and *recht* to depart from his default translations of righteousness-related Hebrew words. However, an examination of Luther's works outside his Bible translations – including in the prefaces and glosses to the translations themselves – reveals that he used *frum* more widely there than in the translations themselves, often as a synonym for *gerecht* to mean 'righteous' within his understanding of the term. The stricter semantic separation between *frum* and *gerecht* in the Bible translations may have been a way of signalling what Luther considered to be important theological differences in contexts where he was not in a position to spell them out, as he could in his other writings.

The main outcome of Luther's revisions to the vocabulary of righteousness in his New Testament translations was to increase the number of translations based on *gerecht* at the expense of those based on *rechtfertig* and its derivatives. This is true across all the parts of speech analysed in this study, but is particularly marked among verb phrases meaning 'to justify', where the fraction of *gerecht*-based translations rose from zero in 1522 to over three-quarters in 1530. The revisions to *gerecht*-based forms started in 1527, but the bulk of them, including all the revisions to verbal constructions, occurred first in 1530.⁷⁹ If only Romans 3: 28 (example (54)) is considered, it can be seen that Luther replaced a passive construction ('gerechtfertiget werde') with an active construction ('gerecht werde'). However, even before Luther introduced *gerecht werden/sein*, he had been using the equally active *rechtfertig werden/sein*, which suggests that he did not make the revision to bring about a change of voice. This, and the fact that Luther replaced *rechtfertig*-based terms with *gerecht*-based terms outside the verb system too, suggests rather that he had a preference for the lexeme *gerecht*. This change could, conceivably, have been motivated by a desire to downplay the juridical connotations of *rechtfertig/rechtfertigen*. However, it is unclear in what ways this would have reflected his own theology of righteousness.

The clearest effect of the widespread replacement of *rechtfertig* by *gerecht* – and this was perhaps also Luther's motive for making the change – was to unify the vocabulary of righteousness and justification in his New Testament translations.

⁷⁹ Given that Luther was still including *rechtfertig*-based forms in his Old Testament translations of 1528 (which were revised to *gerecht*-based forms in 1534), the decision to make these revisions may perhaps be narrowed down to the period 1528–30; cf. Section 4.5.5. and Section 5.

Rather than having one word-family, formed around *gerecht*, for righteousness and another, formed around *rechtfertig*, for justification, Luther now used *gerecht*-based vocabulary for both. A discussion of the theological implications of the change is beyond the scope of this paper, but this systematic change served to reinforce the identity between the righteousness of God and the God-given righteousness of mankind.

Appendix

Set out below are extracts from Luther's *De libertate christiana* (1520) and from Luther's *Vorrhede auff die Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Romern* (1522) to support the outline of Luther's theology of righteousness given in Section 3.

Justification by faith alone

Ideo clarum est, ut solo verbo anima opus habet ad vitam et iustitiam, ita sola fide et nullis operibus iustificatur (*De libertate christiana*)

(‘And so it is clear that, just as the soul needs the word alone for life and righteousness, so it is justified by faith alone and not by any works’).

Vnd [Paul] schleust, das Abraham on alle werck alleyn durch den glawben rechtfertiget sey, so gar, das er auch fur dem werck seyner beschneytung durch die schrifft, alleyn seyns glawbens halben rechtfertig gepreysset werde (*Preface to Romans*)

Faith in Christ

So kompt der glawbe nicht, on alleyne durch Gottis wort oder Euangelion, das Christum predigt wie er ist Gottis son vnd mensch, gestorben vnd aufferstand vmb vnser willen (*Preface to Romans*)

The righteousness of God

Verum est enim et iustum, deum esse veracem et iustum, et hoc ei tribuere et confiteri, hoc est, esse veracem et iustum (*De libertate christiana*)

(For it is true and just/righteous that God is true and just/righteous, and to attribute this to Him and to confess it is to be true and just/righteous)

So thut doch die gnade so viel, das wyr gantz vnd fur voll rechtfertig fur Gott gerechnet werden . . . Gerechtigkeyt ist nu solcher glaube, vnd heyst Gottis gerechtigkeit, odder die fur Got gilt, darumb, das es Gottis gabe ist (*Preface to Romans*)

Righteousness and sin

Alßo das, wie der glawbe alleyn rechtfertiget, den geyst vnd lust bringt zu gutten euserlichen wercken, Also sundiget alleyne der vnglawbe (*Preface to Romans*)

Righteousness and good works

Cum ergo opera neminem iustificent et hominem oporteat esse iustum, antequam operetur bonum . . . (*De libertate christiana*)

(Since, therefore, works justify no-one and a man must be righteous before he can do good . . .)

Righteousness and the law

Vocem legis proferri oportet, ut terreantur et in suorum peccatorum notitiam reducantur, et inde ad poenitentiam et meliorem vitae rationem convertantur (*De libertate christiana*)

(The voice of the law should be brought forward so that people may be terrified and led to acknowledge their sins and hence be turned to penitence and a better way of life)

intelligis, qua causa tantum tribuatur fidei, ut sola impleat legem et sine ullis operibus iustificet (*De libertate christiana*)

(you will understand why such importance is attached to faith, that it alone can fulfil the law and justify without any works)

The two senses of sin

Ideo dum credere incipis, simul discis, omnia quae in te sunt esse prorsus culpabilia, peccata, damnanda (*De libertate christiana*)

(Therefore, when you begin to believe, you learn at the same time that everything that is in you is utterly guilty, sinful, damnable)

Qui vero non crediderit . . . est . . . prophanus, cuius oratio fit in peccatum, nec coram deo unquam apparet, quia deus peccatores non exaudit (*De libertate christiana*)

(He who is not a believer . . . is . . . a profane person, whose prayer turns into sin and he never appears in the presence of God, because God does not listen to sinners)

Notes on Contributor

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