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The Canon in the Vulgate Translation of the Bible

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Abstract
This paper focuses on the development of the Vulgate translation of the Bible and the correlative discussion about the canon, particularly the Old Testament canon, since there were no major disputes over the New Testament books in the days of the Reformation. The New Testament canon was fixed, for the most part, during the fourth to fifth centuries. Special attention will be given to the fourth session of the Council of Trent, where the two decrees regarding the Vulgate were issued.

Keywords
biblical canon, Vulgate, Council of Trent

The debate on the different books and the group of books that were progressively accepted by the church as inspired and normative for her life and belief, and at the end formed our Bibles, has been ongoing since the very beginning of the fixing of the canon. The fathers talked about this debate, but the terminology they used was quite ambiguous; Eusebius (ca. 265–340) talks about books that are *homologoumenoi* (unanimously accepted), *antilegomenoi* (disputed), and *amphiballomenoi* (uncertain) (*Historia Ecclesia* 3.25.1–7). Jerome talks about "canonical" and "ecclesiastical" works (*Epistle to Dardanus* 129.3), and also *apocrifa* in his "prologus galeatus" to his translation of the books of Kings (ca. 391). It seems to be Sixtus of Siena (1520–1569) who coined the terminology "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical" in his book *Bibliotheca Sancta* (although he could have received that terminology, for he says, "Canonical from the second order which were

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then called Ecclesiastical, and now they are called Deuterocanonical among us"; 1566, 10), the former referring to the books belonging to the first order of the sacred canon (*qui ad Primum sacri canonis ordinem pertinent*) and the latter to the books "in the second order of the sacred canon, of which many orthodox fathers doubted, and that the Hebrews, except for Esther, do not receive in the Sacred Scriptures" (1566, 42). This terminology, "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical," has been present ever since in most handbooks and introductions to the sacred Scriptures in the Catholic tradition.[1]

Although many lists of the books of the Bible were produced over different centuries, the final point in the Catholic canon was reached in the fourth session of the Council of Trent (1546) with two decrees, one on the canon, and the other on the Vulgate edition of the Bible.

In this paper I will focus on the development of the Vulgate edition of the Bible and the correlative discussion about the canon, particularly the Old Testament canon, because there were no major disputes over the New Testament books at the time of the Reformation. The New Testament canon was fixed, for the most part, during the fourth to fifth centuries. The twenty-seven books were already listed in the 39th Festal Letter (367) of Athanasius of Alexandria (298–373), and then in the African Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397). These two councils also list the forty-four books of the Old Testament (Lamentations and Baruch were considered part of Jeremiah), including the books written in Greek. Although many early documents list all the books, including those belonging to the Greek tradition, the reproduction of several lists in 692 at the Quinisextine Council of Constantinople, warns against being too simplistic about the fixity of the consensus that existed at the end of the fourth century (cf. Brown and Collins 1993, 1036; Metzger 1987, 216).

Especial attention will be given to the development of the fourth session of the Council of Trent, where the two decrees regarding the Vulgate were issued.

Background: the Vetus Latina, Old Latin

At the end of the Acts of the Apostles when Paul arrives at Rome, "some of the followers in Rome heard about us and came to meet us at the Market of Appius and at the Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and

[1] Since the list of books is long I will just mention one volume released in each century following the agreement on the terminology: Tomasi 1657 (cf. "Syllabus eruditus in Sacram Scripturam," 337ff.); Calmet 1729; Alber 1827; Artola and Sánchez Caro 1992; Tábet 2003.

was encouraged" (Acts 28.15). All the difficulties with the historicity of the book of Acts aside, the presence of Christians in Rome in the first decades after Christ's Easter is stated. This presence of Christians in Rome (and other places in Italy) means that some communities of the very early church settled down in places where the language was Latin, although Greek was still in use in many Latin-speaking places up to the third century; Latin spread slowly in the western Roman Empire. In fact, the Roman Church's language was Greek until the third century, and, according to Sundberg's research, in the third century, Greek was the predominant language for Jews in Palestine, too, although he recognizes that "a significant portion of the Palestinian Jewish population was bi-lingual: Aramaic (and Hebrew as a learned language) *and Greek*" (Sundberg 1997). The first Christian writings addressed to or from Rome were written in Greek: for example, the Letter of Paul to the Romans (ca. 58), the letter of Clement, bishop of Rome to the Corinthians (ca. 96), Justin Martyr (ca. 160). According to Jerome, it was Pope Victor (ca. 190) who for the first time began writing theological books in Latin (*De viris illustribus* 34.53).

