

History of the Bible

Septuagint

{sep' - too - uh - jint}

General Information

The **Septuagint**, commonly designated **LXX**, is the oldest Greek version of the Old Testament of the Bible, the title "seventy" referring to the tradition that it was the work of 70 translators (or 72 in some traditions). The translation was made from the Hebrew Bible by Hellenistic Jews during the period 275 - 100 BC at Alexandria. Initially the Septuagint was widely used by Greek - speaking Jews, but its adoption by the Christians, who used it in preference to the Hebrew original, aroused hostility among the Jews, who ceased to use it after about 70 AD. **It is still used by the Greek Orthodox church.**

The Septuagint contains the books of the Hebrew Bible, the deuterocanonical books - that is, those not in the Hebrew version but accepted by the Christian church - and the Apocrypha. Ancient manuscripts from Qumran suggest that the Septuagint often followed a Hebrew text different from the present authoritative Hebrew text. Thus its value for textual criticism has been enhanced. The Septuagint provides an understanding of the cultural and intellectual settings of Hellenistic Judaism.

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Bibliography

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Septuagint

General Information

Septuagint is the name given the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. The term is derived from the Latin word septuaginta ("seventy"; hence, the customary abbreviation LXX), which refers to the 70 (or 72) translators who were once believed to have been appointed by the Jewish high priest of the time to render the Hebrew Bible into Greek at the behest of the Hellenistic emperor Ptolemy II. The legend of the 70 translators contains an element of truth, for the Torah (the five books of Moses-Genesis to Deuteronomy) probably had been translated into Greek by the 3rd century BC to serve the needs of Greek-speaking Jews outside Palestine who were no longer able to read their Scriptures in the original Hebrew. The translation of the remaining books of the Hebrew Old Testament, the addition to it of books and parts of books (the Apocrypha), and the final production of the Greek Old Testament as the Bible of the early Christian church form a very complicated history. Because the Septuagint, rather than the Hebrew text, became the Bible of the early church, other Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek were made by the 3rd century; these are extant only in fragments, and their history is even more obscure than that of the Septuagint.

Rev. Bruce Vawter

Vulgate

General Information

Vulgate (Latin *vulgata editio*, "popular edition") is the edition of the Latin Bible that was pronounced "authentic" by the Council of Trent. The name originally was given to the "common edition" of the Greek Septuagint used by the early Fathers of the Church. It was then transferred to the Old Latin version (the Itala) of both the Old Testament and the New Testament that was used extensively during the first

centuries in the Western church. The present composite Vulgate is basically the work of St. Jerome, a Doctor of the Church.

At first St. Jerome used the Greek Septuagint for his Old Testament translation, including parts of the Apocrypha; later he consulted the original Hebrew texts. **He produced three versions of the Psalms, called the Roman, the Gallican, and the Hebrew.** The Gallican Psalter, based on a Greek transliteration of a Hebrew text, is now read in the Vulgate. At the request of Pope Damasus I in 382, Jerome had previously undertaken a revision of the New Testament. He corrected the Gospels thoroughly; it is disputed whether the slight revisions made in the remainder of the New Testament are his work.

Through the next 12 centuries, the text of the Vulgate was transmitted with less and less accuracy. The Council of Trent (around 1550) recognized the need for an authentic Latin text and authorized a revision of the extant corrupt editions. **This revision is the basic Latin text still used by scholars.** A modern reworking of it, called for by Pope Paul VI as a result of the Second Vatican Council, was largely completed in 1977. It was used in making up the new liturgical texts in Latin that were basic to the vernacular liturgies mandated by the council.

Ver'sion

Advanced Information

A Version is a translation of the holy Scriptures. This word is not found in the Bible; nevertheless, as frequent references are made in this work to various ancient as well as modern versions, it is fitting that some brief account should be given of the most important of these. These versions are important helps to the right interpretation of the Word. (See Samaritan Pentateuch article, below.)

