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# THE REVISION OF THE VULGATE BIBLE

by DOM ADRIAN WELD-BLUNDELL, O.S.B.

**I**N 1907 Pope Pius X decided to appoint a Commission for the revision of the Latin Vulgate. This version, which was declared to be the official Latin version of the Church by the Council of Trent, was revised and published in 1592 by Pope Clement VIII and this "Clementine edition" has been in use by the Catholic Church down to our own day. The admitted presence of a good many textual errors, however, has made another revision necessary.

The primary object set before the commission was to produce the best critical edition of the text of St. Jerome's translation from the Hebrew which could be obtained from a study of the oldest and best codices, according to the soundest principles of textual criticism. By employing, in addition, the best modern photography, and other mechanical means, the revised text published by this commission might be confidently expected to be the most correct and acceptable edition of the Vulgate Bible.

The work was entrusted to the Benedictine Order by Pope Pius X in a Rescript of 7th December 1907, and at the head was placed the President of the English Benedictine Congregation, Abbot Aidan Gasquet, who soon after was created Cardinal. The 'International "Collegio di Sant' Anselmo" was chosen as the seat of their labours. Cardinal Gasquet moved the work to the Palazzo San Callisto in 1914, and after his death Pope Pius XI built an abbey specially adapted for the work of the Commission, and installed a community drawn chiefly from the Abbey of Clairvaux. The first Abbot of the new community was Dom Henri Quentin who directed the work from the beginning.

The preliminary work of selecting and classifying the manuscripts existing in Europe, especially in Spain, and the photographing of them, page by page, took up several years. A camera, specially designed for the purpose, took a film many yards in length which was sensitized to produce negatives, only requiring to be fixed and washed. These were cut up and bound to form volumes. They showed of course white lettering on a black background. In later years when other manuscripts had to be photographed the micro-film process came into use. The next work required was "collating," or comparing the various manuscripts. For this purpose a large number of copies of the Clementine Vulgate were printed on quarto-size pages. The text was printed in a column at the left side, the rest of the page being left blank to receive all the variations and notes in the Codex to be collated. A number of men and women were engaged in this laborious work and it was considered necessary always to revise it—the revision being done preferably by a member of the Commission. To collate one codex of the whole Bible

in this way would occupy, I should estimate, from my own experience, at least ten months working some six hours a day. It is needless to add that much depends on the legibility of the manuscript.

The form and arrangement adopted in the printing of the volumes of this work follow the plan of Wordsworth and White, revision of the Vulgate New Testament. The revised text is printed at the head of each page in the form of "cola et commata" as is found in many of the earliest Codices, and taken here from the Amiatinus Codex. In this system, the sentence or phrase always begins at the margin on the extreme left, following in one or more shorter lines until completed. As there is no punctuation this makes it easy to read and understand. There are capitals only at the beginning of a chapter for proper names and for "Dominus Deus." The chapters of a book are marked in Roman numerals, the numbering and position of the verses are retained for the convenience of reference and concordance.

As an illustration of this system here is a passage from Genesis xxxvii, 18, where the allocation of the verses is not normal (the verse usually begins with a new sentence).

<sup>18</sup> qui cum vidissent eum procul  
antequam accederet ad eos cogi-  
taverunt illum occidere <sup>19</sup> et  
mutuo loquebantur  
ecce somniator venit <sup>20</sup> venite  
occidamus eum—&c.

On each page, after the revised text, come the variations of the selected manuscripts. In the first four volumes, containing the Pentateuch, there are two groups. In the first are the variations of the oldest and most important codices from which the revised text is selected. These are *Turonensis* (G), VI–VII saec; *Amiatinus* (A) VII–VIII saec; *Ottobonianus* (O) VII–VIII saec. To these are sometimes added others as required. Dom Henri Quentin who had the direction of the work laid down that these earliest codices should be held as prototypes of St. Jerome's work; but when sound criticism required a departure from them and the adoption of a different reading, this should be indicated in the new text by the insertion of a dagger (†) before and after the word or words affected. The final decision was reserved to Dom Quentin himself, and after his death to his successor Dom Pierre Salmon. The second group in the Apparatus contains all the other variations of text found in the selected codices, references as required to the Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint, and quotations from the writings of the Fathers and others.

In Volumes V and VI the Apparatus is divided into three groups: at the bottom of each page are arranged the different divisions of the chapter (in the above lines of the text) as they occur in the various codices. At the beginning of each Book of the Bible there appears a list of the

manuscripts and early printed editions with details and their signs; and a loose card with this *Elenchus Codicum* is sent out with each volume.

As the spelling of many recurring words is found to vary in our manuscripts and sometimes varies even in the same manuscript, a uniform spelling has been adopted based on the best codices, as for example: caelum, proelium, caerimoniae, oboedire, intellegere, milia, litus, conpello, inmitto, temptare, quicquid.