As Christianity spread to the western regions of the Roman Empire in the first centuries after Christ, it became necessary to produce Latin versions of the biblical texts for those who were not able to understand the Greek of the New Testament or the Septuagint. Latin became increasingly used as a lingua franca in place of Greek, first in North Africa and then in Spain, England, Gaul, and Germany.[2] The first translations were made by individual Christians for use within their own community. These translations are known as the Old Latin or Vetus Latina.[3] The first extant witnesses come from Africa in the second century, and seem to represent the earliest translation, but it is not altogether certain that it originated there. In textual terms, however, the form of the Latin version which survived in Africa appears to be the most primitive (Birdsall 1997, under "Latin and Syriac"). Although Tertullian (ca. 160–220) quoted many biblical references in Latin, it is very possible that he translated the Greek text himself; the first witness we know to have taken texts from Latin manuscripts was Cyprian from Carthage around 250.

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[2] We do not have enough data to assume that the Latin biblical text had a Jewish origin. These communities were very much influenced by Greek culture. Besides that there is no reference to the use of Latin in the synagogues. See Trebolle Barrera 2013, 388.

[3] See http://www.vetus-latina.de. The archabbey of Beuron in Germany started the project of a modern scholarly edition of the Vetus Latina in 1949 under the direction of Bonifatius Fischer. Genesis, Ruth, Ezra 1–7, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Wisdom, Sirach 1–28, Isaiah, Mark 1–8, John 1–4, the Letters of Paul (from Ephesians to Philemon), Hebrews, the Catholic Letters, and Revelation have so far been published.

So, the Vetus Latina is the collective name for the large and very diverse group of Latin Bible texts that were translated from the Greek from the second century on in Christian communities. The manuscripts in this collection are often inaccurate and vary widely from one to another. "Jerome affirmed that in his day there were 'as many forms of the text for Latin readers as there are manuscripts' (*Praef. in Josue*), and something of that welter of diverse texts remains to us" (Brown, Johnson, and O'Connell 1993, 1100).

These texts are of great significance for the history of the early church and the transmission of the text of the Bible. Most of the Old Latin translations were made from Greek manuscripts which no longer exist and differ considerably from texts commonly received in the fourth century:

> In the NT, the model was, as a rule, a witness of the "Western Text"; the OT (LXX) was marked by many of the so-called Lucianic variants, which were certainly prior to the martyr Lucian (died ca. 310) and which sometimes went back to the oldest known form of the LXX (Old Greek). . . . The Old Latin sometimes attests the Old Greek, itself witnessing an Old Hebrew prior to the Masoretic Text. (Bogaert 1997, 800)

Although Old Latin texts have undergone their own process of transmission, as the Vetus Latina was continuously revised according to the evolution of the Latin language, the original layer preserves a witness to the Bible, especially the New Testament, which, with the Greek manuscripts, helps us to retrieve the most ancient textual traditions. The language and history of these documents also provide information on the social background of early Christian communities and the spread of the church. African vocabulary was progressively replaced by European, thus allowing for the classification of the manuscripts in two groups: the *afra* version and the *itala* (cf. Trebolle Barrera 2013, 390).

During the fourth century and later, when Jerome started his translation, many other Latin versions continued to be produced until the late Middle Ages.

The Vulgate

In the usage of the Latin fathers, the term *vulgata* referred to the Greek Bible in its current text (*vulgatus* = *koine*: common, divulged) and to its Latin version. Since the seventh century, the term has been applied to the Latin version containing Jerome's translation (cf. Aland and Aland 2013, 195), which was afterwards officially accepted by the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent in 1546. It is not the work of only one translator, nor is it the product of any one age. It is a collection of versions which differ considerably, both in origin and character.