• The Targums

After the return from the Captivity, the Jews, no longer familiar with the old Hebrew, required that their Scriptures should be translated for them into the Chaldaic or Aramaic language and interpreted. These translations and paraphrases were at first oral, but they were afterwards reduced to writing, and thus **targums**, i.e., "versions" or "translations", have come down to us. The chief of these are,

- (1.) **The Onkelos Targum**, i.e., the targum of Akelas=Aquila, a targum so called to give it greater popularity by comparing it with the Greek translation of Aquila mentioned below. This targum originated about the second century after Christ. Other scholars say it dates from 60 BC. This Targum includes the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch. The oldest existing copies seem to be from about 500 AD.
- (2.) The **Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel** comes next to that of Onkelos in respect of age and value. It is more a paraphrase on the Prophets, however, than a translation. It is thought to be from about 30 BC. This Targum contains the historical Books of the Old Testament and the Prophets. The oldest existing copies seem to be from about 500 AD. Written in Aramaic.
- Both of these targums issued from the Jewish school which then flourished at Babylon.

• The Greek Versions

- (1.) The oldest of these is the **Septuagint**, usually quoted as the LXX. The origin of this, the most important of all the versions is involved in much obscurity. It derives its name from the popular notion that seventy-two translators were employed on it by the direction of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, and that it was accomplished in seventy-two days, for the use of the Jews residing in that country. There is no historical warrant for this notion. It is, however, an established fact that this version was made at Alexandria; that it was begun about 280 B.C., and finished about 200 or 150 B.C.; that it was the work of a number of translators who differed greatly both in their knowledge of Hebrew

and of Greek; and that from the earliest times it has borne the name of "The Septuagint", i.e., "The Seventy."

This version, with all its defects, must be of the greatest interest:

- (a) as preserving evidence for the text far more ancient than the oldest Hebrew manuscripts;
 - (b) as the means by which the Greek Language was wedded to Hebrew thought;
 - (c) as the source of the great majority of quotations from the Old Testament by writers of the New Testament.
- (2.) Aquila, called Aquila of Pontus (flourished about 130), translated the Old Testament into Greek. He was born in Sinope, Pontus (now Sinop, Turkey). His translation of the Old Testament was so literal that Jews of his time preferred it to the Septuagint version, as did the Judaistic sect of Christians called Ebionites. The remaining fragments of the version may be found in the Hexapla of the Alexandrian theologian Origen.
- (3.) The **New Testament manuscripts** fall into two divisions,
- Uncials, written in Greek capitals, with no distinction at all between the different words, and very little even between the different lines; and
 - Cursives, in small Greek letters, were a "running hand" script form where the letters were connected as in our longhand. This script was continuous *scriptio continua*, without breaks for words or lines or verses. Also called Minuscule writing.

The change between the two kinds of Greek writing took place about the tenth century AD.

Only five manuscripts of the New Testament approaching to completeness are more ancient than this dividing date.

- The first, numbered A, is the **Alexandrian manuscript**. Though brought to this country by Cyril Lucar, patriarch of Constantinople, as a present to Charles I., it is believed that it was written, not in that capital, but in Alexandria; whence its title. It is now dated in the fifth century A.D. Also called **Codex Alexandrinus**. It contains almost the entire Bible.
- The second, known as B, is the **Vatican manuscript**. (See **Codex Vaticanus** article, below.)
- The Third, C, or the **Ephraem manuscript**, was so called because it was written over the writings of Ephraem, a Syrian theological author, a practice very common in the days when writing materials were scarce and dear. It is believed that it belongs to the fifth century, and perhaps a slightly earlier period of it than the manuscript A. Also called **Codex Ephraemi**. Nearly every Book of the Bible is represented in it.
- The fourth, D, or the **manuscript of Beza**, was so called because it belonged to the reformer Beza, who found it in the monastery of St. Irenaeus at Lyons in 1562 A.D. It is imperfect, and is dated in the sixth century. Also called **Codex Bezae**. This manuscript contains the Gospels and Acts in both Greek and Latin.
- The fifth (called Aleph) is the Sinaitic manuscript. (See **Codex Sinaiticus** article, below.)