The proper names present greater difficulty. For instance one name is found to be spelt in no less than twenty-nine different ways. I will give two rather important examples of this. In Gen. xvii, 15 we read "dixit Deus Sarai uxorem tuam non vocabis Sarai sed Sarram." We find her new name as Saram in many MSS as also in University and early printed editions and in the Sistine and Clementine texts. Cava, with three other MSS, has Saray. Again in Gen. xxxv, 10, God says "non vocaberis ultra Jacob sed Israhel erit nomen tuum." The following variations in spelling are found in the codices: Israel, Israhel, srahel, isrhl, srhl, isrl, ihl. The spelling now adopted is Israhel, wherever the name occurs.

In 1922 Abbot Quentin published his *Memoir sur l'établissement du texte de la Vulgate* (Vatican Press). The work was illustrated with some printed illuminations and contained a number of diagrams showing the connexion between the MSS chosen for the work of revision. It is from this treatise that I have taken the details of the following list of the manuscripts selected by the commission.

As already stated, the three most important Codices, each at the head of a "family" of Manuscripts, are—*Turonensis* S. *Gatiani*. (Parisinus N. acq. lat. 2334) saec. VI–VII (G). *Amiatinus* (Florentinus, Laurent.) saec. VII–VIII (A). *Ottobonianus*. (Vaticanus, Ottob. lat. 66), saec. VII–VIII (O). When Turon. and Ottob. texts come to an end, they are replaced by Vatican lat. 5763 and *Guelferbytanus* Wiss. 64, saec. V, and other MSS. as noted in the *Elenchus Codicum* at the beginning of each book. See note.

I shall now give a few examples of this revision of the text, which in some cases are obvious from the evidence of the oldest MSS, in other cases perhaps less obvious.

In Gen. i, 16, the Clementine Vulgate has "fecitque Deus duo luminaria magna." This appears in the Cava Codex, in Univ. ed. and most early printed ed. But the best MSS have "duo magna luminaria" and this is the reading now adopted.

In Gen. iii, 7, the Clementine Vulgate has "se esse nudos," with the Alcuins, some older MSS and Italian versions, the Univ. and early printed ed. But the three chief MSS G, A and O have "esse se nudos" which is now put in the revised text.

In Gen. iii, 15, occurs the well-known text "ipsa (ipse) conteret caput tuum." All the oldest MSS, have "ipsa," except O and three others

(which however were later corrected to *ipsa*). The LXX reads *ipse* (αὐτός). As to the evidence of St. Jerome I should like to quote the words of Dom Henri Quentin from a lecture he gave at the Biblical Institute in Rome. "He (St. Jerome) quotes the passage in his *Quaestiones hebraicae in Genesim*, written in 389, that is to say before the translation of the Octateuch from the Hebrew towards the year 398—and he quotes *ipse*. He had occasion to deal again with the text after his translation of the Book of Genesis from the Hebrew. He quotes it in 408–10 when he is commenting on Isaias and in 410–14 when he comments on Ezechiel. On both these occasions he gives the text a special form: "Iste est coluber tortuosus qui decepit Evam in paradiso, quae (Eva) quia Dei praecepta destruxerat propterea morsibus eius patuit et audivit a Domino 'Tu observabis caput eius et ipse observabit tibi calcaneum.' 'Tu observabis,' thou, Eve, thou shalt observe the head of the serpent. Is it not perfectly clear, and is it not strange that a text so decisive and repeated has not attracted more attention? *Ipsa* conteret caput tuum."

In Gen. viii, 7, we have been accustomed to read that the raven which Noe put out of the Ark "non revertebatur." The codices are a good deal divided about the presence or absence of the negative. G, O, and A\* (prima manu) omit the "non" in accordance with the Hebrew. Some other MSS likewise omit and hence we find the negative left out in the revised text.

In Gen. xviii, where Abraham pleads with God to spare Sodom, he asks (verse 28) "delebis propter quadraginta quinque universam urbem" (Clementine Vulgate). Some MSS have this, including Paris Univ. codd., early printed ed., and LXX. But many others have "propter quinque" only, with A. Alcuins, early printed ed. and Carafa (W). This latter text has now been adopted.

It is strange to find all the ancient MSS reading "ad lavandos pedes camelorum" in Gen. xxiv, 32, where it is quite obvious that the water was not to wash the feet of the camels but of the man-servant. Yet the first MS to read "pedes eius" is Carafa (sixteenth century). The Sistine and Clementine Vulgate texts follow this and it is also adopted in the new revision, thus: "ad lavandos pedes†eius†et virorum," etc.

Another obvious error would seem to exist in the manuscript text of Gen. xxxii, 22. Most of the MSS, including the chief, have the reading "et (Jacob) transivit vadum Jacob." Seven of the MSS were later corrected to "Jaboc" in accordance with the Hebrew and LXX. The Univ. MSS and early printed ed. have "Jaboc"—and of course the new revision.

No changes in the text are likely to be of any grave importance, but those of less importance are numerous. I have counted as many as seven hundred and fifteen in this Book of Genesis (excluding proper names); and four hundred and seventy-six in the Book of Exodus. They consist of changes of nouns or adjectives, of conjunctions or adverbs or their

omission; the substitution of *-que* for *et* or vice versa and the inversion of words in a sentence.