Jerome's first steps in Bible translation took place during his stay in Rome (382–385). Because of the many variant readings in the Old Latin text he was asked by Pope Damasus (ca. 304–384) to revise the Gospels according to the Greek text. After Damasus's death (384), Jerome had to leave Rome; he travelled to Antioch and then settled in Bethlehem where he led a life of asceticism and literary activity until his death on September 30, 420.

He knew the library that Origen and Eusebius had started in Caesarea, and in 387 he began translating Origen's (that is, the Hexaplaric) edition of the LXX. But during his work, around 390, he distanced himself from the Greek tradition to undertake a translation from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament that was preserved among the Jews. He had two reasons for doing so. The first one was a *critical* one, to establish a good Latin text according to the *hebraica veritas*. The second one was *apologetic*, because of the accusation by the Jews, hostile to the Christian faith, that Christians did not possess the genuine scriptural text and that their theological arguments, based either upon the Latin or Greek texts, were therefore not authentic or valid (Jerome's preface to Isaiah; cf. Cimosa 2003, 151).

Jerome's knowledge of Hebrew was good, although on Old Testament Aramaic he was not such an expert. He had the assistance of Jews in Bethlehem who helped him with the language and with the interpretation of the Targumim. He also recommended the help of Jewish masters ("If you have doubts, ask the Hebrews what the meaning of the original is"; *Epistle to Augustine* 112.20).

In his prefaces to his translations of the books (or group of books) of the Bible, he gives much information from which we can trace, in part, the progression of his work that lasted for more than twenty years (382–ca. 407). He knew different text traditions of the LXX text:

> In his preface to Chronicles, written ca. 396, Jerome noted that there were in his day three commonly received LXX text traditions: one in Egypt that was connected with the name of Hesychius, a second from Caesarea in Palestine that reflected the work of Origen, and a third (which elsewhere [*Epistle to Sunniam* 106] he characterized as the *koine* ["common"] or vulgate form) that was connected with Antioch and the work of Lucian (d. 312). (Brown, Johnson, and O'Connell 1993, 1095)[4]

Although "Jerome's Vulgate" is a commonplace, Jerome did not translate all the books in the Bible:

[4] The Latin prefaces to the books are published in Fischer et al. 1969; an English version of the prefaces can be consulted in Edgecomb 2007.

> No experienced scholar ever attributed to Jerome the translation or the revision of Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, 1–2 Maccabees, Baruch, and the Epistle of Jeremiah, which are to be found in Vulgate manuscripts. It is also accepted today that Jerome did not touch the Pauline and Catholic Epistles, Acts, or Revelation. The Pelagian circles in Rome and Rufinus the Syrian are likely the authors of the Vulgate revision of those NT books. (Bogaert 1997, 801)

After his death, probably in the middle of the fifth century, the translations he made were complemented by the addition of others' translations, put together by an editor who used the terminology of Rufinus.

Jerome's translation was well known in antiquity and he was very well prepared for such a work, since his reputation as one of the most learned biblical scholars had spread through all the church, especially in Western Europe. In his preface to the Gospels he mentions Pope Damasus, who had asked him for the revision. It may be that this mention of the Bishop of Rome was important for the increasing relevance Jerome's translation took on over the centuries.

Jerome's view on the canon

As mentioned, Jerome did not translate all the books in the Bible. So it is inappropriate to speak about "Jerome's Vulgate." It is valid, though, to talk about Jerome's view on the subject of the canon, because, although this canon was not accepted by the Great Church after Jerome, he himself refers to it in the prologue of many of the books he translated. Jerome defended the *hebraica veritas* (*Hebrew truth*, meaning the Hebrew text; *Epistle to Augustine* 112.20) and so also the short canon restricted to the books written in Hebrew.