• The Syriac Versions

- **Old Syriac Version**. Contains the Four Gospels, copied about the fourth century. Two copies exist today.
 - **Syriac Peshitta**. This was the standard Syrian Version, created about 150-250 AD. More than 350 copies of it exist today.
 - **Palestinian Syriac**. About 400-450 AD.
 - **Philoxenian**. 508 AD. Polycarp made this translation.
 - **Harkleian Syriac**. 616 AD, by Thomas of Harkel.
- (See Syriac article, below.)

• The Latin Versions

A Latin version of the Scriptures, called the "**Old Latin**," which originated in North Africa, was in common use in the time of Tertullian (A.D. 150). Of this there appear to have been various copies or recensions made. About 50 copies exist today. The dates of those copies are not known. A Latin version made in Italy, and called the **Itala**, was reckoned the most accurate. This translation of the Old Testament seems to have been made not from the original Hebrew but from the LXX. This version became greatly corrupted by repeated transcription, and to remedy the evil, **Jerome** (A.D. 329-420) was requested by Damasus, the bishop of Rome, to undertake a complete revision of it. By 384 AD, Jerome had completed the task. It met with opposition at first, but was at length, in the seventh century, recognized as the "**Vulgate**" version. The word Vulgate means common or popular. More than 10,000 manuscript copies of the Vulgate exist today.

The Vulgate Bible appeared in a printed form about A.D. 1455, the first book that ever issued from the printing press. The Council of Trent (1546) declared it "authentic." It subsequently underwent various revisions, but that which was executed (1592) under the sanction of Pope Clement VIII was adopted as the basis of all subsequent editions. **It is regarded as the sacred original in the Roman Catholic Church.**

All modern European versions have been more or less influenced by the Vulgate. This version reads *ipsa* instead of *ipse* in Gen. 3:15, "She shall bruise thy head."

Other Latin Versions

- **African Old Latin** or **Codex Babbiansis**. 400 AD.
- **Codex Corbiensis**. 400-500 AD. Contains the Four Gospels.
- **Codex Vercellensis**. 360 AD.
- **Codex Palatinus**. Fifth century AD.

• Other Versions

There are numerous other ancient versions which are of importance for Biblical critics, but which we need not mention particularly, such as the

- **Ethiopic**. Fourth century, from the Greek LXX; More than 2,000 manuscript copies of it exist today. Some scholars say sixth century.
- **Memphitic**. Circulated in Lower Egypt about the fourth century from the Greek.
- **Thebaic**. Designed for Upper Egypt, about the fourth century from the Greek.
- **Sahidic**. Early in the third century in Egypt
- **Bohairic**. Fourth century. About 100 manuscript copies now exist.
- **Middle Egyptian**. Fourth or fifth century.
- **Gothic**, written in the German language, but with the Greek alphabet, by Ulphilas (died A.D. 388), of which only fragments of the Old Testament remain; About 6 partial texts exist today.
- **Armenian**, about A.D. 400; About 2,600 manuscript copies exist today. Translated from a Greek Bible.
- **Slavonic**, in the ninth century, for ancient Moravia. Over 4,000 manuscript copies exist today.
- **Arabic**. About 75 manuscript copies exist today.
- **Persian**. Only 2 manuscript copies exist today.
- **Anglo-Saxon**. Seven manuscript copies exist today.
- **Georgian**. Fifth century.
- **Nubian**. Sixth century.

• The English Versions

The history of the English versions begins properly with **Wyckliffe** (around AD 1384). But earlier, around AD 650, Caedmon wrote many of the Bible's central passages in the form of Saxon poems. Around AD 700, two bishops, Eadhelm and Egbert, made rather crude Saxon translations of the Psalms and of the Gospels.

