

Hieronymus, *Biblia Sacra Vulgata. Lateinisch-deutsch*. Vol. 5: *Evangelia—Actus Apostolorum—Epistulae Pauli—Epistulae Catholicae—Apocalypsis—Appendix*, edited by Andreas Beriger, Widu-Wolfgang Ehlers, and Michael Fieger, Sammlung Tusculum, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018. ISBN 978-3-11-048997-2. Pp. 1401. €79,95/\$91.99/£72.50.

- [1] No need to argue, the Vulgate version of the New Testament is relevant to textual critics and biblical scholars due to its formation history, the authority it received from its early days onwards, and, of course, its interesting parallels with and differences to the Greek transmission. Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome to produce a revised translation of exactly that specific form of the gospels that had circulated in Rome (and elsewhere) as *Vetus Latina*. In addition to the biblical text, Jerome's introductions to the gospels and to (what he regarded as) the Pauline letters are of major historical value, too, and form an indispensable tool for understanding the author's work, motivation, and the attendant circumstances in his days. The value of the Vulgate cannot be underestimated as, for instance, the Roman Catholic Church authenticated it as its official Bible at the Council of Trent (1545–1563), and, thereafter, it became the binding and authoritative text for the Roman rite for centuries.
- [2] The present volume is the fifth and, thus, final in the series altogether published in 2018: Vol. 1: *Genesis—Exodus—Leviticus—Numeri—Deuteronomium*; Vol. 2: *Iosue—Iudices—Ruth—Samuhel—Malachim—Verba dierum—Ezras—Tobias—Iudith—Hester—Job*; Vol. 3: *Psalmi—Proverbia—Ecclesiastes—Canticum canticorum—Sapientia—Iesus Sirach*; Vol. 4: *Isaias—Hieremias—Baruch—Ezechiel—Daniel—XII Prophetae—Maccabeorum*. The three editors supply their readers with a rather short but concise introduction that is reprinted in all the volumes of the series. For further details see my review of volume 3 (see there, chapter 2).
- [3] The editors present the Latin text on the left and the German translation on the right so that original and translation are facing each other. At the bottom of the Latin source text biblical references are given that help to identify parallels or important links. The Latin text is presented according to the critical edition of the *Vulgate* by Weber and Gryson. The German translations are written in a fluent and very readable style in accordance to the editors' policy given in the introduction not to accomplish a product with a pastoral tone or any ecclesiastical touch (see my review of volume 3, chapter 2). Consequently, the German does not correspond with any of the so-called classical translations (e.g., Luther, *Einheitsübersetzung* or *Elberfelder*).
- [4] Every volume of the series comes with the same final chapter on measures, weights, and currencies (here 1399–1401), which is very helpful (1) for comprehending exactly what ancient terms mean when they are converted into their modern equivalents (kilograms, litres, kilometres, etc.) and (2) for referencing, because the passages of use are given, too. There are no indices, nor is there a bibliography.
- [5] Apart from the texts in Latin and German themselves, the volume offers a real treasure as it, consequently, includes Jerome's *incipit in evangelio* (the volume presents *incipit praefatio Hieronymi presbyteri in evangelio* and informs in a note that the title does not come from Jerome himself) and his *incipit prologus in epistulis Pauli apostoli*.

- [6] The *praefatio* (14–23) is directed at Pope Damasus and refers to his order to Jerome to turn an old *opus* into a new one. Jerome’s thoughts revolve around the policy of translation he follows (with having an eye on Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion for the Old Testament) and the truth of the interpretation of the New Testament the apostle accepted. To Jerome, the whole New Testament was without any doubt (*non dubium est*) written in Greek with the exception of the Gospel of Matthew, which—as he claims to know—was first composed in Hebrew. Furthermore, he explains the canon system of Eusebius of Caesarea, who followed Ammonius of Alexandria and employed ten *canones*. The canon tables are presented in full (25–37) and their numbering is presented in the outer margin of the Latin texts. Therefore, readers can reconstruct the parallels of passages between the four canonical gospels as identified by Eusebius (and Jerome).
- [7] In the *prologus* (688–703), Jerome justifies the essential importance of the letters of Paul, among which only Hebrews receives further attention: some people doubt that Hebrews (*ad Hebraeos*) is written by Paul, because his name is not mentioned anywhere in the letter. Jerome unmasks this as a pseudo-argumentation so that any alternative attribution (e.g., to Barnabas, Luke, or Clement, as their names are missing in the letter, too) are wrong. To him, Hebrews reflects Paul’s fine doctrine. Besides, it is not surprising that the letter differs from all the others according to style and language, because it was originally composed in Hebrew, Paul’s mother tongue, while the rest was written in Greek. Then, Jerome elucidates why the chapter of the Pauline letters starts with *ad Romanos* and what the other letters offer in regard to Paul’s teaching, probably *the* criterion for ordering all these texts.
- [8] There is neither a *praefatio* or *prologus* for the *epistulae catholicae*, nor for *apocalypsis*. A very interesting section follows thereafter with the *Oratio Manasse*, *liber Ezrae* 3, *liber Ezrae* 4, *Psalmus* 151, and *epistula ad Laodicenses*, which is presented according to manuscript A and manuscripts S, CME, and cb so that there are two Latin texts and their corresponding two German translations. These texts in the appendix are a distinguishing and unique feature of the *Vulgate* of the New Testament.
- [9] The praise of the editorial work and the whole translation project made in my review of volume 3 should be repeated here, as it is applicable to the present book under review, too: editors are to be congratulated for the whole series of volumes that provide a for long needed, very helpful, trustworthy, and indispensable tool. With the complete *Biblia Sacra Vulgata* on the shelf every biblical scholar—and a researcher of textual criticism in particular—is well equipped for studying the essential translation by Jerome; and we even learn about his motivation, the attendant circumstances, and the background for accomplishing such a comprehensive project.

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