In his preface to the books of Kings he states,

> This prologue to the Scriptures may be appropriate as a helmeted introduction to all the books which we turn from Hebrew into Latin, so we may be able to know whatever is outside of these is to be set apart among the apocrypha. Therefore, Wisdom, which is commonly ascribed to Solomon, and the book of Jesus son of Sirach, and Judith and Tobias, and The Shepherd are not in the canon. I have found the First Book of the Maccabees is Hebrew, the Second is Greek, which may also be proven by their styles. (Edgecomb 2007)

Jerome also mentions the short canon in his preface to the books of Solomon:

> . . . just as the Church also reads the books of Judith, Tobias, and the Maccabees, but does not receive them among the canonical Scriptures, so also one may read these two scrolls for the strengthening of the people, (but) not for confirming the authority of ecclesiastical dogmas. (Edgecomb 2007)

Jerome, as well as Athanasius of Alexandria (298–373), lists twenty-two books from the Jewish Scriptures corresponding to the letters of the *alephat* (vowelless alphabet, such as that of Hebrew). This was the case, since the Twelve Minor Prophets were considered a single book and there were five double books (comprising what we know as ten books: 1–2 Samuel; 1–2 Kings; 1–2 Chronicles; Ezra–Nehemiah; Jeremiah–Lamentations) and the book of Ruth was joined to the book of Judges. Their twenty-two books correspond to the thirty-nine ("protocanonical") books in a modern Bible. In the West, Augustine (*De doctrina christiana* 2.8.13; A.D. 396–397) listed forty-four Old Testament books (actually forty-six by our count, since Lamentations and Baruch are part of Jeremiah), including the books from the Greek tradition, and because of his great stature this tended to close down discussion in the West concerning the extent of the canon.

> The Western church as witnessed in the North African councils of Hippo and Carthage accepted a fixed number of OT books including some deuterocanonicals found in the LXX manuscripts. But the writers of the Eastern church were more aware of the shorter scriptural canon drawn by the Jews. Origen mentions that the Hebrews have twenty-two books; Athanasius, who had Jewish teachers, insists that the Christians should have twenty-two books just as the Hebrews have; and of course, Jerome did his best to propagate the Hebrew canon in the Western church. (Brown and Collins 1993, 1042)

Although Jerome defended the *hebraica veritas*, when he was asked by some bishops, he translated a few of the deuterocanonical books. The book of Tobias, which Jerome translated in one day (as he had Judith in "one short night's work"), was one of his last Bible translations (ca. 405–407). In his preface to Tobias he says, "it is better to be judging the opinion of the Pharisees to displease and to be subject to the commands of bishops" (*et episcoporum iussionibus deservire*). While we may take this as evidence that Jerome "was well disposed to change his mind if that was the opinion of the church" (Tábet 2003, 194 n. 47), it would be overstating Jerome's concession to interpret it as meaning that he accepted the deuterocanonical books.

Later history of the Vulgate up to the Council of Trent

Although these days we recognize the Vulgate as *the* Latin Bible and there were many at Jerome's time who welcomed his translations, opposition to it was more prevalent than is often noted. There was even an African community that rioted against its bishop because of the introduction of the new translation, but from the fifth century on, scholars of Gaul (France) and

Spain for the most part preferred this translation to the Old Latin. "It was not, however, until the eighth and ninth centuries that it was universally adopted. St. Bede (d. 735) called it 'nostra editio,' but the name '*Vulgata editio*' was first applied to it probably by Roger Bacon (d. 1294), and this title was used and sanctioned by the Council of Trent" (Steinmueller 1938–1939).

During the centuries following Jerome's translation, Latin Bible manuscripts went on multiplying in Western Europe. No Latin Bible in one codex is known with certainty before the middle of the sixth century. The first mention of Bibles in one volume comes from M. Aurelius Cassiodorus (Squillace, Italy; d. ca. 583) under the term *pandectes* (complete collection). Their use spread slowly. They became the common practice in the scriptoria of Alcuin (736–805 born in York, abbot of Ferriéres and of Saint Martin of Tours) and Theodulf (ca. 750–821, appointed by Charlemagne as bishop of Orleans) from the very beginning of the ninth century (cf. Bogaert 1997).