Early in the work of revision it was noticed that quite a number of errors in the Vulgate text were traceable to the three manuscripts of the Paris University (thirteenth century) which were largely dependent on one of the less important codices, then copied by some of the early printed ed. and thus introduced into the Clementine text. This of course is clearly shown in the Apparatus.

In 1945 the Commission published Vol. V Liber Samuhelis (I and II Kings). Last year there appeared Vol. VI, Malachim (III and IV Kings).

### NOTE.

To the first family or group of codices under *Turonensis* belong other Spanish MSS:

*Cavensis* of Cava. saec VIII-IX (C).

*Legionensis*. The codex of St. Isidore, dated 960 A.D.

*Acad. Hist.* 2. Madrid Library, saec XII.

*Oxoniensis*. Laud. lat. 92, saec IX.

*Lugdunensis* Parisinus. N. acq. 1740, saec VIII.

*Complutensis*, Matriten. Univ. Cent. 31, saec X.

Two MSS from Monte Cassino Library, 531 and 520, saec XI.

*Toletanus*, Matrit. Bib. Nat. saec X.

*Oscensis*, Matrit. Mus. Arch. 485, saec XII.

*Matritensis*, Bib. Nat. A. 2 saec XI.

*Burgensis*, Seminarii Maj. saec X.

The second family or group under *Amiatinus* contains the following:

*Turonensis* 10 *Martinianus*, saec. VIII.

*Maurdramni Ambianensis* 6-7, saec VIII.

Six Alcuin codices follow:

*Parisin.* Lat. 3, saec IX.

*Parisin.* Lat. 11514, saec IX.

*Zurich. Turicensis Carolinus* C. 1., saec IX.

*Grandivallensis*. Lond. add. 10546, saec IX.

*Vallicellianus*. Rome. Bibl. Val. B. 6, saec IX.

*Paulinus*. Rome. Abb. S. Pauli ex. Mur. saec IX.

In the third group under *Ottobonianus* we have the MSS of Theodulfus, Bishop of Orleans, who died in 821. Also:

*Hubertianus*. London. add. 24142, saec IX. from the abbey of St. Hubert in the Ardennes.

*Aniciensis*. Anicien. Capituli, saec IX, now at Puy.

*Mesmianus* (seu Theodulphus) Parisinus. lat. 9380, saec IX.

*Gep.* (seu *Sangermanense parvum*) Parisin. lat. 11937, saec IX.

*Geo* (seu *Sangermanense oblongum*) Parisin. lat. 11504. saec IX.

Four codices of Italian recension: (Ψ)

*Bov. Vaticanus* lat. 10510, saec XII.

*Bovin. Vatican.* lat. 10511, saec XII.

*Italicus Vatican* lat. 12958, saec XII.

*Mediolanen. Ambros.* B. 47. Inf. saec XII.

Three MSS of the University of Paris ( $\Omega$ ):

*Sorbonicus*. Parisin. lat. 15467, saec XIII.

*Correctorium S. Jacobi* Parisin. lat. 16719., saec XIII. The Bible of the Dominican School of St. James.

*Mazarinus* Parisin. Bib. Mazar. 5. saec XIV.

Early Printed Editions added in the Apparatus:

Editio Princeps, 42 lin. dicta (Moguntiae?) 1452 (?) The Gutenberg Bible.

Ed. Gobelini Laridii. Coloniae 1530.

Ed. Roberti Stephani (secun.) Paris 1532.

Ed. Rob. Steph. (quarta) Paris 1540.

Ed. Theolog. Lovaniensium Antwerp. 1583.

Codex Carafianus Vatican lat. 12959-60.

Ed. Sixti V Pont. Max. 1590.

Ed. Clementis VIII Pont. Max. 1592.

## CORINTH IN ST. PAUL'S TIME

by THE REV. W. REES, M.A., B.Litt.

### II.—ITS PEOPLE AND RECENT HISTORY.<sup>1</sup>

IT is impossible to understand the Corinth of St. Paul's time if we ignore the chasm of a hundred years in the city's history, as some writers appear to do. Cities with such a broken history are few but renowned. Troy, Carthage, and London are among them. But in other cases nobody forgets the chasm.

The foundation of the new Corinth in 45 B.C. was resented by the Greeks, partly no doubt because it was to be a Roman city, an outpost of the "barbarian" masters of the world, but partly also because many of its inhabitants had started life as slaves. The Greek poet Crinagoras wrote these lines at the time: "Unhappy city, what a change of tenants thou hast seen! Oh, the black day for Greece! Better for thee, O Corinth, to lie lower than the earth, better to be more forsaken than the deserts of Africa, than to be delivered up to this scum of the slave-market."

The new colony seems to have had other troubles too. During its first fifteen years it could hardly have received much of that watchful care which a new city needs. The leaders of the Roman world were preoccupied with wars and rivalries among themselves. Augustus could not in any case have done much for Corinth as it lay in Antony's portion of the empire. It must have been a hard time for the colonists, probably poor, certainly without civic traditions, and cold-shouldered by their neighbours. It may well have been dire distress that induced them to use a source of wealth which their neighbours would certainly regard as unhallowed. The ancient Greek graves, which had been spared by

<sup>1</sup> The first part of this article appeared in the July number.