Portions of the Scriptures were rendered into **Saxon** (as the **Gospel according to John**, by **Bede**, A.D. 735), (much improved quality) and also into **English** (by **Orme**, called the "**Ormulum**," a portion of the Gospels and of the Acts in the form of a metrical paraphrase, toward the close of the seventh century), long before **Wyckliffe**; but it is to him that the honour belongs of having first rendered the whole Bible into **English** (A.D. 1384). This version was made from the Vulgate, and renders Gen. 3:15 after that Version, "She shall trede thy head." This translation was very stilted and mechanical in style. It is likely that only a few hundred copies were ever made, because the printing press had not yet been invented. Each copy was laboriously and meticulously copied by hand. There are presently one hundred and seventy copies still in existence.

In 1454, Johann **Gutenberg** developed the movable type printing press. This allowed all of the following Bible versions to be printed in much larger quantity. It seems no coincidence that Martin Luther and the Protestant Revolution began soon after (1517), since a much larger number of scholars now had easy access to Biblical texts.

This was followed by **Tyndale's translation** (1525-1531) (this translation was based on the original Greek of the New Testament, and was translated in a free idiomatic English; when the KJAV was produced almost a century later (1611), one-third of it retained Tyndale's wording and the remainder retained his general literary structure); **Miles Coverdale's** (1535-1553); **Thomas Matthew's** (1537), really, however, the work of John Rogers, the first martyr under the reign of Queen Mary. This was properly the first **Authorized Version**, Henry VIII, having ordered a copy of it to be got for every church. This took place in less than a year after Tyndale was martyred for the crime of translating the Scriptures. In 1539 Richard **Taverner** published a revised edition of Matthew's Bible. The **Great Bible**, so called from its great size, called also **Cranmer's Bible**, was published in 1539 and 1568. In the strict sense, **the "Great Bible" is "the only authorized version**; for the Bishops' Bible and the present Bible [the A.V.] never had the formal sanction of royal authority." Next in order was the **Geneva version** (1557-1560) (the first version to recognize the division of the text into verses); the **Bishops' Bible** (1568); the **Rheims and Douai versions**, under Roman Catholic auspices (1582, 1609) (still the standard Roman Catholic Bible); the **Authorized Version** (1611) (the most broadly distributed version, also called King James Authorized Version [KJAV]; the work of fifty-four scholars from Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster; a number of revisions were soon made, in 1613, 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769); and the **Revised Version of the New Testament** in 1880 and **of the Old Testament** in 1884. The two were combined and called the **English Revised Version** (1885).

(Easton Illustrated Dictionary)

Newer Popular English Versions

General Information

The **American Standard Version** (1901, 1946, 1957); **The Holy Bible; Revised Standard Version** (1946 [NT], 1952 [OT], 1971); the **Living Bible** (1971); the **New International Version (NIV)** (1973, 1978, 1984); the **Simple English Version** (1978, 1980); the **New King James Version** (1982); and the **Micro Bible** (1988), have all developed broad acceptance by various Christian Denominations and groups.

Additionally, the **Literal Translation of the Holy Bible** (Young, 1887, reprinted 1953); **The Twentieth Century New Testament** (1901); **The Historical New Testament** (Moffatt, 1901); **The New Testament**

in Modern Speech (Weymouth, 1903); **The Holy Bible - An Improved Edition** (Amer. Baptist Publication Society, 1913); **The Bible - A New Translation** (Moffatt, 1922); **The New Testament, an American Translation** (Goodspeed, 1923); **The Bible, an American Translation** (Goodspeed, 1931); **The New Testament** (Williams, 1937); **Letters to Young Churches (Phillips, 1948)** (paraphrases the New Testament Epistles); **The Gospels (Phillips, 1953)** (popular paraphrases among young people); **The Berkeley Version of the Bible** (Verkuyl, 1959); have popularity for various reasons, usually either common vocabulary or extremely careful translation.