As we have seen, the Vulgate took many centuries to become established as the principal Latin Bible. Meanwhile, the Old Latin versions continued to spread and to be used up to the thirteenth century. Some of these translations are preserved in Bible manuscripts, in the writings of the church fathers and in early Christian liturgies.

The history of the revision of the Vulgate's text is long and quite difficult to trace. Cassiodorus collected very old manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments according to Jerome. One of the best Vulgate codices, the Codex Amiatinus, has some relationship to the Cassiodorian text.

Theodulf started a revision of the text but was largely influenced by Spanish manuscripts. In 797 Emperor Charlemagne invited Alcuin of York to produce an edition of the Vulgate according to the best manuscripts. The Alcuinian recension was quite free of Old Latin readings and was widely disseminated throughout the Middle Ages, enjoying great authority. This Alcuinian text was the base text for the Paris Bible (thirteenth century), harshly criticized by Roger Bacon, who wrote of it, "in this Paris Vulgate, the text is for the most part horribly corrupted" (cf. Steinmueller, 1938).[5] This text was in turn used for the first printed Bible, and it appeared later on, with minor variations, in all the early printed editions, including the official Roman edition recommended by the Council of Trent.

Because of the deficient text, the council asked for an officially sponsored critical edition of the Vulgate. This revision was seriously undertaken during some thirty years and was finished under the pontificate of Sixtus V

[5] "Textus est pro majori parte corruptus horribiliter in exemplari Vulgato, hoc est Parisiensi" (quoted in Steinmueller, 1938).

(d. 1590) and published under the authority of Pope Clement VIII in Rome in 1592, the so-called Sixto–Clementine Vulgate. Unfortunately, despite all the efforts, as a text it left much to be desired (cf. Fischer et al. 1969, xx). The Clementine text became the official Catholic Vulgate Bible.

The text of the Vulgate edition included all the books of the Hebrew biblical tradition and some of the books, or additions of books (Esther, Daniel), of the LXX. Not all the books present in the LXX manuscripts (Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus) found a place in the Vulgate. From the Old Testament, 3–4 Maccabees, 3–4 Esdras, the Prayer of Manasseh, the Odes of Solomon, and Psalm 151 were omitted; from the New Testament (taking into consideration that the oldest manuscripts of the LXX are preserved in Christian codices) the following were omitted: Epistle of Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas, and 1 Clement. Although these books were left out of the canon, many versions of the Vulgate contain some of them (Prayer of Manasseh, 3–4 Esdras) as an appendix after Revelation.

In 1907, Pope Pius X set up a Pontifical Commission for the Establishment of the Text of the Vulgate, in Rome. The attempts to recover the archetypal Vulgate form (ca. A.D. 400) were hampered by the lack of sufficiently early manuscripts. Usually we can recover only an intermediate text form between the missing archetypes and the early recensional undertakings of Alcuin (d. 804), Theodulph of Orleans (d. 821), and the Spanish tradition centered on the eighth century, Codex Toletanus (cf. Brown, Johnson, and O'Connell 1993, 1102).

Receptio of the Vulgate Bible at the Council of Trent

The religious context of the Council of Trent (also known as the Tridentine Council)[6] was the crisis in the Catholic Church caused by the Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther. The position of the Catholic Church in reference to the Reformation was to refute the ideas of the so-called "heretics" and to propose a Counter-Reformation in diverse aspects of the life of the church. To do so, they needed a solid foundation of faith on which they could build the refutations. This solid foundation was the faith of the church based on the word of God contained in the Bible transmitted by the living tradition of the church. But which Bible?

[6] The church historian Hubert Jedin published the *History of the Council of Trent* in 2400 pages; he devotes fifty pages to "Scripture and Tradition," describing in an almost day-by-day account the work of the fathers that led to the fourth session (April 8, 1546), when the decrees of the canon and the Vulgate were issued (Jedin 1972).

In order to answer this question and to promote the Counter-Reformation, in 1542 Pope Paul III appointed a Universal Council[7] which lasted for twenty-five sessions between 1545 and 1563 in the small city of Trent, in northern Italy. At the final session 255 fathers were present.

