

Pope Gregory the Great

A. FROM LETTER 29 TO ARISTOBOLUS

(PL 77. 482-3)

[6th Century]

There are not words, I know, to express my affection. But what I feel towards you, your own affection will the better show you. I have heard that you are working under difficulties. But I am not really worried about that, because so often a ship which manages to reach the high seas under favourable conditions, is often driven back at the beginning of the voyage by contrary winds and is taken back into port. Besides, if you do happen to undertake the translation of my wordy letter, I beg of you, do not translate word for word but sense for sense. Very often, while the properties of the words are sedulously observed, the full sense is lost.



B. FROM LETTER 30 TO NARSA, THE MONK

(PL 77.887)

...Your Excellency is well aware that today there is nobody in Constantinople who competently translates documents from Latin into Greek. For while they keep the words and pay minimal attention to the sense, they do not make the words intelligible, and they mangle the sense.