Samar'itan Pen'tateuch

Advanced Information

On the return from the Exile, the Jews refused the Samaritans participation with them in the worship at Jerusalem, and the latter separated from all fellowship with them, and built a temple for themselves on Mount Gerizim. This temple was razed to the ground more than one hundred years B.C. Then a system of worship was instituted similar to that of the temple at Jerusalem. It was founded on the Law, copies of which had been multiplied in Israel as well as in Judah.

Thus the Pentateuch was preserved among the Samaritans, although they never called it by this name, but always "the Law," which they read as one book. The division into five books, as we now have it, however, was adopted by the Samaritans, as it was by the Jews, in all their priests' copies of "the Law," for the sake of convenience. This was the only portion of the Old Testament which was accepted by the Samaritans as of divine authority.

The form of the letters in the manuscript copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch is different from that of the Hebrew copies, and is probably the same as that which was in general use before the Captivity. There are other peculiarities in the writing which need not here be specified. There are important differences between the Hebrew and the Samaritan copies of the Pentateuch in the readings of many sentences. In about two thousand instances in which the Samaritan and the Jewish texts differ, the LXX agrees with the former. The New Testament also, when quoting from the Old Testament, agrees as a rule with the Samaritan text, where that differs from the Jewish. Thus Ex. 12:40 in the Samaritan reads, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel and of their fathers which they had dwelt in the land of Canaan and in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years" (comp. Gal. 3: 17). It may be noted that the LXX has the same reading of this text.

(Easton Illustrated Dictionary)

Sinait'icus codex

Advanced Information

Sinaiticus codex, usually designated by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is one of the most valuable of ancient MSS of the Greek New Testament. On the occasion of a third visit to the convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai, in 1859, it was discovered by Dr. Tischendorf. He had on a previous visit in 1844 obtained forty-three parchment leaves of the LXX, which he deposited in the university library of Leipsic, under the title of the Codex Frederico-Augustanus, after his royal patron the king of Saxony. In the year referred to (1859) the emperor of Russia sent him to prosecute his search for MSS, which he was convinced were still to be found in the Sinai convent.

The story of his finding the manuscript of the New Testament has all the interest of a romance. He reached the convent on 31st January; but his inquiries appeared to be fruitless. On the 4th February he had resolved to return home without having gained his object. "On that day, when walking with the provisor of the convent, he spoke with much regret of his ill-success. Returning from their promenade, Tischendorf accompanied the monk to his room, and there had displayed to him what his companion

called a copy of the LXX, which he, the ghostly brother, owned. The MS was wrapped up in a piece of cloth, and on its being unrolled, to the surprise and delight of the critic the very document presented itself which he had given up all hope of seeing.

His object had been to complete the fragmentary LXX of 1844, which he had declared to be the most ancient of all Greek codices on vellum that are extant; but he found not only that, but a copy of the Greek New Testament attached, of the same age, and perfectly complete, not wanting a single page or paragraph." This precious fragment, after some negotiations, he obtained possession of, and conveyed it to the Emperor Alexander, who fully appreciated its importance, and caused it to be published as nearly as possible in facsimile, so as to exhibit correctly the ancient handwriting.

The entire codex consists of 346 1/2 folios. Of these 199 belong to the Old Testament and 147 1/2 to the New, along with two ancient documents called the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. The books of the New Testament stand thus; the four Gospels, the epistles of Paul, the Acts of the Apostles, the Catholic Epistles, the Apocalypse of John.