The first sessions of the council were devoted to establishing the modus operandi (working methods) of the council (sessions 1–2); then the fathers reasserted the Nicene–Constantinopolitan Symbolum (session 3). In the fourth session they worked on the biblical canon, mainly on the Old Testament canon, for there was little dispute with the Protestants regarding the New Testament canon in the church tradition. Influenced by Renaissance humanism, the Reformers, in their desire to go back to the original faith because of the many abuses in the church, also wanted to return to the source texts, and so they rejected the biblical books belonging to the Greek tradition (LXX) and went back to the Hebrew canon.[8] A fixed canon was needed, for Scripture was the necessary basis for all further dogmatic aspects that were challenged by the Reformation and that the council was willing to face.

The canon was a matter of controversy not only between Catholics and Protestants. Despite the statements of former councils on the canon (for example the Council of Florence, 1452, or the local Synods of Hippo, 393, and the Third Council of Carthage, 397), which accepted all the books, including those coming from the LXX, many Catholic theologians had thrown doubt upon the authority of many of the books. Jerome, the undisputed authority in reference to sacred Scripture, had accepted the Hebrew canon. Regarding the canon, Luther, within Renaissance humanism, was Erasmus's disciple and followed his beloved Jerome, as did Cajetan (1469–1534), a cardinal of the Catholic Church who was the Pope's Legate at Wittenberg, who disputed the canonicity of the Letter to the Hebrews, Revelation, and the Epistles of James and Jude because he mistakenly identified authenticity with canonicity.

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[7] In fact, there had been many previous attempts to call for a council, but they failed. Luther himself had requested a council when his theses were rejected (November 28, 1518), then Paul III, on June 2, 1536, called for a council in Mantua; nobody heeded the call. Later on it was called for May 1538 in Vicenza, and finally it was called for the little city of Trent. Cf. Daniel-Rops 1955, 100.

[8] In fact, Luther broke with the tradition of the church on the question of the OT canon during the debate of the doctrine of purgatory at Leipzig in June 1519. The church of Rome had based its doctrine on 2 Macc 12.46. "Luther could not avoid the reading; neither could he deny that the church had accepted this book. When thus pressed, Luther launched into an argument of desperation. He denied the right of the church to decide matters of canonicity; canonicity, he argued, is to be determined by the internal worth of a book" (Sundberg 1966, 195).

Seripando (1493–1563, Augustinian Prior General Superior who attended the Council of Trent) agreed with Erasmus and Cajetan regarding canonicity, and tried to harmonize his opinions about the Greek canon of books with the Florentine decree. He said the distinction was that these books were "canonical and ecclesiastical," to be read for the edification of the people, but they were not sufficient per se to confirm the ecclesiastical dogma. So he proposed a distinction between a *canon fidei* (formed by the canonical and authentic books, later called "protocanonical") and a *canon morum* (formed by the canonical and ecclesiastical books, later called "deuterocanonical"), between *argumenta probantia* and *argumenta probabiliora* (cf. Jedin 1972, 70; Dunker 1953, 280, 285).

Some of the fathers attending the council did not want to address the question of the canonicity of some books because matters that had already been approved by so many councils could not be a point of controversy. Their testimonies should be merely collected and confirmed. This was not the position of the majority, and they wanted the question of the Scriptures to be considered. This investigation about the different books within the sacred Scriptures was to be done outside the council since the theologians that acted as consultants to the fathers did not belong to the council.

The discussion over the necessity of making a distinction among the books was long, repetitive, and oscillating. Although many deemed it useful, nevertheless, after long deliberation the view of the majority prevailed, "that the Sacred Books be taken and venerated without any mention of degrees between them of difference of authority. There follows a line crossed out in the manuscript: 'notwithstanding it cannot be denied'" (Dunker 1953, 291).

Bishop Marco Vigerio of Senigalia, in an annotation accompanying his vote on this question, admirably expresses the view of the fathers:

> Although there is a certain distinction between the Sacred Books, yet for good reasons "placet" that this be not expressed, and that they all be "absolutely" accepted as authored by the Holy Ghost, and as books in which there is no falsity or suspicion, without distinction. (Duncker 1953, 297)

The solution was not to deal with the question at the council, but to leave those who were so inclined free to examine the question with the help of theologians:

> . . . the Fathers agreed on acceptance of the Sacred Books "simpliciter," as was done by many of the ancient Fathers, by the third Provincial Council of Carthage, by that of Pope Gelasius, by Innocent I, and lastly by the Council of Florence. However, in order to account, if necessary, for the doings of this Council, they

> had come to the conclusion that it should be the task of the theologians of the various Orders to put together in a separate compendium solutions to the objections raised. (Duncker 1953, 284)

The decrees on the canon and the Vulgate

Finally, during the fourth session of April 8, 1546, the two decrees were approved by the fathers of the council, the first one regarding the canon, and the second regarding the edition of the Vulgate:

> 1. [The Synod] following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and holds in veneration with an equal affection of piety and reverence all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament, since one God is the author of both, . . . [the list of all the books follows in 58–59] . . . entire with all their parts, as they were wont to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate edition. (*EB* 57, 60)

> 2. The Church has decided and declares that the said old Vulgate edition, which has been approved by the Church itself through long usage for so many centuries in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, be considered authentic. (*EB* 61)

The first decree put an end to more than a thousand years of controversy about the canon within the Catholic Church. By saying they venerate "with an equal affection of piety . . . all the books," they are making no distinction between greater or lesser authoritative books. It is worth noticing that canonicity is defined in relation to inspiration: "since one God is the author of both" Testaments. Thus canonicity is the consequence of the recognition that a book is inspired.

When the declaration says, "entire with all their parts," it is referring to portions such as the additions to the books of Esther and Daniel.

Cardinal Pacheco suggested adding an "anathema" to the decree, so that this first decree be a formal dogmatic definition of the Catholic Church.

It should also be noted that these remarks are not a canonization of the Latin text, as many often assume. In fact, in the second decree, the council proposes to prepare an edition to be printed as correctly as possible (*quam emendatissime imprimatur*; *EB* 63) because the text of the Latin Bible was in need of a critical treatment (see Murphy 1966, 189).

The second decree states the authenticity of the Vulgate edition. This means that the Vulgate is the authoritative source for arguments in faith and morals, for use in liturgy, preaching, and teaching. Thus the decree did not reject the original text and:

> did not connote any intrinsic superiority as far as textual criticism is concerned. It merely meant that the longevity of the Latin Bible in the Western Church entitled it to official status as a witness to the Word of God. But it should also be said that this contributed to a hard and fast position that solidified in the post-Tridentine Church: the primacy of the Vulgate. The proper emphasis on the Hebrew text was only applied, in an official way, in the encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, of 1943. (Murphy 1966, 190)[9]

The encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* again took up and explained the theme of the "authenticity" of the Vulgate:

> And if the Tridentine Synod wished "that all should use as authentic" the Vulgate Latin version, this, as all know, applies only to the Latin Church and to the public use of the same Scriptures; nor does it, doubtless, in any way diminish the authority and value of the original texts. For there was no question then of these texts, but of the Latin versions, which were in circulation at that time. . . . This special authority or as they say, authenticity of the Vulgate was not affirmed by the Council particularly for critical reasons, but rather because of its legitimate use in the Churches throughout so many centuries; by which use indeed the same is shown, in the sense in which the Church has understood and understands it, to be free from any error whatsoever in matters of faith and morals; so that, as the Church herself testifies and affirms, it may be quoted safely and without fear of error in disputations, in lectures and in preaching; and so its authenticity is not specified primarily as *critical*, but rather as *juridical*. (*EB* 549; emphasis mine)

The reason provided for this assertion is the "long usage for so many centuries" in the church, in fact for more than a thousand years at the council's time. Actually, not a few scholars of textual criticism have questioned the idea of the "original form" of the biblical text, to the point that, according to them, it is more difficult today to oppose "critical" and "ecclesial" in reference to a biblical text. Thus some scholars hold that the only realistic goal in producing a critical text is the critical reconstruction of a text which has been used, at least for a certain time, in the midst of an ecclesial community (Buzzetti 2005, 233).