It is shown by Tischendorf that this codex was written in the fourth century, and is thus of about the same age as the Vatican codex; but while the latter wants the greater part of Matthew and sundry leaves here and there besides, the Sinaiticus is the only copy of the New Testament in uncial characters which is complete. Thus it is the oldest extant MS copy of the New Testament. Both the Vatican and the Sinai codices were probably written in Egypt. (See Vaticanus article, below.)
(Easton Illustrated Dictionary)

Syr'iac

Advanced Information

Syriac, (2 Kings 18:26; Ezra 4:7; Dan. 2:4), more correctly rendered "Aramaic," including both the Syriac and the Chaldee languages. In the New Testament there are several Syriac words, such as "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" (Mark 15:34; Matt. 27:46 gives the Heb. form, "Eli, Eli"), "Raca" (Matt. 5:22), "Ephphatha" (Mark 7:34), "Maran-atha" (1 Cor. 16:22).

A Syriac version of the Old Testament, containing all the canonical books, along with some apocryphal books (called the Peshitto, i.e., simple translation, and not a paraphrase), was made early in the second century, and is therefore the first Christian translation of the Old Testament. It was made directly from the original, and not from the LXX Version. The New Testament was also translated from Greek into Syriac about the same time. It is noticeable that this version does not contain the Second and Third Epistles of John, 2 Peter, Jude, and the Apocalypse. These were, however, translated subsequently and placed in the version. (See Version article, above.)

Codex Vatica'nus

Advanced Information

The Codex Vaticanus is said to be the oldest extant vellum manuscript. It and the Codex Sinaiticus are the two oldest uncial manuscripts. They were probably written in the fourth century. The Vaticanus was placed in the Vatican Library at Rome by Pope Nicolas V. in 1448, its previous history being unknown. It originally consisted in all probability of a complete copy of the Septuagint and of the New Testament. It is now imperfect, and consists of 759 thin, delicate leaves, of which the New Testament fills 142. Like the Sinaiticus, it is of the greatest value to Biblical scholars in aiding in the formation of a correct text of the New Testament. It is referred to by critics as Codex B.
(Easton Illustrated Dictionary)

The Early Canon of the New Testament

The following table indicates which Books of the New Testament were included in a number of early Versions, including several of the Manuscripts discussed above. See the legend at the bottom for descriptions of what the letters indicate.

	Mar cion c.140	Iren- aeus 130-202	Old Latin 150-70	Murat- orian c.170	Tertull 150-220	Old Syriac 200	Origen 185-254	Hippo- lytus 200-25	Euse- bius 325-40	Codex Vatic 325-50	Codex Sinai 325-425	Athan- asius 367	Amphi- locius 380	Pesh- itta 375-400	Cart- hage3 c.397	Codex Alex 425-75
Matthew	o	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
Mark	o	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
Luke	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
John	o	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
Acts	o	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
Romans	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
1 Cor	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
2 Cor	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
Galat	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
Ephes	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
Philip	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
Coloss	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
1 Thess	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
2 Thess	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
1 Tim	o	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	m	i	i	i	i	i	i
2 Tim	o	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	m	i	i	i	i	i	i
Titus	o	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	m	i	i	i	i	i	i
Philem	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	o	i	i	i	i	o	i	i	i
Hebrew	o	o	o	o	o	i	d	o	i	i	i	i	o	i	i	i
James	o	o	o	o	o	i	d	o	d	m	i	i	o	i	i	i
1 Pet	o	i	o	o	i	i	i	i	i	m	i	i	o	i	i	i
2 Pet	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	d	m	i	i	i	o	i	i
1 John	o	i	i	i	i	i	o	o	i	m	i	i	i	i	i	i
2 John	o	i	i	i	o	o	d	o	d	m	i	i	i	o	i	i
3 John	o	o	i	o	o	o	d	o	d	m	i	i	i	o	i	i
Jude	o	o	i	i	i	o	d	o	d	m	i	i	i	o	i	i
Revel	o	i	i	i	i	o	i	i	i	m	i	i	i	o	i	i
Hermas	o	i	o	o	o	o	i	o	r	m	i	o	o	o	o	o
Barnabas	o	o	o	o	o	o	i	o	r	m	i	o	o	o	o	o
Didache	o	o	o	o	o	o	i	o	r	m	o	o	o	o	o	o
ApocPet	o	o	o	i	o	o	o	o	o	m	o	o	o	o	o	o
1Clement	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	m	o	o	o	o	o	i
2Clement	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	m	o	o	o	o	o	i