Although the Council of Trent declared the Vulgate edition of the Bible "authentic," it did not exclude the text of the original languages. In fact, the official documents of the Catholic Church progressively supported the use

[9] Recourse to the original languages was already viewed favorably, albeit timidly, in the encyclical on the study of the sacred Scriptures, *Providentissimus Deus* in 1893 by Leo XIII (*EB* 106).

of the text of the original languages in producing a critical text, in study, and in translation of the Bible for the liturgy or public use.[10]

The history of the development of the canon can be recounted on the basis of the data in existing documents and traditions, but the problem of the canon is not just a historical one. As Murphy says, "ultimately and *pro me*, the adherence to a canon of books, inspired and normative, is a religious commitment, an act of faith. History cannot establish such a motivation" (1966, 190).

"Deuterocanonical" books in the Vulgate?

As we have seen in the introduction, it seems to be Sixtus of Siena who coined the expressions "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical" in his volume *Bibliotheca Sancta* in 1566. So, it is pointless looking for this formulation within the debates or in the decrees of the Tridentine Council and its fourth session concerning the canon in 1546, twenty years before Sixtus's work.

After Sixtus of Siena, the presence of the terms "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical" has been a constant in Catholic writing over the centuries (see examples in note 1). On the other hand, as far as official documents of the Catholic Church go, these expressions are almost completely absent.[11]

So, if we have to answer the question of the above subheading, Are there "deuterocanonical" books in the Vulgate?, our answer should be "no" and "yes." No, because talking about "deuterocanonical" books in the Vulgate would be an anachronistic use of the term, although we do find some books from the LXX. And yes, with hesitation, because the terminology has been

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[10] See *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) *EB* 106; *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943) *EB* 547–49; *Dei Verbum* 22 (1965) *EB* 702.

[11] They can be found in only three places, all in interconfessional contexts: (1) The "Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible," signed by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Catholic Church and the General Secretary of UBS in 1987. (2) The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Jewish people and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible" (May 24, 2001), where the Extension of the Canon of the Scripture is referred to. Note 31 says, "The Catholic Church accepts 46 books in its Old Testament canon, 39 protocanonical books and 7 deuterocanonical, so called because the former were accepted with little or no debate, while the latter (Sirach, Baruch, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, 1,2 Maccabees and parts of Esther and Daniel) were accepted only after centuries of hesitation (on the part of certain Eastern Church Fathers as well as Jerome); the Churches of the Reformation call these 'Apocrypha.'" (3) Finally, in n. 151 in the "Post-synodal apostolic exhortation Verbum Domini" (Sept. 30, 2010), under the heading "The Bible and ecumenism" (§46), we find, "It should be recalled, however, that with regard to the so-called deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament and their inspiration, Catholics and Orthodox do not have exactly the same biblical canon as Anglicans and Protestants."

used, perhaps acritically, for centuries, referring to the biblical books coming from the Greek tradition.

When Sixtus of Siena talks about "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical" he insists on the *first order* and the *second order*. For him the distinction between proto- and deuterocanonical is one of "cognition and time, not of authority, certitude of worth, for both orders received their excellency and majesty from the same Holy Spirit" (Hayes 2008, 991). When he speaks of the first and second order of the canon, is he referring to the Hebrew (Palestinian) canon and to the Greek (Alexandrian) canon? He is not explicit on that. Maybe, referring to the MT and the LXX, it would be acceptable to talk about the first *text* and the second *text*, for we can recognize, at least for the Law and the Prophets, that the Hebrew text is prior to the Greek, but the works of Sundberg (1966, 1997) seem to demonstrate that there is not a complete Hebrew canon prior to the Greek canon; that being the case, is it valid to continue using the terms "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical"?

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Abbreviation

EB Filippi, Alfio, and Erminio Lora, eds. 2004. *Enchiridion Biblicum: Documenti della Chiesa sulla Sacra Scrittura, Edizione Bilingüe.* Bologna: Ed. Dehoniane. For the English text see http://www.catholicscripture.net/enchiridion. Accessed Dec 2014.