i=included (canonicity definitely accepted)

o=omitted (canonicity doubted or denied)

m=missing (the codex omits the Pastorals and ends at Heb. 9:13)

d=disputed (canonicity mentioned as being in doubt)

r=rejected (canonicity specifically denied)

Notes:

Marcion

Marcion was a heretic in Rome. He believed that the Church should eliminate all references to the Creator-God of the Old Testament. Therefore, he proposed rejecting the entire Old Testament as well as anything in the New Testament that seemed to him to be contaminated with Judaism. Therefore, he eliminated everything but an edited version of Luke (written by the Gentile Luke) and ten of the Pauline Epistles. Marcion's list was definitely not the position of the Church at the time, but a deliberate variation from it. Actually, his efforts acted to inspire the orthodox Church to speed up their establishment of the true New Testament Canon.

Muratorian Fragment

Cardinal Muratori first published (in 1740) a list based on a document he studied that also came from around Rome. The beginning of the original document is mutilated, but it evidently included Matthew and Mark because it refers to Luke as the third Gospel. It included the Apocalypse of Peter (a Book later determined to be non Canonical) and it mentions that the Shepherd of Hermas as being worthy to be read in Church but not to be included among prophetic or apostolic writings.

The Gospel

Very early on, possibly soon after the writing of the Gospel according to John, the four Gospels appear to have been united. The fourfold collection was originally known as "The Gospel" (singular) and this appears to be where the "according tos" were established. This collection was designated by the Greek word *Evangelion*.

Tatian

Around 170 AD an Assyrian Christian (apparently in Rome) named Tatian combined the fourfold Gospel into a narrative "Harmony of the Gospels". This was long the favorite form of the Gospels in the Assyrian Church, and it was quite distinct from the four Gospels in the existing Old Syriac version also existant at the time. Tatian's Harmony is usually known as the *Diatessaron* and it is thought that its original language was probably Greek, but later given to the Assyrian Christians in a Syriac form.

Luke

When the four Gospels had become gathered together into one combined work, Luke's two contributions (Luke and Acts) thus became separated. Slight modifications were apparently then introduced into the text at the end of Luke and the beginning of Acts. (Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:2) Some scholars have been concerned about apparent inconsistencies regarding the Ascension in these two Books that this 'adjustment' might be responsible for that.

Corpus Paulinum

At roughly the same time that the fourfold Gospel was collected together, the group of Paul's writings were assembled. It was designated by the Greek word *Apostolos*. Initially, this

collection just included the letters "To the . . ." but Hebrews and Acts were soon bound up with them.

Origen

Origen mentioned that a number of Books were disputed by some: Hebrews, 2Peter, 2John, 3John, James, Jude, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Didache, and the 'Gospel according to the Hebrews'. (This last greatly resembled Matthew and existed among a group called the Ebionites in Egypt and Transjordan. Jerome later identified it with the "Gospel of the Nazarenes".) It is not clear if Jerome was correct about that.

Athanasius

In 367 AD, Athanasius appears to have been the first to establish the specific New Testament Canon of 27 Books that became broadly accepted and which we follow today.

Eastern Church

It took until around 508 AD that 2Peter, 2John, 3John, Jude and Revelation were included in a version of the Syriac Bible, adding to the earlier 22, to then agree with the same 27 Book New Testament Canon as in the West.

Hippo Regius (393) and Carthage (397)

These were the first two ecclesiastical Councils held specifically to classify the Canonical Books. These both occurred in North Africa. They did not impose any 'new' list on Christians but rather codified the already generally recognized Canon.

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